



***NEW MEXICO'S
EARLY
LEARNING
OUTCOMES***

“What children need to know, be able to do, and the dispositions toward learning they need to possess to be successful when they enter kindergarten”

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Overview of Learning Outcomes

Pre-Kindergarten Learning Outcome Clusters

K-12 Content Standards

Health and Well-Being

Physical Education, Health Education

Supported by the Physical and Motor/Developmental Domains

Literacy

Language Arts

Supported by the Physical, Motor, Social, and Cognitive Developmental Domains

Numeracy

Mathematics

Supported by the Physical, Motor, Social, Language, and Cognitive Developmental Domains

Aesthetic/Creativity

Arts

Supported by all Developmental Domains

Scientific Conceptual Understandings

Science

Supported by all Developmental Domains

Self, Family and Community

Social-Studies

Supported by the Motor, Social, Emotional, Language and Cognitive Developmental Domains

**APPROACHES TOWARD LEARNING AFFECT HOW AND WHEN
LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE MANIFESTED**

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR 4- TO 5-YEAR-OLDS

INTRODUCTION

The Learning Outcomes are a framework to guide educators in their efforts to make informed decisions about curriculum and assessment. They reflect current research on brain development and best practices. They represent the growing consensus among early childhood professionals that a greater emphasis be placed on young children's conceptual learning, social and emotional development, and participation in relevant and meaningful learning experiences.

A growing body of research has focused on the importance of learning in the early years. Publications such as *Eager to Learn*, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, and *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* have detailed research that supports the importance of the early years in future student achievement. The *No Child Left Behind* legislation focuses on the need for accountability in supporting student achievement for all children. The movement toward learning standards in the United States has articulated key benchmarks for student achievement at each grade level (K-12) in academic content areas. These standards have impacted the quality of educational programs and have improved student achievement across the country. Although there has been a focus on the importance of early learning, the standards movement has not included pre-kindergarten until now. Over the past few years organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the International Reading Association, and the National Council for the Teachers of Mathematics, have provided forums and policy statements concerning the development of standards for pre-kindergarten learning. Many states have developed standards and others are in the process of development.

These pre-kindergarten learning outcomes describe what children at the end of their preschool experience need to know and be able to do for school success. Therefore, when reading the outcomes one should think in terms of the child's learning in the year before entering kindergarten. They describe age appropriate understandings and behaviors related to the ways young children think, reason, create, and recreate as they engage in the learning process. As we focus on age appropriate expectations, it is imperative that individual appropriateness be considered. Young children vary in background experience, language spoken, abilities, health and nutrition status, and zest for learning. They may have a condition that limits the way they learn. The Learning Outcomes are guidelines to be used with all children in any early education setting, including childcare centers, family childcare homes, Head Start, preschools, and school district PreK programs.

In order to achieve expectations set forth in this document, the following recommendations are essential to realize the full potential of the learning outcomes.

- (1) Provisions should be made to help personnel (many of whom have limited professional preparation) understand the role of outcomes as they relate to curriculum and assessment.

- (2) Professional preparation opportunities, with accompanying financial support, should be provided to help teachers acquire the skills essential for the complex tasks of understanding individual growth and development, assessing each child's development, and planning experiences that support success.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Research has shown that children construct their own knowledge through physical, social, and mental activity (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Children are active learners. Because children learn through first hand actions with objects and things in their world, their learning is mediated and linked to the sociocultural context (Vygotsky, 1986).

As active learners young children need opportunities to observe objects, people and events in their world, form their own hypotheses, try them out, observe what happens, and formulate their own answers (Dewey, 1944; Glassman, 2001). Play is the child's mode of finding out about the world around them. All types of play – manipulative play, play with games, rough-and-tumble play, and socio-dramatic play – provide children with opportunities to try things out, observe what happens and learn (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998).

Organizing children's learning spaces through centers of interest is an efficient and appropriate way to support children's' active mode of learning. Learning centers encourage children to make decisions, learn new skills, practice skills previously gained, as well as interact with others. Learning centers offer children and teachers considerable flexibility. Because they do so, learning centers support the diverse needs of children. For example, the needs of children with physical disabilities may be accommodated by providing pathways, low tables, or other necessary adjustments. Those children who need shielding from intrusion or stimulation can be offered quiet, protected centers, as well as spaces for active learning.

The following principles should serve as a guide in understanding and implementing New Mexico's Pre-Kindergarten Learning Outcomes.

- **All young children are capable of learning.**
Every child enters school eager to learn. Children who believe they can learn and expect to achieve, do so (Seefeldt, Denton, Galper & Younosai, 1999). Play is the fundamental vehicle through which children learn and construct their own understanding about the world around them. Meaningful learning occurs in a safe environment where children are actively engaged. Appropriate early educational experiences, offered in a safe and stimulating environment, can extend, expand, and clarify the ideas, concepts, language and social skills children gain spontaneously. Preschool teachers should hold high expectations for all young children.
- **Knowledge of child growth and development is essential for program development and implementation.**
Decisions about appropriate curriculum for groups of children and for individual children should be based on knowledge of child development and on careful observation of children at play.

- **Developmental domains are highly interrelated.**

Development in one domain influences the development in other domains. This interrelationship must be considered in planning preschool programs. For example, children's language skills affect their ability to engage in social interactions. Children who can use language effectively to negotiate social situations or those who have the intellectual ability to consider another's point of view are more likely to be those with strong social skills. Likewise, learning to write and read depends in great part on how children feel about themselves, development of fine motor skills and their ability to achieve (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, developmental domains cannot be considered in isolation from one another. Learning outcomes and indicators listed for one domain could also be cited in other domains.

- **Children demonstrate individual differences in development.**

All children within an age group should not be expected to arrive at each indicator at the same time or master each outcome to the same degree of proficiency. Although children develop skills and competencies through a generally predictable sequence of milestones, they do not develop them in exactly the same way or at exactly the same time. Some children may have a developmental delay or disability that requires adaptations and modifications to the environment, materials and interactions.

- **Development and learning are embedded in culture.**

Culture, the social context in which children learn, grow, and develop, is defined as a complex whole of language, knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and ways of living that are passed on to future generations (Cole, 1999). Social groups, the family, neighborhood, religious or ethnic groups within a society, explicitly or implicitly pass on their customs, values, or moral principles to the young. Beginning at birth, the culture socializes children to become members of a society. But children are not just products of the culture they grow in. As children grow, they pick and choose selectively from the cultural influences they are exposed to, shaping their own cultural context over time (NRC & IM, 2001).

- **Families are the primary caregivers and educators of their young children.**

The close attachment between young children and their families demands parent involvement. Consideration of each child's unique circumstances, respect for each family, and cooperative involvement between families and preschools is also critical to children's academic success and later school achievement (NRC, 2001a). Program staff must give families the information they need to support their children's learning and development. Creating partnerships with families is a way to insure that children are provided with the best learning experiences at home and at preschool.

- **Young children learn by doing.**

Teachers should provide opportunities for children to explore materials, to engage in physical activities, and to interact with peers and adults. A balance of child-initiated and teacher-selected activities will maximize children's learning.

Part One – Continuum of Developmental Domains Birth to Five Years

This section provides a concise review of developmental milestones. These early years are critical in terms of foundational learning in every area of development. The domains are divided into age-related units of months and years but it is stressed that the age specifications are only approximate markers derived from averages or norms, as mid-points not intended to represent any one child. These age expectations vary from child to child in form and time of acquisition. The important consideration in assessing a child’s development is sequence not chronological age, or whether the child is moving step-by-step in each area of development. (Allen & Marotz, 1999.)

Physical/Health			
Infant (Birth – 12 mo)	2-3 Year Olds	3-4 Year Olds	4-5 Year Olds
<p>Children have innate reflexes (sucking, grasping), progress from lying on stomach with head raised to sitting alone, develop pincer grasp, reach, learn to transfer things from one hand to the other, learn to crawl, scoot and/or walk.</p> <p>Children become aware of their own bodies in the environment and develop fine and gross motor skills.</p> <p>Toddler (12 – 24 months) Children walk backwards, run, dance, turn pages of book one at a time, build block towers, push, pull, throw, fill, empty, open, shut, squeeze, poke, and drop toys. Children are learning as they discover through physical development. Self-confidence develops as motor skills become better.</p> <p>Children enjoy repetition, such as dumping and filling. Eye-hand coordination is developing.</p>	<p>Children at this age walk upstairs 2 feet on a step, sit on riding toys and push with feet, hop in place and jump from low heights, climb, run, throw objects using forearms, and are increasing their fine motor development.</p> <p>Children develop eye-hand coordination, prewriting skills, strengthen fine motor skills, and increase their gross motor skills.</p>	<p>Children are continually improving coordination, run at an even pace, turn and stop well, swing without being pushed, ride a tricycle, begin to balance on a beam and stand on one foot. They throw, catch, and kick objects a short distance.</p> <p>Children can also build block towers, draw shapes and objects and hold writing instrument with fingers. They use scissors to make snips.</p> <p>Children continue to perfect fine and gross motor skills and develop competence and confidence in their abilities.</p>	<p>Children move with direction and refined coordination, walk forward easily, and backward with effort, along a wide beam, hop on one foot, ride a tricycle with speed and control, climb and play easily on large equipment with ramps, stairs, ladders, or climbing boards, throw, catch, and kick with increasing direction and control.</p> <p>Children manipulate a variety of objects requiring increased control and coordination. They manipulate materials in a purposeful way, planning and attending to detail; copy and draw simple shapes, letters, and words including name; cut with scissors along lines, turning corners; cut shapes out of paper.</p>

Language/Communication			
Infant (Birth – 12 months)	2-3 Year Olds	3-4 Year Olds	4-5 Year Olds
<p>Children communicate through crying, coos, gurgles, babbles, squeals, laughs, facial expressions, and respond to human voices. Infants will also imitate the sounds of others. They develop self-confidence as they learn to communicate needs. Two-way communication teaches children that words have meaning and people will respond to their sounds.</p> <p>Toddler (12 – 24 months) Children progress from saying first words to speaking in simple sentences. They also point to and name objects, play with sounds, ask questions, imitate others' speech, and by 24 months have a vocabulary of 24-50 words. Children learn to communicate their needs, learn that words have meaning and power, learn the importance of written words, and develop a vocabulary.</p>	<p>Children should engage and be encouraged to begin to use language more in play, ask names of things, make negative statements, and increase their vocabulary. Children develop fine motor skills and reading readiness skills (turning pages right to left). Vocabulary, memory and speech are increased by labeling items in books and asking questions.</p>	<p>Children use 3-4 word sentences to express wants and needs, can follow 2-3 simple directions at a time, can give simple accounts of their day/experiences, answer simple questions with one or two words, ask simple questions, respond to questions and comments from others, can say own name, begin to use plurals, have difficulty taking turns in conversation, and enjoy finger plays, rhymes, and songs with repetition. Children develop the ability to think out loud and talk themselves through situations. They can represent their thoughts and feelings verbally.</p>	<p>Recognize and invent rhymes and repetitive phrases; notice words that begin the same way. Use longer sentences (5-6 words) to communicate, follow two step directions, answer questions with complete thought, ask questions to further understanding, respond to others' comments in a series of exchanges. They participate in story time, retell familiar stories, show general knowledge of how print works, recognize and name many letters, make judgments about words and text by noticing features (other than letters and words). They compare and predict story events, act out main events of a familiar story. Understand there is a way to write that conveys meaning. Write recognizable letters, especially those in own name. Use prepositions "on," "in," and "under." Produce elaborate sentence structure. Speech is almost entirely intelligible.</p>

Cognitive (Thinking, Reasoning, Problem Solving)

Infant (Birth - 12 months)	2-3 Year Olds	3-4 Year Olds	4-5 Year Olds
<p>Children learn through 5 senses, actively use hands to explore environment. Infants will actively explore their environment when they feel secure, develop object permanence (knows objects exist out of sight and will search for them). They begin to be aware of cause-effect relationships. Use of positive responses by adults when infants seek out and perform new skills will help infants gain self-confidence in their ability to learn.</p> <p>Toddler (12 – 24 months) Children can follow simple directions, name familiar objects, understand relationships between objects, clearly see cause- effect relationships, and have an increasing desire to explore and experiment. Explorations become increasingly purposeful to find meaning in events, objects and words as they attempt to discover how the world works. They begin to understand the concept of parts and whole.</p>	<p>Children respond to simple directions, begin to imitate adults, have a limited attention span, begin to sequence and match objects, identify objects and ask questions. Children develop reasoning and problem solving skills, begin to think for themselves, problems begin to be worked out mentally rather than by trial and error, creativity and logical thinking are expanded.</p>	<p>Children have short attention spans (10 minutes), cannot deal with abstract ideas, are curious, inquisitive, and egocentric, are aware of past and future, enjoy stories, singing, numbers, quantity, and art activities, are beginning to mentally represent objects. Children are able to symbolically represent objects. They focus on one aspect of a situation, and reason from particular to particular. Understands triangle, circle, square; can point to requested shape.</p>	<p>Notice and ask questions about similarities and differences. Experiment with materials in new ways when first way doesn't work. Continue to work on task even when encountering difficulties. Wonder, "what will happen if" and test out possibilities. Apply new information or vocabulary to an activity or interaction. Sort a group of objects by one property and then another. Use comparative words related to number, size, shape, texture, weight, color, speed, volume; create simple patterns of own design. Understand and use positional words. Place objects in one-to-one correspondence, count correctly (up to 10 or so) when touching or handling object for each number. Indicate if paired words sound the same or different: sheet/feet, ball/wall. Near end of year, can name 18-20 uppercase letters and write several. Print own name; recognize some printed words (especially those that have special meaning to the child).</p>

Social/Emotional			
Infant (Birth – 12 months)	2 – 3 Year olds	3-4 Year Olds	4-5 Year Olds
<p>Children develop attachments, trust, learn to smile socially, recognize familiar people and their own self in mirrors. Children will explore their environment in the presence of caregivers. Children become socially competent individuals. When a child's needs are met consistently, trust, love, and security develop. Children develop and maintain a trusting relationship with the same primary caregiver.</p> <p>Toddler (12 – 24 months) Children experience stranger anxiety, look for caregivers' response in uncertain situations, express affection to others, imitate others behaviors, engage more in parallel play and simple interaction with others, test limits, strive for independence, and are egocentric. Children develop identity and a sense of self. They also realize they are separate individuals from their caregivers and environment.</p>	<p>Children are protective of their possessions, want to be independent, are self-centered, they play near and watch other children, occasionally joining in play with others, and they begin to engage in imaginative and dramatic play. They say no often. Children develop social skills (getting along with others).</p>	<p>Children have difficulty sharing and taking turns, are beginning to show self-control, need help resolving conflicts, express sympathy, enjoy humor, begin to get bossy but also learn to play cooperatively, want to please adults, show aggression, and love living things. Engage in make-belief play alone and with others. Children's peers become increasingly important and they need to develop a positive self-concept. They may continue to have a special blanket, stuffed animal, or toy for comfort.</p>	<p>Treat arrival and departure as routine parts of day. Regard parents and teachers as resources and positive role models. Are able to describe feelings and their cause. Assert own feelings and desires verbally without being confrontational. Complete multiple tasks of own choosing with some adult assistance. Use self-help skills and participate in chores without reminders. Put away materials from one play activity before starting another. Understand and follows classroom rules and procedures without prompting. Outgoing, friendly, overly enthusiastic at times. Moods change rapidly and unpredictably; laughing one minute, crying the next. May throw tantrum over minor frustrations (a block structure that will not balance); sulk over being left out. Imaginary playmates are common; hold conversations and strong emotions with invisible friend.</p>

Self Help Skills

Infant (Birth – 12 months)	2 – 3 Year Olds	3-4 Year Olds	4-5 Year Olds
<p>Children’s needs are met by caregivers. Begin to encourage older infants to feed themselves and drink from a cup. Children develop trust and security as needs are met on a regular basis. Older infants develop self-esteem and independence.</p> <p>Toddler (12 – 24 months) Children are still working on feeding themselves with a fork and spoon and drinking from a cup. They can finger feed with ease. Children develop self-esteem, independence and a positive attitude on feeding themselves, as well as fine motor skills.</p>	<p>Children can feed themselves, wash and dry their hands with assistance, and are beginning to be or are toilet trained. Children develop self-esteem, independence and fine motor skills. Children also learn to count objects and follow simple directions (cognitive).</p>	<p>Children can button and unbutton, zip and unzip, set the table and serve themselves. They are better at undressing than dressing. They take care of toilet needs in daytime. Children develop self-confidence as they are able to do things for themselves. Feed self independently. Can pour milk and juice with fewer spills.</p>	<p>Take care of own toileting needs; often demands privacy in bathroom. Dress self; can lace shoes, button buttons, buckle belts. Get frustrated if problems arise in getting dressed while stubbornly refusing adult help.</p>

Part Two – Learning Outcome Clusters

Definition of readiness for success in school

Readiness is built upon the foundation of early development and learning experiences that meet individual needs developmentally, culturally, and linguistically.

As a result of family nurturing and positive interactions with others, young children reach appropriate levels of general knowledge of physical and motor development, social and emotional development, language development, cognitive development and of a level of general knowledge that are essential for success in kindergarten and beyond. Kindergarten readiness as a philosophy acknowledges individual approaches toward learning, as well as the unique experiences and backgrounds of each child.

Definition of curriculum and assessment (summarized from NAEYC and NAESC/SDE):

Curriculum is an organized framework that delineates the content children are to learn, the processes through which children achieve the identified curricular goals, what teachers do to help children achieve these goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occur. The early childhood profession defines curriculum in its broadest sense, encompassing prevailing theories, approaches, and models.

Assessment is the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting the work children do and why they do it. It is the basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child, including planning for groups and individual children, and communication with parents. Assessment encompasses the many forms of evaluation available to educational decision makers. Assessment in the service of curriculum and learning requires teachers to observe and analyze regularly what the children are doing in light of content goals and the learning processes.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) & National Association of Early Childhood Specialist in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). (1992) Guidelines for appropriate curriculum and assessment in programs serving children ages 3 through 8. *Young Children*, 46(3), 21-38.

Purpose

Learning Outcomes for New Mexico's PreK programs have been developed to provide early childhood educators with a framework to use in planning quality curriculum. Identifying the needed skills (indicators) maximizes the potential for school success and promotes a smooth transition to kindergarten.

Rationale

Children entering kindergarten come with a variety of preschool and home experiences, and accordingly, with varying levels of school readiness. Providing children with a strong start significantly contributes to their long-term development and learning success.

This document defines a vision for school success and describes the indicators appropriate for five-year-olds entering kindergarten. Current research on the important role of brain development, early literacy, and social-emotional competencies was used to set the indicators at a level to promote optimum readiness for school success.

Using this document

The indicators that accompany each outcome provide some of the many ways that growth, development, and learning can occur in the context of the concrete and meaningful learning experiences that characterize a stimulating learning environment for young children. The indicators should never be used to delay entry of children who are age eligible to participate in kindergarten programs.

Early childhood educators are advised to use the learning outcomes in combination with developmentally appropriate practice in order to make informed decisions regarding preschool curriculum and individualized learning needs. Appropriate early childhood assessment methods include observation, developmental checklists linked to curriculum, portfolios and parent interviews. Periodic assessment helps determine where each child's skills are on a continuum of development. This provides early educators with the information they need in order to provide individualized learning. Educators can then plan high quality learning experiences designed to promote the development of school readiness skills, especially in programs that serve children at-risk, including those with disabilities.

The current focus on academic readiness has the potential to promote inappropriate instructional practice through "push down" of elementary school curriculum into preschool. Early childhood educators need an understanding of child development, the developmental continuum for birth to five year olds, developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment practices as well as early childhood teaching pedagogy to ensure that appropriate methods are used to promote children's development and learning.

Structure of the Learning Outcomes

The Learning Outcomes are organized into 7 clusters, which relate directly to New Mexico K-12 Content Standards. These learning outcome clusters are designed to be interdependent and must be considered as a whole for pre-kindergarten children.

- Health and Well-Being
- Literacy
- Numeracy and Spatial Relationships
- Aesthetic/Creativity
- Scientific/Conceptual Understanding

- Self, Family and Community
- Approaches Toward Learning

Each cluster includes the following:

- **Learning Outcomes** – competencies children should demonstrate as a result of high-quality PreK experiences
- **Indicators** – skills, behaviors and abilities that assist children in achieving the learning outcomes

Resources

This document incorporates information and perspectives from a wide array of resources, including:

- National Head Start Child Outcomes Framework
- New Mexico's K-12 Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards
- New Mexico Performance Standards and Benchmarks for Three and Four Old Children
- Standards from other states, including Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, Rhode Island and Wyoming
- *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children*, a joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) 1998
- *Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success*, a joint position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialist in State Departments of Education
- *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, Dodge, Colker, & Heroman
- *Developmental Profiles: Pre-birth Through Eight*. Allen & Marotz
- *Early Childhood Education: Standards for Quality Programs for Young Children*. National Association of Elementary School Principals
- *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*. Snow, Burns, and Guffin
- *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*, NAEYC

Health and Well-Being

During the preschool years, children's physical growth and maturation are important aspects of their overall development. Young children's future health and well-being are directly related to the development and strengthening of their large and small muscles. During the pre-kindergarten period the development of gross and fine motor skills serve as the foundation for the development of future academic skills such as writing and reading. Motor development involves muscle control. Fine motor control or small muscle movement, refers to such abilities as manipulation of materials and tools, hand dominance, and eye-hand coordination. Gross motor control or large muscle movement, refers to such characteristics as balance, coordination, purposeful control, and stability of body movements and functions.

Children represent their thoughts and feelings through movement. They use their bodies to investigate people, places, objects, and events. They move just for the pleasure of it. As children explore, combine, and refine these physical movements, they develop the higher-order thinking skills necessary for future social and academic success.

Physical well-being, health, and safety activities should be integrated into all curricular areas. Activities should be structured to encourage pre-kindergarten children to explore their world, promote agility and strength, enhance neural processing, and develop general body competence and overall autonomy. Young children should be introduced to concepts that promote a healthy lifestyle, and should be provided adequate age-appropriate indoor and outdoor space and facilities that allow them to experience a variety of developmentally appropriate physical activities.

Physical well-being means that basic needs have been met: food, clothing, shelter, and regular health and dental care. A healthy child whose basic needs have been met is able to focus on, and/or engage in, experiences crucial to the learning process.

Both phases of this dimension are aided by a child's knowledge of dietary practices that promote good nutrition, for example, eating a variety of foods at regular meals. A child should also know how to use personal hygiene practices that result in cleanliness and good grooming, such as, brushing teeth, combing hair, and washing hands before eating. The goal for all children is full participation. Good physical health and motor development allow for full participation in learning experiences. Children with a disability receive specific accommodations, which permit them to participate fully at his/her own level.

Area	Outcome	Indicator
Physical Development, Health and Well-Being	#1 The child independently uses gross motor control including balance, spatial awareness and stability.	<p>1.1 Exhibits body coordination and strength in activities such as climbing stairs with alternating feet, marching, running, jumping, hopping, dancing, riding tricycles and scooters.</p> <p>1.2 Exhibits balance and spatial awareness in many situations (running and stopping, climbing, ball handling, and/or simple group games, i.e., "Duck, Duck, Goose").</p>
	#2 The child independently uses fine motor skills.	<p>2.1 Is developing manual coordination to use cutting and writing tools and demonstrate self-help skills such as buttoning and zipping.</p> <p>2.2 Coordinates eye-hand movements using beads, laces, pegs, puzzles and other manipulatives and small objects.</p> <p>2.3 Holds writing tool in pincer grasp to draw, scribble write, make letter-like shapes and/or letters.</p>
	#3 The child's behavior demonstrates health and hygiene skills.	<p>3.1 Shows increasing awareness of hygiene in handwashing, toileting, and/or dental hygiene.</p> <p>3.2 Shows increasing awareness of healthy lifestyle practices (that healthy bodies need nutritious foods, exercise and physical activity and rest).</p>
	#4 The child demonstrates safe behaviors in increasing numbers of situations.	<p>4.1 Identifies potentially harmful objects, substances and behaviors.</p> <p>4.2 Increasingly follow classroom, school and safety rules most of the time.</p>

Outcomes and Indicators supported by development in the domains: motor, physical, cognitive, language, social

*Aligns with Head Start Child Outcome: Domain 8 – Fine Motor Skills, Health Status and Practices

*Foundation for Kindergarten Content Standard: Physical Education 1 & 4



Literacy

According to the 1998 joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), pre-kindergarten children need developmentally appropriate experiences and teaching to support literacy learning. These include, but are not limited to:

- Positive, nurturing relationships with adults who engage in responsive conversations with individual children, model reading and writing behavior, and foster children's interest in and enjoyment of reading and writing;
- Print-rich environments that provide opportunities and tools for children to see and use written language for a variety of purposes, with teachers drawing children's attention to specific letters and words;
- Adult's daily reading of high-quality books to individual children or small groups, including books that positively reflect children's identity, home language, and culture;
- Opportunities for children to talk about what is read and to focus on the sounds and parts of language as well as the meaning;
- Teaching strategies and experiences that form phonemic awareness, such as songs, finger plays, games, poems, and stories in which phonemic patterns such as rhyme and alliteration are salient;
- Opportunities to engage in play that incorporates literacy tools, such as writing grocery lists in dramatic play, making signs in block building, and using icons and words in exploring computer games; and
- First hand experiences that expand children's vocabulary, such as trips in the community and exposure to various tools, objects, and materials.

Language and literacy are composed of listening, speaking, writing, thinking, and reading. The foundations of language and literacy are critical to all other curriculum areas as well as to the individual's social and emotional development. Children develop the basis for communication in infancy, beginning with nonverbal and social exchanges, by developing spoken language, moving to an understanding of how oral language is translated into written symbols, and then finally learning to decode and create written symbols to develop literacy. A solid foundation in language development in the years before a child enters school will promote success in reading and writing in the future. Young children who have rich language and literacy experiences are less likely to have difficulties learning to read.

The ways in which children learn to read and write are similar to how they develop language. Just as children seem compelled to learn language, children become excited about pictures and letters to communicate. The printed word, whether it is in a storybook or in the environment, is the bridge that allows children to connect their own lives to distant places, quality children's literature, and to new ideas. Through natural exposure to books children discover that written words are another way to share ideas. A child who enters school having recognized the joy of a storybook, a developing awareness of letters of the alphabet, and/or the ability to write a few letters, is a child well prepared to learn to read and write.

Area	Outcome	Indicator
Literacy	#5 The child demonstrates development and expansion of listening skills.	5.1 Listens with understanding to directions and conversations.
		5.2 Follows directions with increasing complexity.
		5.3 Hears and discriminates the sounds of language in words to develop phonological awareness.
		5.4 Demonstrates understanding of new vocabulary introduced in conversations, activities, stories, or books.
	#6 The child communicates experiences, ideas and feelings through speaking.	6.1 Uses an increasingly complex and varied spoken vocabulary and sentence structure in language(s) used for instruction in the program.
		6.2 Asks and answers relevant questions.
		6.3 Engages in conversations that develop a thought or idea.
	#7 The child engages in activities that promote the acquisition of emergent reading skills.	7.1 Demonstrates an interest and enjoyment in books, listening to stories read aloud, and/or looking at books using illustrations or familiar text.
		7.2 Demonstrates comprehension of a story read aloud by asking relevant questions or making pertinent comments.
		7.3 Progresses in understanding and using conventions of reading (including holding book upright, identifying front and back, turning pages correctly, and recognizing that print proceeds from left to right).
		7.4 Progresses in understanding and using concepts of print (including recognizing that letters of the alphabet can be individually named; recognizing letters in own name, classmates' names and environmental print; and/or recognizing words as units of print separated by spaces).
	#8 The child engages in activities that promote the acquisition of emergent writing skills.	8.1 Experiments with a variety of writing tools, materials, and surfaces.
8.2 Demonstrates knowledge that writing and drawing are different and uses early stages of writing in the form of shapes and letter-like symbols to convey ideas.		
8.3 Increasingly attempts to represent meaningful words and print in the environment using the early stages of writing.		

This outcome is supported by development in the following domains: physical, cognitive, motor, social

*Aligns with Head Start Child Outcome: Domains 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7

*Foundation for Kindergarten Language Arts Content Standard: I, II, and III

Numeracy and Spatial Relationships

Numeracy is mathematical literacy that is necessary for people to navigate the mathematical situations presented in every day life. Young children are natural mathematical learners (NAEYC and NCTM, 2002). Children develop mathematical concepts through active engagement in meaningful and purposeful experiences that are broader in scope than numerals and counting. In an inclusive, developmentally appropriate play-based environment, pre-kindergarten children will have opportunities to acquire and understand mathematical skills and concepts using hands-on experiences. They should have access to a wide variety of tools and technologies that foster understanding in real-life situations.

Mathematics helps young children make sense of their world. Children are inclined to make comparisons, notice similarities and differences in objects, and explore relations within their environment. This ability to organize information into categories, quantify data, and solve problems helps children to learn about time, space, and number. Children's exploration of mathematics should not be isolated, but rather imbedded in rich, authentic tasks that allow them to integrate new understanding with language development and other developmentally appropriate learning needs. Mathematics is integrated into all aspects of daily routines.

A child's learning is facilitated by emergent and planned developmentally appropriate math experiences. When children play in the sandbox, cook applesauce, and complete a puzzle, they are engaging in activities that allow them to develop the thinking skills that are naturally used in daily life. Children learn the uses of mathematics to describe and explore relationships among objects and materials in the environment. They increasingly develop the vocabulary and skills to measure, describe patterns, and to express order and position.

Early childhood teachers must be flexible during daily routines and strive to capture teachable moments using open-ended questioning techniques to expand mathematical concepts. These teachers must also facilitate activities that address and extend young children's developmental levels. Achieving and maintaining mathematical literacy is truly a lifelong quest in our world of ever advancing technology.

Area	Outcome	Indicator
Numeracy	#9 The child understands numbers, ways of representing numbers and relationships between quantities and numerals.	9.1 Uses one-to-one correspondence in counting increasingly higher groups of objects 9.2 Uses numbers and counting as a means for solving problems and determining quantity. 9.3 Recognizes some numerals.
	#10 The child demonstrates understanding of geometrical and spatial concepts.	10.1 Recognizes, names, describes, compares and creates familiar shapes. 10.2 Describes and interprets spatial sense and positions.
	#11 The child demonstrates an understanding of non-standard units to measure and make comparisons.	11.1 Compares and uses language relating to time with increasing accuracy. 11.2 Anticipates, remembers, and describes sequence of events with increasing accuracy. 11.3 Uses mathematical language to describe experiences and make comparisons involving measurement with non-standard and/or standard units of measure.
	#12 The child demonstrates the ability to investigate, organize, and create representations.	12.1 Sorts, classifies, and groups materials by one or more characteristics. 12.2 Collects, organizes and begins to represent in some way information about self, surroundings, and meaningful experiences.

This outcome is supported by development in the following domains: motor, cognitive, language, social, physical

*Aligns with Head Start Child Outcome: Domain 3 - Number and Operations, Geometry and Spatial Science, Patterns and Measurement.

*Foundation for Kindergarten Mathematics Content Standard: Strand – Number & Operations Strand, Algebra Strand, Geometry Strand



Aesthetic/Creativity

“The creative arts are our universal language, the language of our imagination, of musicians and dancers, painters and sculptors, storytellers and poets.” (Edwards, 1997)

Creativity is essential for life. During the early years, imagination and creativity are at their height. The arts mobilize the imagination and creative spirit as children seek meaning and reason about their world. The arts invite children to discover who they are and to develop a powerful repertoire of ways to express and represent their ideas, theories, and emotions. As they begin to appreciate the aesthetic dimension of their daily lives, they are inspired to create beauty and joy for themselves and others.

Investigating and appreciating the arts allows children to integrate a variety of domains. The arts provide each child with a vehicle and an organizing framework to express individual ideas, knowledge, and feelings. Music, movement, drama, and visual art stimulate children to use words, manipulate tools and media, and solve problems in ways that are aesthetically pleasing and simultaneously convey meaning.

Through experimenting with sounds, colors, forms, motion, and words, children communicate in ways that are distinctly their own and that reflect their unique approaches to learning. Each painting, dramatic play scenario, and improvised tune provides teachers and families with insights into a child's interests and abilities and allows children to express what they know. In an environment that fosters the arts, children learn to appreciate the contributions of other children and the works of others that reflect different experiences, cultures, and views.

Area	Outcome	Indicator
Aesthetic Creativity	#13 The child demonstrates appreciation for the arts (movement, music, visual and dramatic).	13.1 Communicates ideas and/or feelings through creative activities (for example, making up a song, acting out a story, creating a piece of art work or a set of movements).

This outcome is supported by development in the following domains: motor, cognitive, language, physical, social, emotional

*Aligns with Head Start Child Outcome: Domain 5

*Foundation for Kindergarten Arts Content Standard: 1 and 2

Scientific/Conceptual Understanding

“Our world is a museum, a field trip, a laboratory, and a natural resource, just waiting to be discovered, explored and enjoyed.” (Barbara J. Taylor, 1991)

Young children are natural scientists. They easily become fascinated by everyday happenings. Pre-kindergarten science is a time for discovery (Bredenkamp & Copple, 1997). Their natural curiosity and sense of wonder lead them to observe, question, investigate, and interpret the infinite possibilities of the world around them. They are eager to discover all they can about the world in which they live. Children are immersed in science in their daily lives.

Science concepts need to be concrete, observable, and within the realm of the child’s experience and pre-operational thinking (Piaget & Inhelder, 1967). Through varied and repeated opportunities to observe, manipulate, listen, reflect, problem solve, make inferences, and respond to open-ended questions, pre-kindergartners form new understandings, gain interests, and become life-long learners. As they come to see, appreciate, and respect the interconnectedness of the universe, children are inspired to become responsible citizens of the earth.

Quality early childhood science programs require a balance of content and process, using multi-sensory experiences. In addition to science inquiry skills, pre-kindergartners can begin to acquire a foundation of scientific concepts and knowledge on which they can build a clear understanding of their world. Pre-kindergarten children learn science concepts through active play and exploration of the environment. Early childhood teachers can facilitate discovery by inviting questions, asking open-ended questions, encouraging hands-on experiences, and providing opportunities to experiment and observe the world. Teachers should look for opportunities to explore scientific concepts in all content areas.

Area	Outcome	Indicator
Scientific Conceptual Under-Standings	#14 The child uses the scientific method to investigate the physical and natural worlds and to hypothesize and make predictions.	14.1 Uses senses to investigate characteristics and behaviors in the physical and natural worlds and begins to form explanations of observations and explorations.
		14.2 Asks questions about the physical and natural worlds.
		14.3 Makes predictions and forms hypotheses.
#15 The child acquires scientific knowledge related to life sciences.	15.1 Explores, observes, and describes a variety of living things and distinguishes from non-living things.	
#16 The child acquires scientific knowledge related to earth science.	15.2 Explores, observes, describes, and participates in a variety of activities related to preserving the environment.	
#16 The child acquires scientific knowledge related to earth science.	16.1 Investigates, compares, and contrasts seasonal and weather changes in the immediate environment.	

This outcome is supported by development in the following domains: motor, physical, social, cognitive, emotional, language

*Aligns with Head Start Child Outcome: Domain 4 and 5

*Foundation for Kindergarten Science Content Standard: 1-9, 10-A, 11-A, 12-A, 13-A, C, D and E.



Self, Family and Community

“How young children view themselves is as important as how children think.”
(Mary Louise Hemmeter)

Social and emotional development is the critical foundation to lifelong learning and well-being. Research clearly indicates that children who develop self-confidence and positive social skills early in life are more successful learners later on (The National Academies, *Eager to Learn, NRC, 2001a; Neurons to Neighborhoods, 2000; Katz & McClennan; Ladd, 1990*). This competence is nurtured in an environment that affirms children as individuals and as participants in their community.

Social-emotional growth and learning develops through interactions with others and is interconnected to other domains of development, such as cognitive and physical development. Social relationships between adults and children exert a powerful influence on children’s development. Children initially learn about themselves and how to behave from their families, but they are also influenced by peers and other adults in early childhood settings (Kagan, 2000).

For young children the foundation for learning in social studies and history begins with the child’s personal experiences and understanding of the relationship of self to home and family. Their understanding then gradually expands to include the people they meet in their school, neighborhood, community, and the larger world. Teachers need to identify children’s current knowledge and understanding. The pre-kindergarten curriculum needs to focus on concepts that are related to the child’s immediate experience. The literature indicates that children need emotionally warm and positive environments with teachers who nurture self-concept, independence, and self-control in order to be successful learners (Berk, 2001).

Area	Outcome	Indicator
Self, Family and Community	#17 The child exhibits self-awareness.	17.1 Expresses needs and/or stands up for own rights.
		17.2 Makes choices and expresses likes and dislikes.
		17.3 Identifies own gender, family and culture.
	#18 The child demonstrates self-control.	18.1 Adapts behavior to fit different situations (for example, accepts transitions, follows daily routines and/or incorporates cultural expectations).
		18.2 Increasingly expresses feelings through appropriate gestures, actions, and language.
	#19 The child demonstrates personal responsibility.	19.1 Cares for personal and group possessions.
19.2 Begins to accept the consequences of his or her own actions.		

Area	Outcome	Indicator
Self, Family and Community	#20 The child works cooperatively with other children and adults.	20.1 Plays and interacts with various children, sharing experiences and ideas with others.
		20.2 Uses and accepts negotiation, compromise, and discussion to resolve conflicts.
	#21 The child develops relationships of mutual trust and respect with others.	21.1 Respects the rights of others recognizing their feelings and increasingly responding with courtesy and kindness.
		21.2 Accepts guidance and direction from a variety of familiar adults and seeks their support when needed.
		21.3 Demonstrates an increasing understanding and acceptance of similarities and differences among people, such as gender, race, special needs, culture, language, and family structures.
	#22 The child demonstrates knowledge of neighborhood and community.	22.1 Identifies, discusses and dramatizes duties of a variety of common community occupations.
	22.2 Sees self as a citizen in a democratic classroom community and the community at large by increasingly contributing to group decisions and responsibilities.	

This outcome is supported by development in the following domains: social, emotional, cognitive, language, motor

*Aligns with Head Start Child Outcome: Domain 6

*Foundation for Kindergarten Social Studies Content Standard: 3-A-2, 6-G-2, 2-B-1

Approaches Toward Learning

All children, regardless of innate abilities or the presence of disabilities are able to learn and be successful. How a child acquires and understands knowledge and applies that knowledge in meaningful ways depends upon the child's unique approach to learning.

How a child approaches learning is influenced by the following:

- openness to and curiosity about new tasks and challenges,
- willingness to take initiative,
- ability for task persistence and attentiveness,
- reflection and interpretation of experiences, imagination, creativity and problem solving skills,
- individual temperament, and
- family and community support for curiosity and children's autonomy.

Each young child's approaches toward learning are unique. Cultural background and experiences contribute to a child's approach to tasks and should be validated and respected. A well-planned learning environment, carefully designed activities, and positive teacher/child interactions support children's willingness to explore their environment, try new experiences and gain persistence in completing projects. Adults must insure that every child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills to a new level of mastery.

Area	Outcome	Indicator
Approaches to Learning	#23 The child is open and curious to learn new things.	23.1 Demonstrates eagerness to find out more about other people. 23.2 Shows interest in exploring the environment, learning new things and trying new experiences.
	#24 The child takes initiative.	24.1 Initiates interaction with peers and adults. 24.2 Develops increasing independence during activities, routines, and play.
	#25 The child exhibits imagination and creativity.	25.1 Tries new ways of doing things. 25.2 Uses imagination to generate a variety of ideas. 25.3 Role plays to express feelings, to dramatize stories, to try out social behaviors observed in adults, and reenact real-life roles and experiences.
	#26 The child shows confidence.	26.1 Demonstrates increasing self-confidence through interactions with others.
	#27 The child displays persistence and pursues challenges.	27.1 Focuses and completes a variety of tasks, activities, projects, and experiences. 27.2 Demonstrates resiliency and coping skills when faced with challenges (i.e., concentrates despite distractions and interruptions and/or increasingly manages own frustration levels).
	#28 The child uses problem solving skills.	28.1 Recognizes and solves problems through observation, active exploration, trial and error, and interactions and discussions with peers and adults.

This outcome is supported by development in the following domains: cognitive, social, emotional, language

*Aligns with Head Start Child Outcome: Domain 7

*Foundation for Kindergarten Performance Standard: NA

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Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

Teachers must promote the inclusion of children with disabilities and developmental delays with their peers in regular classroom activities. Emphasizing what children can do and enjoy doing builds their confidence. Children with disabilities and developmental delays need support just like their typically developing peers to participate as fully as possible in all areas of the preschool curriculum.

In inclusion programs, the classroom environment, teacher interactions, and/or materials and equipment may have to be modified to enable children with disabilities to participate with their peers. Classroom teachers need to plan and/or modify activities depending on the learning needs or strengths of each individual child. Thoughtful adaptation of activities will allow children with disabilities and developmental delays to participate with their peers to the fullest extent possible.

Adaptations for Children with Disabilities

Note: These are just a few suggestions for adaptations. Consult more comprehensive resources to make sure the curriculum and classroom are adapted appropriately for children with different disabilities. Many of these strategies are also helpful for children without disabilities and for English language learners.

For children with vision disabilities:

- Place direct lighting over work areas and locate art area near bright indirect light to assist children with visual disability.
- Make sure children identify themselves before speaking.
- Use thick cord taped to the floor to mark children's personal space.
- Use art materials that provide texture (e.g., gel paint that dries with a raised surface; tempera paint with sand added); high contrast paper (light, dark, shiny, sparkling); bold colors that are easy to differentiate.
- Provide materials with Braille and tactile symbols along with opportunities for development of tactile skills.

For children with hearing disabilities

- Use visual pictures and symbols to illustrate words to songs.
- Provide visual cues such as red and green cards to indicate that the drumbeat or music has started or stopped.
- Face children and tap out the rhythm on a drum in their view; invite them to feel the drum.
- Invite children to sit near the speaker or lean against the piano to feel the vibration as music is played. Also increase the bass.
- Create "story boxes" for familiar stories. For example, place props of the story *The Three Little Pigs* in a box. When the story is read aloud, the props offer both tactile cues for the words being read, and the opportunity to act out story components. In this way concepts that might be available only by seeing or hearing will be made more meaningful while also allowing children more direct involvement with the story. These strategies enhance the activity for all children, not just those with a disability.

For children with language disabilities:

- Provide good models of communication (in any language).
- Use special or adaptive devices to increase a child's level of communication and/or participation.
- Use a favorite toy, activity, technology, or person to encourage communication and/or participation.
- Use a variety of symbols (tactual symbols, object symbols, picture symbols such as Mayer Johnson pictures) around the room along with various printed materials that support children's primary languages while they are learning English (e.g., books, newspapers, magazines in the dramatic play area).
- Arrange the room to encourage language and conversations (e.g., tables pulled away from walls so that children sit or stand opposite each other).

For children with physical disabilities:

- Use adaptive equipment and furniture so children can participate in all parts of the curriculum, small and large group activities, circle time, etc., along with their peers.
- Ensure that room space allows for wheelchairs, walkers or other equipment so that children using them can move about the room safely and independently.
- Use adaptive equipment on the playground so that children can play with their peers and benefit from physical exercise.
- Make sure that the classroom is arranged so that toys, games, dramatic play and art materials are equally accessible for all children.

Suggested Resources:

Gould, P. & Sullivan, J., (1999). *The Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom: Easy ways to adapt learning centers for all children*. Beltsville, MD, Gryphon House, Inc.

Sandall, S. & Schwartz, I., (2002). *Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs*: Baltimore, MD, Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENTATION

(Adapted from New Jersey)

Assessment of young children is an ongoing process that documents evidence of early learning, in order to make informed instructional decisions. This evidence may include anecdotal records of children's conversations and behaviors, small and large group situations, samples of art work and drawings, photographs, recordings or other records of children engaged in activities and play.

Documentation, a preliminary stage in the assessment process, focuses on identifying, collecting, and describing the evidence of learning in an objective, nonjudgmental manner. Teachers should, on a regular basis, take the time to track children's emerging skills, identify learning goals, and share the information with colleagues. Based on this information, new curriculum strategies may be generated or additional questions be posed. Careful documentation and assessment can increase the teacher's understanding of normal child development, assist in understanding the needs of the children in a specific class, and enhance the teacher's ability to reflect on the instructional program.

Purpose of Assessment in Preschool Education

The primary purpose of the assessment of young children is to help educators determine appropriate activities for individuals and groups of children.

The documentation/assessment process should do the following:

- Build on multiple forms of evidence of the child's learning,
- Take place over a period of time,
- Reflect the understanding of groups, as well as of individual children, and
- Reflect sensitivity to each child's special needs, home language, learning style, and developmental stage.

The information from the documentation/assessment process should do the following:

- Connect to developmentally appropriate learning goals,
- Add to an understanding of the child's growth and development,
- Provide information that can be applied directly to instructional planning, and
- Be communicated with the child's family and special personnel, when appropriate.

Importance of the Documentation/Assessment Process for Teachers' Professional Development

Teachers who use the documentation/assessment process enhance their ability to do the following:

- Respond easier and more effectively to demands for accountability,
- Teach more effectively, using interactive experiences that enhance children's development,
- Make more productive instructional decisions (e.g., how to set up the classroom, what to do next, what questions to ask, what resources to provide, how to stimulate each child's development, and what external support systems are required),
- Meet more of the children's special needs within the classroom. The ongoing process of identifying, collecting, describing, interpreting, and applying classroom-based evidence can help the teacher to become more aware of and develop a broader repertoire of instructional strategies, and
- Identify the most appropriate learning experiences for children.

The documentation/assessment process can also help young children to perceive learning to be important and worthwhile as they see their teachers actively engaged in documenting their learning.

Portfolio Documentation

Portfolio assessment is the systematic and intentional collection and documentation of significant samples of children's work. The portfolio process should clearly indicate the learning goals, illustrate and document the children's development over a period of time, actively involve children, and reflect each child's individual development based on expectations of the child for the year.

Some strategies for portfolio documentation are as follows:

- Determine the developmental areas to be assessed (e.g., spoken language, art, early literacy, symbolic play, motor skills, math concepts, creativity, and peer relationships),
- Identify the documents which best demonstrate development (e.g., drawings, paintings, other art work, photos, dictated stories, book choices, teacher's notes, audio/video tapes, graphs, and checklists),
- Regularly create a collection of samples with children's input (i.e., record what the children tell you about a variety of things),
- Develop a storage system for the samples of children's work,
- Describe the documentation with colleagues in order to gain additional perspectives on the child's development. Study groups of teachers can be formed to collect and describe samples of children's work,
- Connect the children's work to the learning outcomes,
- Identify any learning gaps in the development story. Make sure the samples show the full range of what each child can do, and
- Collect data that tells a clear story to the audience.

Observation

Observation of young children is critical in the documentation and assessment process. However, observation is a skill that must be developed and perfected by the teacher over time. In the process of observing children, teachers can make use of the following techniques: rating forms, photography, narrative description, anecdotes, videotaping, journals, and the conversations of individual children and groups. Observation must be intentional. As part of the daily classroom routine, it is probably the most authentic form of assessment. Observing children in the daily preschool experience is the best place to start when creating a real-life profile of the child.

What to observe:

- Dispositions (trends in behavior or activity that reflect particular learning styles and motivators);
- Coping strategies (i.e., notice how the child solves a problem);
- Social interactions, including withdrawal or isolation (i.e., determine the child's place in the group); and
- Key attributes of the child (i.e., identify and list interests and play patterns).

How to observe:

- Regularly, with a specific purpose;
- At different times of the day;
- In different settings throughout the school or center;
- The usual demeanor of the child, not the unusual behavior or bad days; and
- For new possibilities. If a child is having trouble, could the environment or circumstances be changed to assist the child?

The Parents

Parents should be partners in the accurate and sensitive assessment of young children. The following practices help encourage parental involvement in child assessments:

- Accentuate the positive when discussing children;
- Talk about child observations informally, during everyday conversations with parents;
- Explain assessment approaches at a parent meeting or workshop. Be clear about the differences between standardized tests and authentic assessment;
- Write about assessment in a newsletter or a special letter home;
- Demonstrate that parents are respected partners in the documentation of behavior and progress of child, and
- Support comments with documentation showing what the child has accomplished over time.

The Children

Everyone has a view of a child's abilities, preferences, and behaviors, including the child. To effectively involve the children in their own assessment do the following:

- Observe and document things the children say and do. Often random statements such as, "I was this big my last birthday, now I'm THIS big" are evidence that children are capable of assessing what they can do and how they are changing.
- Ask children about themselves. Children will tell you what they do and do not like to do. Some children may be pleased by a conference-like situation in which they have your undivided attention, while others may respond to more informal discussions.
- Ask children to assess their work. Ask children to help decide which work should be included in their portfolio. Respect their choices and responses about their work.
- Let children take pictures of their most prized work from time to time. They can make a bulletin board display of their specially chosen picture portfolio.

Achievement Tests

Individual and group-administered norm referenced tests are usually inappropriate tools for assessing young children's development. Such instruments are not typically designed to provide information on how children learn, how they might apply their learning to real life situations, or how the test results relate to the teacher's instructional goals and planning. Instructional planning should be grounded in the evidence of children's learning that reflects their activities as closely as possible, such as records of their language and samples of their work.

Developmental Screening Measures

At times, the typical preschool instructional program may not be adequate in supporting a specific child's development. Individual developmental screening measures may be used to identify children who have major impediments to learning, such as problems in the development of language, or with vision, or hearing. In such cases, the results of screening measures should be used to determine whether a child needs further more comprehensive diagnostic assessment.

Referral for an Evaluation

When a parent or a teacher has a concern and suspects a potential disability, a written referral to the district's child study team should occur. The child may be eligible for special education. The parent, preschool teacher, and the team meet to determine the need for evaluation and discuss the assessments to be completed. After completion of the evaluation and a determination of eligibility, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. In addition to special education personnel, the team always includes the parent and the preschool teacher. The team will determine what types of support are necessary such as modifications in the classroom or special education services. To the maximum extent appropriate, preschoolers with disabilities should receive their preschool education with their peers.