JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

October 25, 2004

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Chairman

SUBJECT: Information on Plan to Accept Comment on *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten*

On November 5, 1986, the State Board of Education approved the document, *Standards of Quality and Curriculum Guidelines for Preschool Programs for Four Year Olds.* The purpose of that document was to provide the framework for the design and implementation of a high-quality preschool program targeted to four year olds at risk of school failure. That document has provided the foundation for our highly successful Michigan School Readiness Program, the state prekindergarten program targeted at four year olds at risk of school failure, now serving almost 26,000 children each year, 19 percent of all four-year-old children in Michigan. Recognizing the value and need for quality early childhood education programs for children four through eight years old, the Michigan State Board of Education appointed another committee to develop *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten through Second Grade*, and adopted those standards on December 15, 1992. Although used broadly, many of the recommendations were applicable to public school districts because of the wide age range covered. At the same time, procedural safeguards and other rules were adopted for Early Childhood Special Education (formerly Pre-Primary Impaired, PPI) classrooms.

In August 2002, the Michigan State Board of Education adopted the report of its Task Force on Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy. The report directed the Department of Education to develop a single document, including expectations for young children's development and learning, and quality standards defining programs that would allow them to reach those expectations. It had become apparent that a document was needed that focused only on children ages three and four, and the programs that serve them. Varying program standards made inclusion of targeted groups of children in some programs difficult. Federal requirements for early childhood opportunities for states also supported the need for a revision of the current documents.

In January 2003, Michigan embarked on a journey to develop a comprehensive early childhood system, with the vision of "A Great Start for every child in Michigan: safe, healthy, and eager to succeed in school and in life." The alignment between the Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and Governor Granholm and her administration has created a tremendous

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opportunity to move this important issue further ahead. As the work has unfolded, it has become clear that expectations for young children's learning and quality program standards beyond child care licensing rules are a critical foundation for all of the system.

In response to these requests, the Department of Education convened an interagency group to lead the development of this new document, *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten*. The State Board of Education appointed an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee of more than 80 individuals who have spent almost a year and countless hours on this work. Attachment A is the product of those efforts. The draft has been reviewed by the Advisory Committee, several offices within the Department of Education and our interagency partners, and by additional members of some selected organizations represented on the Advisory Committee. Attachment B is a plan to accept broad public comment on the proposed revised document. After the period of public comment and meetings, the Steering Committee will reconvene to consider the comments. A final recommendation on adoption of the revised standards is expected for the January or February 2005 State Board of Education meeting, depending on the extent of revisions based on the public comment.

The Department and interagency partners have begun the process to develop a parallel document to address the development and learning of younger children, birth to age three, to continue the recommendations of the Task Force on Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy and the needs of our interagency partners.

Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten

Draft for Public Comment
November 9, 2004

Michigan State Board of Education

Table of Contents

Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten

DRAFT

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Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten

Introduction

This document stands on the shoulders of earlier efforts by the Michigan State Board of Education and its partners to define quality programs for young children and the learning that might be expected of them. On November 5, 1986, the State Board of Education approved the document, *Standards of Quality and Curriculum Guidelines for Preschool Programs for Four Year Olds.* The purpose of that document was to provide the framework for the design and implementation of a high-quality preschool program targeted to four year olds at-risk of school failure.

Recognizing the value and need for quality early childhood education programs for children four through eight years old, the Michigan State Board of Education appointed another committee to develop *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten through Second Grade*, and adopted those standards on December 15, 1992. Although used broadly, many of the recommendations were most applicable to public school districts because of the wide age range covered. At about the same time, procedural safeguards and other rules were adopted for Early Childhood Special Education (formerly Pre-Primary Impaired, PPI) classrooms.

In August 2002, the Michigan State Board of Education adopted the report of its Task Force on Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy. The report directed the Department of Education to develop a single document, including expectations for young children's development and learning, and quality standards defining programs that would allow them to reach those expectations. It had become apparent that a document was needed that focused specifically on three- and four-year-old children and on the programs that serve them. Varying program standards had made inclusion of targeted groups of children in some programs difficult. Federal requirements for early childhood opportunities for states also supported the need for a revision of the current documents.

In January 2003, Michigan embarked on a journey to develop a comprehensive early childhood system with the vision of "A Great Start for every child in Michigan: safe, healthy, and eager to succeed in school and in life." As the work unfolded, it became clear that expectations for young children's learning and for quality program standards beyond child care licensing rules were a critical foundation for all of the system.

In response to these requests, the Department of Education convened an interagency group to lead the development of this new document, *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten*. The State Board of Education appointed an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee of more than 80 individuals who spent almost a year and countless hours on this work. The Advisory Committee hoped that the document would result in:

- The development of cohesive standards that integrate and align all early childhood programs as a foundation for all children's well-being.
- Plans for professional development of early childhood staff so that all children have access to qualified staff.

- A framework for an accountable early childhood system that would include assessments of children's learning and of program quality.
- Partnerships among professionals, families, and communities as full partners in children's school and life success.
- The definition of and support for best practices in early childhood programs.
- Promotion of public awareness of the standards and their implementation.

Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten is meant to provide guidance to all early care and education programs and thus provide all children in Michigan with opportunities to reach essential developmental and educational goals. Young children's development and learning are highly dependent upon their relationships and environments. Carefully developed early learning expectations linked to K-12 expectations can contribute to a more cohesive, unified approach to young children's education. This new document, *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten,* includes both *Quality Program Standards for Preschool and Prekindergarten Programs* and *Early Learning Expectations for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children*. Clear research-based expectations for the content and desired results of early learning experiences can help focus curriculum and instruction. By defining the content and outcomes for young children's education, the early learning expectations will lead to greater opportunities for preschoolers' positive development. Alignment with *K-12 Grade Level Content Expectations* will result in better transitions to formal schooling.

Definition of a single set of *Early Learning Expectations* does not mean that every three- or four-year-old child's development and learning will be the same as every other child's development and learning. Learning in the early years is characterized by variability, dependent on experience, and connected across domains. Similarly, definition of a single set of *Quality Program Standards* does not imply that every preschool/prekindergarten classroom in Michigan will look the same. A variety of curricula, methodology, and program implementation strategies are required to meet the needs of the diversity of children and to provide choices to meet families' goals and preferences. The wide framework of the standards, based on research and the range of opportunities for programs to meet those standards will ensure a continuum of services to support Michigan's young children.

When *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten* is implemented and utilized as a complete document, the State Board of Education believes that Michigan will enable its early childhood settings to reach even higher quality, that our children will have opportunities to achieve the expectations we have set for them, and that we will achieve our vision of "A Great Start" for them all.

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Quality Program Standards for Preschool and Prekindergarten Programs

Quality Program Standards for
Preschool and Prekindergarten Programs
Introduction

The 1986 blue-covered document, *Standards of Quality and Curriculum Guidelines for Preschool Programs for Four Year Olds*, was adopted as Michigan began its first targeted state prekindergarten program for four-year-old children at risk of school failure. The "blue standards" included a set of critical elements and components used at that time to determine quality in early childhood programs and thought to predict positive results for children. The standards articulated what the State Board of Education considered necessary for preschool programs to be successful, and have been used continuously as the prekindergarten program grew into the Michigan School Readiness Program. Monitoring instruments and self-assessment protocols leading to a continuous improvement planning process were developed and implemented based on the standards. Although the State Board of Education and the Department of Education distributed the "blue standards" and supporting documents widely, they were never required for programs other than the Michigan School Readiness Program.

In 1992, the orange-covered document, *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten through Second Grade*, including voluntary standards for classrooms designed for children ages four through eight, was adopted by the State Board of Education. Although meant to apply to many early childhood programs, much of the language was specific to public school districts because age range covered included the early elementary grades. The "orange standards" were required for a few grant programs, and many school districts had great success in implementing programs based on the document.

At the same time, procedural safeguards and special education regulations were developed for Early Childhood Special Education (formerly Pre-Primary Impaired, PPI) classrooms for children ages three through five, funded through Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Confusion in the early childhood world about which set of State Board of Education program standards applied to which program (or should apply) became apparent. Inconsistent program standards made inclusion of children of differing backgrounds and characteristics difficult. Simultaneously, efforts in state government to improve quality in all programs, beyond the minimums required by early childhood/child care licensing, brought together a large group to redefine high quality program standards.

This document represents a first effort in Michigan to address and reconcile the differences in early childhood classroom programs. It raises the expectations for programs for all children, regardless of their development, learning difficulties, cultural differences and/or disabilities. The standards in this section of the document are meant to provide a description of quality in all classroom programs (but not family or child care home programs) for three- and four-year-old children, regardless of sponsorship or funding. Each program standard is followed by a list of statements that illustrate a variety of ways that a quality program may demonstrate that it meets the standard. A particular program will reflect some, but probably not all, of the items that

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demonstrate each standard. Funding stipulations may require programs to meet particular standards in specific ways.   Programs funded for targeted populations may have required components to meet the standards. Implementation documents, manuals, funding applications, and the like provide additional guidance to those programs.

The quality standards are meant to describe the characteristics of classroom preschool/prekindergarten programs that can provide all children with experiences and opportunities that allow them to meet the *Early Learning Expectations* defined in a later section of this document.

The Program's Statement of Philosophy

A quality early childhood program begins with an underlying theory or statement of fundamental beliefs—beliefs about why it exists, what it will accomplish, and how it will serve all the children and their families involved in the program. The philosophy establishes a framework for program decisions and provides direction for goal-setting and program implementation, the foundation upon which all activities are based.

The philosophy statement guides decisions about how the program:
- Employs a qualified and nurturing staff who use developmentally appropriate practices.
- Establishes a warm, stimulating, and multi-sensory environment filled with developmentally appropriate materials.
- Develops a curriculum that supports children's individual rates of development.
- Maintains a continuous evaluation system that regularly assesses and reviews program goals and children's progress.
- Nurtures a cooperative relationship between families and the program and fosters collaboration with the community.
- Provides for continuous staff development.
- Promotes a climate of acceptance and inclusion of children of varying cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and racial backgrounds with a range of abilities and disabilities.

Program leaders use current research about how children grow, develop, and learn in combination with national standards (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation Criteria, Head Start Performance Standards, Division of Early Childhood documents) to inform the development of its philosophy statement.

1. **Program Standard:** *A written philosophy statement for the early childhood care and education program is developed and utilized as the basis for making program decisions and establishing program goals and objectives.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Develops a philosophy statement that incorporates suggestions from the program's staff (teachers, administrators, and support staff), governing board, families, and community representatives.
   2. Reviews the philosophy statement at least every five years.
   3. Uses input from staff, the governing board, families, and community representatives; new legislation; research findings, and/or other significant factors which impact early childhood education to inform the revision of the philosophy statement.
   4. If applicable, recommends adoption of the philosophy statement by the governing or advisory board of the program.

2. **Program Standard:** *The philosophy statement includes the rationale for the program.*

A Quality Program:
1. Aligns the philosophy statement with state and local goals, standards, and guidelines for early childhood education programs.
2. Assures that the philosophy statement reflects applicable legislation.
3. Aligns the philosophy statement with the values of high quality early childhood and education programs.
4. Addresses the social, economic, cultural, linguistic, and familial needs of the community in the philosophy statement.
5. Includes a bibliography of research findings and theories (e.g., the value of play) used in developing or revising the philosophy as a part of the statement.

3. **Program Standard:** *The program promotes broad knowledge about its philosophy.*

A Quality Program:
1. Disseminates copies of the philosophy statement to program staff, governing board members, families, and other interested persons.
2. Includes discussion of how the philosophy affects the operation of the program in staff development and information sessions for families, other agencies, and community members.

4. **Program Standard:** *The program uses the philosophy statement in making decisions about every aspect of the program.*

A Quality Program:
1. Uses its philosophy to identify the program's goals and objectives.
2. Assures that the philosophy is visible in the program plan (e.g., policies, curriculum, family collaboration), development, and implementation.
3. Applies the philosophy in the evaluation and revision of the program.
4. Uses the philosophy statement in the development of staff job descriptions, personnel evaluations, and development activities.

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Community Collaboration and Financial Support

Children's learning is enhanced when early childhood programs work collaboratively and cooperatively with community programs, institutions, organizations, and agencies to meet the broader needs of children and their families through direct services or referrals. Relevant community funding sources should be identified and utilized to support quality early childhood programs, services, and resources, regardless of sponsorship.

1. **Program Standard:** *The program shows evidence of participation in collaborative efforts within the community and has membership on the community's early childhood collaborative council.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Participates in the development of a common community philosophy of early childhood expectations.
   2. Shares information on available community services and eligibility requirements for services with administrators, the teaching staff, and all early childhood providers.
   3. Plans with other community programs/agencies for coordination of a comprehensive, seamless system of services for all children and families.
   4. Explores and, to the extent possible, employs joint funding of the program.
   5. Encourages joint and/or cooperative professional development opportunities.
   6. Promotes outreach efforts in the community to develop and extend early childhood knowledge as part of ongoing public relations.
   7. Participates in a community early childhood collaborative council, if available.

2. **Program Standard:** *The program works cooperatively and collaboratively with other early childhood programs in the community in order to facilitate children's transition into and out of programs and from one program to another.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Collaborates to ensure a smooth transition for children and families into preschool and from preschool to elementary school.
   2. Promotes an awareness of all early childhood programs in the community and an identification of commonalities.
   3. Shares appropriate printed materials and activities for families and children to facilitate transition.
   4. Participates in the establishment and implementation of a system for sharing information about specific children between and among programs, agencies, and schools.
   5. Cooperates with the special education personnel from school districts in the area to address the transition needs of children with disabilities.
   6. Participates in joint funding and professional development opportunities for staff regarding transitions for children and families.

3. **Program Standard:** *The program works with public and private community agencies and educational institutions to meet the comprehensive needs of children and families, to assist one another in the delivery of services, increase resources, and to strengthen advocacy efforts.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Streamlines the process for making referrals.
   2. Reduces barriers by working with collaborating entities to expand existing support services for young children (e.g., child care, literacy initiatives, and summer food programs).
   3. Shares available community resources to achieve specific objectives with the entire early childhood community (e.g., health screenings, counseling, parenting sessions, before- and after-school child care, care for sick children).
   4. Has knowledge of various program eligibility requirements.
   5. Shares physical space (e.g., space for a well-baby clinic, mental health counselors on site, a food pantry, a clothing bank) as possible.
   6. Encourages professional organizations and local districts to share information about training, conferences, and other staff development opportunities with all early care and education programs in the community.
   7. Participates in the preparation and implementation of contracts or memoranda of agreement between participating agencies.
   8. Advocates for young children and supports quality early childhood education programs in the community.

4. **Program Standard:** *The program works with community volunteer groups, agencies, and the business community (e.g., senior citizen groups, libraries, United Way agencies, volunteer groups, faith-based groups, service organizations, business organizations).*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Invites members from community groups/agencies to participate in the program (e.g., be tutors, companions, presenters, mentors, etc., for children, volunteers for the program).
   2. Invites members from community groups/agencies to be part of the interagency advisory committee.
   3. Provides opportunities for cosponsorship of community programs for families (e.g., reading aloud to children, child development classes at the workplace or at a community facility).
   4. Identifies strategies for community partnership and reciprocation.

5. **Program Standard:** *Funds are identified and used to purchase resources (e.g., staffing, space, equipment, materials) to provide an effective, accessible program.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Provides funds for program space and maintenance.

2. Provides funds for instructional materials and supplies which contribute to teaching and learning.
3. Provides funds for the purchase and maintenance of equipment which contribute to teaching and learning.
4. Provides funds for materials and supplies to implement all program components and accomplish all program objectives.
5. Provides funds for the assurance of health and safety regulations.
6. Provides funds for the evaluation of the program.
7. Provides funds for employment of support staff to assist program implementation.
8. Provides funds for developing and revising curricular and instructional materials.

6. **<u>Program Standard</u>:** *The program has funds necessary to employ qualified staff and provide staff development activities.*

   <u>A Quality Program</u>:
   1. Provides funds for salaries/wages, and benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement, sick leave, vacation) for all staff (e.g., teachers, administrators, and support staff).
   2. Provides funds for the number of staff necessary to conduct and administer the program.
   3. Provides funds for additional pay, compensatory time, or released time for all staff to participate in professional development activities.
   4. Provides funds for salaries of substitute staff when regular staff members participate in authorized professional development activities.
   5. Provides funds for staff for authorized expenses and activities, including transportation and per diem expenses, according to local and state guidelines.

7. **<u>Program Standard</u>:** *The program has funds necessary for parent involvement and education programs and family-oriented activities.*

   <u>A Quality Program</u>:
   1. Provides funds for on-site child care services during parent workshops and group meetings.
   2. Facilitates family participation in special events and other meetings through financial support (e.g., stipends, meals).
   3. Provides funds for resource materials for training and group meetings for family members.

Physical and Mental Health, Nutrition and Safety

Children's good health (mental, oral, physical health, and fitness), nutrition, and safety are essential to their development and learning. A quality early care and education program addresses these needs, in partnership with families, by establishing opportunities for information exchange and by providing services directly or creating linkages with agencies that do provide such services.

1. **Program Standard:** *Programs address the need for continuous accessible health care (mental, oral, physical health, and fitness) for children.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Provides for information and referral for parents of children to health care partners for preventive and primary health care needs and coverage.
   2. Periodically reviews and updates health records (including immunization records) to ensure that children receive recommended treatment and preventive services.
   3. Establishes and implements a written policy to address basic health care and health care emergencies.
   4. Works with parents and community partners to support an agreed-upon plan of action for goals related to the overall health of a child, such as the IEP and IFSP.
   5. Works with parents to obtain information on their child's health, and share observations and concerns in order to build a supportive and nurturing environment.
   6. Trains and supports staff in securing or providing referrals for needed services and documents all follow-up efforts.

2. **Program Standard:** *The program addresses the nutritional health of children.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Provides for information and referral for children to nutritional health partners for preventive and primary needs and coverage.
   2. Ensures that nutritional services contribute to the development and socialization of children.
   3. Makes a variety of food available that follows nutritional guidelines as set by the National Dietary Association.
   4. Provides sufficient time for each child to eat.
   5. Fully accommodates medically-based diets or other dietary requirements.
   6. Follows all rules and regulations applicable to Federal and State food safety and sanitation laws.

DRAFT

3. **Program Standard:** *The program's policies and practices support the inclusion of children with special health care needs unless participation is deemed a risk to the safety or health of the child or others, or fundamentally alters the nature of the program.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Ensures that the program has adequate health policies and protocols, staff training and monitoring, and supplies and equipment to perform necessary health procedures.
   2. Implements plans to accommodate a child's health or safety needs before services to a child begins or as soon as possible after the need is identified.
   3. Protects the privacy of the affected child and her or his family.
   4. Reassures parents of other children that their children are at no health risk.
   5. Promotes understanding of the child's special health care needs, without embarrassing or drawing attention to the child.
   6. Ensures that parents and health care or other providers supply clear, thorough instructions on how best to care for the child, in order to protect the child's health and safety, as well as the health and safety of other children and staff.
   7. Obtains assistance from local agencies or organizations (e.g., hospitals, schools, and local health departments) for ways to accommodate the child in the program.

4. **Program Standard:** *Programs address requirements for continuous safe environments for children.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Provides information and referral to parents and children creating and maintaining a safe environment.
   2. Provides professional development to all staff working with children regarding safe environments and regulatory requirements.
   3. Develops and implements written policy and procedures for staff and parents to follow.
   4. Periodically reviews policies and procedures and updates where necessary.
   5. Provides for a periodic review of background checks of all personnel and regular physical environment inspections.

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Staffing and Administrative Support and Professional Development

Early childhood programs are staffed by individuals with differing levels of education and experience as required by the program's administering agency. All instructional staff, support staff, and non-paid personnel (e.g., parents, volunteers) should have training, experience, and access to staff development activities commensurate with their responsibilities. Additionally, strong and knowledgeable administrative leadership is a key component of an effective early childhood program.

1. **Program Standard:** *Teachers are qualified to develop and implement a program consistent with the program philosophy and appropriate to the developmental and learning needs of the children and families being served, including the development of a continuing parent education and family involvement component.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. If an elementary or other school program, employs teacher(s) with educational training, course work, and supervised field experience, including an elementary teaching certificate with an early childhood endorsement from an institution approved by the State Board of Education based on the NAEYC/NCATE guidelines or the equivalent teacher certification from another state.
   2. If a community-based organization, employs teacher(s) with educational background including at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood/child development/preschool education, equivalent continuing education experience as approved by the State Board of Education, or equivalent experience as a certified teacher of children birth through six years of age in a program that included educational training, course work, and supervised field experience equivalent to student teaching.

2. **Program Standard:** *Paraprofessionals (i.e., those staff who work with children under the supervision of a teacher) are trained to implement program activities and assist in the care and education of the children.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Employs paraprofessionals with associates degrees in early childhood education/preschool education, child development, child care or hold Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials or equivalent continuing education experience, as approved by a college or the State Board of Education.
   2. Employs paraprofessionals who have had directed training programs, supervised work, or field experiences implementing educational activities for young children.

DRAFT

3. **Program Standard:** *Support staff and non-paid personnel are assigned to roles that enhance the program's goals and increase the adult/child ratio.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Provides background screens for support staff and volunteers in order to protect the physical and emotional safety of the children in the program.
   2. Provides orientation on program goals and objectives as well as basic methods of positive interaction with children.
   3. Assigns tasks and responsibilities that compliment their skill level and areas of strength.
   4. Offers professional development and advancement opportunities.
   5. Through restructured staff assignments and configurations, uses support staff and volunteers to improve the adult/child ratio.

4. **Program Standard:** *The staff participates in a variety of ongoing professional development activities (e.g., in-service training, professional workshops, courses at institutions of higher learning, teacher exchanges, observations, coaching).*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Assures that program specific requirements for maintaining and continuing teacher certification or other credentials are met.
   2. Assures that staff members participate each year in early childhood professional development activities (e.g., college courses, in-service activities, workshops, seminars, or training programs).
   3. Assures that professional development activities are based upon program and individual needs assessments.

5. **Program Standard:** *Staff professional/career development efforts are assisted and supported by administrative policies, practices, and appropriate resources.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Requires administrators and supervisors to support the provision of and staff participation in staff development and in-service training that address individual staff needs.
   2. Conducts supportive staff evaluations in accordance with guidelines and program policies.
   3. Keeps professional training resources updated and includes information about early childhood research, teaching methods, techniques for classroom management, developmentally appropriate practices, technology, and child development/learning theories.
   4. Requires program administrators to support staff affiliation with local, state, or national professional organizations and organizations that advocate for young children and families.

6. **Program Standard:** *To achieve optimum educational outcomes for the children, the program applies staffing patterns and practices that allow for maximum staff/child interaction, program implementation, and consistency of staff.*

    A Quality Program:
    1. Maintains a recommended range for enrollment of 15 to 18 children per group or the number of children specified in applicable regulations/laws.
    2. Assigns a paraprofessional in preschool classes enrolling more than eight children or the number of children specified in applicable regulations/laws.
    3. Assigns staff as appropriate to support the IEP or IFSP requirements of a child with a disability.
    4. Assures that the preschool classes are under the direction of administrative/supervisory personnel in consultation with a specialist in early childhood education.
    5. Provides staff with paid time for planning with colleagues and specialists.
    6. Enhances staff retention as well as greater continuity and consistency for children by providing supervision and mentoring of staff.
    7. Implements policies that support and promote staff retention and longevity.

7. **Program Standard:** *The program administrator is or the program employs an early childhood specialist who is qualified to administer or collaborate in the administration of the program, including supervision and management, program and staff evaluation, and program and staff development.*

    A Quality Program:
    1. Has an administrator or employs an early childhood specialist who has a graduate degree in early childhood or child development; experience in planning, developing, implementing and evaluating curriculum for a variety of child populations; and, experience in the supervision and evaluation of personnel.

8. **Program Standard:** *The program employs an administrator who is qualified to implement, evaluate, and manage the program, the budget, and serve as a link between the program, the community, and the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies.*

    A Quality Program:
    1. Employs a program administrator with educational preparation in developmentally appropriate early childhood education.
    2. Employs a program administrator with educational preparation and experience in the supervision, management, and evaluation of personnel, facilities, and program budget.
    3. Employs a program administrator with educational preparation and experience for the coordination of the program with other local, state, and federal agencies.
    4. Assigns the program administrator the responsibility for obtaining the resources necessary to fund the program.
    5. Assigns the program administrator the responsibility for the collaborative efforts of the program.

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9. **Program Standard:** *The early childhood specialist and/or the program administrator has/have the responsibility for directing the evaluation activities of the program and instructional personnel.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Arranges for, under the direction of the early childhood specialist and/or the program administrator and in conjunction with teachers, staff, and parents, the annual evaluation of the early childhood education program utilizing local, state, and national standards or criteria for quality, effective early childhood education.
   2. Arranges for the early childhood specialist and/or the program administrator to annually evaluate staff performance according to local, state, and national standards and/or criteria using a variety of techniques (e.g., observation, self-evaluation).
   3. Requires the early childhood specialist and/or program administrator to utilize the results of staff performance evaluations to plan activities for program improvement, staff development, and training.

10. **Program Standard:** *The early childhood specialist and/or program administrator participate in continuing education/professional development activities.*

    A Quality Program:
    1. Provides funding and time for the early childhood specialist and/or program administrator to actively associate with at least one professional organization concerning young children (e.g., MiAEYC, CEC).
    2. Provides funding and time for the early childhood specialist and/or program administrator to actively seek knowledge and ideas by reading professional publications.
    3. Requires the early childhood specialist and/or program administrator to disseminate information regarding early childhood research and staff development opportunities to staff.

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The Partnership with Families

Early childhood programs value, respect, and celebrate families. Staff and administration understand the family's role as the first and most important teachers, and honor the right and responsibility of each family to be active partners in their child's education. Staff and administrators foster positive partnerships with all family members to support learning, including mothers, fathers, non-custodial parents, guardians or foster parents, grandparents, and others closely involved in the child's life.

Quality programs use a range of strategies to connect with family members including those who may be reluctant to become engaged in the program. They accomplish this through not only program structure and activities but also through the establishment of a caring atmosphere that is viewed by families as welcoming, respectful, and nurturing, and a setting in which staff and administration are responsive to their needs and concerns. Quality programs also welcome the involvement and opinions of families in planning for continuous quality improvement of the program.

1. **Program Standard:**   *Families have multiple opportunities for regular involvement with the program and its staff including placement, planning for individualization and evaluation related specifically to their child.*

    A Quality Program:
    1. Enables the family to take part in the decision making process related to the child's participation in the program, so program goals and expectations and goals for their child and family can be met.
    2. Holds formal and informal parent-teacher conferences in which families are encouraged to share strengths, concerns, goals, and expectations; staff uses this knowledge to follow-up appropriately.
    3. Employs methods of regular written and verbal communication using an appropriate literacy level and the home language when possible.
    4. Makes two visits available to each family annually outside of the program setting, with at least one in the child's home.
    5. Responds to family members in a timely manner.
    6. Provides scheduled progress reports for each child.
    7. Adopts policies to address information sharing with non-custodial parents.
    8. Arranges for staff members to initiate other means of communication with parents who do not attend conferences/meetings or do not respond to teacher-initiated communications.
    9. Requires program staff to collaborate with parents/family members in the design of appropriate assessment and/or intervention plans at an early stage when a child is having difficulty with behavior, social interactions, transitioning and/or with developmental/ learning progress.
    10. Is designed and arranged so that families feel welcome and respected including practices and materials that reflect the diversity of the families served.

11. Uses signs to clearly welcome parents and communicate schedules and daily routines (i.e., welcoming entrance signs, directional signs to classrooms, posters of the daily schedule).
12. Maintains confidentiality in accordance with program and state requirements.

2. __Program Standard:__ *Families have multiple opportunities to participate in the child's classroom program.*

A Quality Program:
1. Provides family members the opportunity to become familiar with the program and the staff of the child's particular classroom prior to the start of the child's participation in the program.
2. Arranges opportunities for family members to share their culture, family traditions, and special skills and interests.
3. Makes opportunities available to participate in a variety of classroom activities and observations (e.g., interact with or observe children in the classroom; assist in planning and implementing field trips, visitations, and classroom activities; assist with the preparation of learning materials for daily activities).

3. __Program Standard:__ *Families are provided a range of opportunities outside of the classroom for participation, education, and enrichment as part of their child's program.*

A Quality Program:
1. Provides for family participation and support keeping in mind the requirements of the sponsoring agency or legislation.
2. Arranges for family members to have access to family education, enrichment, or family support group programs and activities provided by the program or through referral to community agencies.
3. Provides or has access to a family resource space that includes a lending library of educational toys, games, and materials for children and families and materials, information, and resources designed to improve the quality of family life and/or support children's learning and development in the home setting.

4. __Program Standard:__ *The program's policies and practices promote support and respect for the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child's health, learning, and social-emotional well-being.*

A Quality Program:
1. Supports staff in learning key words from the child's home language and their English equivalents.
2. Provides books and materials that reflect families' home languages and culture, as well as that of others in the community.
3. Communicates with the family in their preferred language or mode of communication.

5. **Program Standard:** *Family members and members selected from the community participate in the program's advisory council; the council has responsibility for recommending direction in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the program.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Operates the advisory council with parent membership under the guidelines and requirements of the sponsoring agency or legislation and within the framework of policies and practices as established by the council and the program's governing body.
   2. Provides equal opportunity to all parents to serve on the advisory council based on the program's policies.
   3. Arranges for the advisory council to provide recommendations regarding all components of the program based upon the most recent data and research in early childhood education.
   4. Assures that, as much as possible, the advisory council reflects the composition and characteristics of the families enrolled in the program and the people who make up the broader community (e.g., a balance of males and females, racial/ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, representatives from businesses and private and nonprofit agencies).
   5. Communicates the activities of the advisory council to all families and staff and provides information about how to contact the council members.

6. **Program Standard:** *All families are provided with opportunities to assist in evaluation of the program.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Provides each family with the opportunity to review and provide input on program requirements, practices, policies, procedures, activities, communication and events in order to determine the program's responsiveness to families and their needs.
   2. Provides each family with the opportunity to offer perceptions about the value for their children of the child development program offered in the classroom and of any special services.
   3. Invites each family to assess the continuum of family-involvement activities (e.g., the nature, quality, and quantity of the various participation opportunities afforded to them; unmet needs or areas of interest; the extent to which participation opportunities were scheduled and offered in ways which were responsive to employment schedules and child care needs).

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The Learning Environment

Just as a quality program views children's development and learning as an integrated process encompassing all domains, so are the components of the program's learning environment intertwined. The program's curriculum, climate, teaching practices and physical environment are interdependent and must be considered together if the program is to be effective. The learning environment in a high quality program is designed to help children gain the social competence, knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to succeed in their present environment and in later responsibilities in school and life.

Curriculum

The curriculum in a quality early childhood program is thoughtfully planned based on an evidence-based framework consistent with the goals of the program and with standards established by the program's governing body and any applicable legislative requirements. It is consistent with and supports reasonable expectations for young children's development and learning and is culturally and linguistically responsive. An effective curriculum provides a coherent and intentional set of experiences and activities which support multiple goals and support children's development across all domains. The curriculum is designed to connect with and support developmentally appropriate expectations for children's development and learning in the years beyond the preschool program.

1. **Program Standard:** *The curriculum is based on the predictable sequences of growth and development of three- and four-year-old children.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Implements learning experiences and activities in all areas of development (i.e., social, emotional, intellectual, language, creative, and physical development) keeping with individual children's levels of functioning and comprehension.
   2. Maintains developmentally appropriate expectations of behavior and performance for children.
   3. Provides a range of opportunities and materials for play (e.g., child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported, and teacher-initiated).
   4. Uses a variety of teaching strategies in implementing the curriculum (e.g., teacher-initiated, teacher-facilitated, and child-initiated with opportunities for free choice).

2. **Program Standard:** *The curriculum is designed to address all aspects of children's development and to further their learning with emphasis on the unique needs of the young child.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Relates each experience, activity, routine, and transition to curricular goals.
   2. Incorporates spontaneous learning experiences into the daily schedule as a means to further children's growth and development.

3. Establishes two-way communication between homes and school so that home events are considered in planning a child's day and school experiences are communicated to the families.
4. Assures that children have ample opportunities for playing with others.
5. Handles the separation process from home to school with sensitivity and respect for the children's individual needs.
6. Recognizes children's anti-social behavior as a lack of skill or knowledge and appropriately addresses it as part of growth and development.
7. Assures that adults in the program recognize that children think and reason differently from more mature learners.
8. Designs activities, transitions, and routines that reflect children's attention span, need for physical activity, social interaction and attention from caring adults.

3. **Program Standard:** *The curriculum is designed to include experiences related to children's social, emotional, intellectual, language, creative, and physical development.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Assures that children have experiences to enhance their social development, including acquisition of interpersonal skills, self-discipline, caring, and respect for others.
   2. Assures that children have experiences to enhance their emotional development, including the development of basic attitudes of trust, autonomy, and initiative, as well as a positive self concept.
   3. Assures that children have experiences to enhance their intellectual development, including knowledge of the physical world, creative problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, and appropriate social knowledge important to the culture.
   4. Assures that children have experiences to enhance their language and early literacy development, including listening and speaking skills and emergent skills in writing and reading.
   5. Assures that children have experiences to enhance their creative development including the development of imagination, as well as an awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of art, music, drama, poetry, prose, and the wonders of the natural world.
   6. Assures that children have experiences to enhance their physical development, including small and large muscle development, as well as body awareness and sensory development.

4. **Program Standard:** *The curriculum fosters the integration of the content areas to support children's development in all domains.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Integrates content areas around concept-based projects and themes.
   2. Reflects children's interests and suggestions in project topics, themes, and learning centers.
   3. Presents content in an integrated fashion, rather than through isolated bits of knowledge and activities.
   4. Uses strategies to make connections between prior learning and new experiences and subsequent knowledge.

5. Uses every learning experience as an opportunity to enhance children's language and early literacy development.
6. When available, requires that instructional specialists work in collaboration with the classroom staff and within the classroom to support and extend classroom projects or themes.
7. Views collaboration among teachers, parents, administrators, and community members as essential to enhancing the integration of the curriculum.

5. **Program Standard:** *The curriculum is developmentally and linguistically appropriate and takes into account children's individual rates of development as well as individual interests, personalities, temperaments, languages, cultural and family backgrounds, and learning styles.*

A Quality Program:
1. Adapts the program to individual patterns and uniqueness and for the timing of children's growth within the available program resources.
2. Presents learning objectives in a sequence and rate that is in keeping with children's individual needs, rather than based on a predetermined schedule.
3. Monitors, adapts, and adjusts activities and experiences in response to children's demonstrated levels of functioning and competence at all ability, interest and skill levels.
4. Is responsive to various learning styles (e.g., kinesthetic, visual and auditory).
5. Provides continuous opportunities for children of all ages and abilities to experience success.

6. **Program Standard:** *The curriculum is designed to provide a developmentally and linguistically appropriate environment and adult guidance to enable the participation of children with special needs.*

A Quality Program:
1. Supports all children in achieving a sense of belonging and membership in their classroom.
2. Adapts activities, makes accommodations, and uses other strategies that integrate children socially and enables them to participate in all activities, regardless of abilities.
3. Adapts materials and equipment so that all children can share in activities.
4. Provides and arranges space to make play equipment and materials accessible to all children.
5. Assists children, if necessary, in using and playing with materials.
6. Increases the complexity and challenge of activities, as children develop.
7. Observes children carefully to identify their preferred ways of interacting with the environment, taking into account their skills in handling objects and materials, frequency of conversation, interest in listening to stories and songs, and choices to work alone or with others.
8. Provides multiple avenues for children to learn and to express themselves (e.g., children with disabilities have access to creative and physical experiences that enable participation in alternative ways).

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9. Requires each adult to be responsible for each child in the program so that every adult can support every child to meet their learning expectations.
10. Discusses parents' expectations for their children.

7. **<u>Program Standard:</u>** *The curriculum is designed so that activities are carefully and developmentally sequenced in keeping with individual children's levels of functioning and comprehension.*

   <u>A Quality Program:</u>
   1. Expects the teaching staff to articulate developmentally appropriate expectations for children's behavior and performance.
   2. Expects the teaching staff to be aware of each child's level of functioning and comprehension in relation to their aesthetic, sensory, social emotional, intellectual, language, and physical development.
   3. Expects teaching staff to be able to articulate to others the ultimate goal toward which a particular activity is related.
   4. Expects the teaching staff to introduce information or materials which makes the task more manageable when a child experiences difficulty.
   5. Plans experiences and activities that over time reflect a sequence from simple to complex skills, from concrete to abstract concepts, and which enable children to make progress toward the next step in their learning.
   6. Provides many varied opportunities, materials, and equipment for children to observe, explore, and experiment with their environment on a continuing basis.
   7. Presents skills, concepts, and information for children to learn, only after children have had ample opportunity for exploration.
   8. Uses specific teaching strategies to help children learn skills, concepts, or information they cannot discover on their own.

8. **<u>Program Standard:</u>** *The curriculum is designed to promote individualized teaching and learning rather than requiring children to move in a group from one learning activity to the next.*

   <u>A Quality Program:</u>
   1. Plans for a range of activities to address the varying abilities of children in the group.
   2. Presents learning activities in a meaningful context, on multiple occasions and in a variety of ways.
   3. Assures that teachers can articulate a developmentally appropriate range of objectives for each activity they plan.
   4. Assesses children on the basis of individual accomplishments and not by comparison to the accomplishments or development of other children.
   5. Assures that children's lack of accomplishment is never purposely brought to the attention of the group.
   6. Never penalizes children in any way for lagging behind their classmates in any area of development.

9. Program Standard: *The curriculum is designed to include experiences related to multicultural awareness.*

    A Quality Program:
1. Provides opportunities for children to interact with adult members of their own and of other cultural groups.
2. Provides classroom activities which include books, pictures, props, music, foods, materials, field trips, and costumes representing a wide range of cultural groups.
3. Assures that children receive positive, accurate information about a variety of cultural groups.
4. Integrates multicultural activities into the daily routines of the program rather than reserving them only for holidays or special occasions.

10. Program Standard: *The curriculum is designed to enable children to learn those things that are important to them.*

    A Quality Program:
1. Encourages teachers to plan themes and areas of investigation based on the interests of the children rather than planning an entire year's themes at the beginning of the year.
2. Encourages spontaneous, as well as planned, investigation of those occurrences which arouse a child's curiosity and interest.
3. Designs curriculum in such a way that children's ideas, interests and concerns are acknowledged, respected and supported.
4. Provides for children's questions to be answered promptly and accurately.
5. Addresses home and community events important to children in a timely manner and uses them as an opportunity for learning.
6. Makes available materials children request frequently, as appropriate.

11. Program Standard: *The curriculum is designed around all children's abilities to make sense of the world and acquire competence as life long learners.*

    A Quality Program:
1. Assures that children's successful experiences are extended and enhanced by the curriculum.
2. Presents concepts in the curriculum through learning activities and materials that are real and relevant to the lives of children, and that move from the concrete to the abstract.
3. Develops skills (e.g., in literacy, math, physical development) in a meaningful context.
4. Considers children's play as an appropriate and important way of learning.

Climate

Effective programs for three- and four-year old children are planned to be age appropriate and to meet their individual needs. A program establishes a positive climate and promotes positive interpersonal relationships. This includes relationships between children and adults, among children, and between the staff and families.

1. **Program Standard:** *The program is structured to enhance children's feelings of comfort, security and self-esteem and development of positive relationships with adults and other children.*

    A Quality Program:

    To Support Positive Adult/Child Relationships:
    1. Accepts all children's individual levels of development, interest, temperament, cultural background, language, and learning styles and uses them as the basis for programmatic planning.
    2. Treats all children with warmth, respect, and caring, regardless of social, economic, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or family background, and regardless of gender, behavior, appearance, or any disability.
    3. Accepts and values children's primary languages and uses them as a means for communication.
    4. Promptly attends to children's feelings and emotions with respect and gentleness.
    5. Assures that each child experiences positive adult attention during the day.
    6. Schedules staff to provide children with consistency of adult supervision.
    7. Assures that children can identify at least one primary caregiver from whom to seek help, comfort, attention, and guidance.

    To Support Positive Child/Child Relationships:
    8. Assures that children have ongoing opportunities to interact informally with one another.
    9. Assures that children have ongoing opportunities to recognize and accept similarities and differences among one another.
    10. Provides children with strategies and information about specific social skills to enhance their interpersonal relations.
    11. Encourages children to negotiate and resolve conflicts peacefully with adult intervention and guidance only when necessary.
    12. Provides opportunities for small and large group activities leading to expanded perspectives, cooperation, collaboration and membership in a group.

2. **Program Standard:** *The program is structured to assure that children's biological and physical needs are met.*

    A Quality Program:
    1. Assures that the environment of the facility meets the needs of children according to state licensing requirements.

2. Structures the program to ensure that children's biological needs are met (e.g., toileting available when children indicate need; opportunity to rest; snack available during each 2.5 hour time frame; drinking water available all day).
3. Provides sufficient time for a nutritious meal/snack to be served and eaten. (e.g., family style where adults sit with and eat the same food as children; children have the opportunity to serve themselves with assistance as needed; conversation is among children and adults and is an extension of children's interests).
4. Balances daily routines based on children's needs (e.g., active and quiet, outdoor time, self care, and rest time activities).
5. Establishes and implements policies and procedures regarding children's health and educates staff on the individual and group health needs of children.
6. Assures that staff is trained in First Aid and CPR and that first aid/health materials are always available on site.
7. Provides additional clothing for children and children are changed promptly as the need arises (e.g., smocks for messy activities, extra seasonal outdoor clothing, changes of clothing for bathroom accidents and health emergencies).

3. **Program Standard:** *The program's policies and practices support the enrollment and participation of all children including those with disabilities and promote an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity, individual capacities, and family composition.*

A Quality Program:
1. Implements nondiscriminatory enrollment and personnel policies.
2. Expects staff to demonstrate, through action, a genuine respect for each child's family, culture, and life-style.
3. Provides an environment that reflects the cultures of all children in the program in an integrated, natural way.
4. Fosters children's primary language, while supporting the continued development of English.
5. Avoids activities and materials that stereotype or limit children according to their gender, age, disability, race, ethnicity, or family composition.
6. Expects staff to model respect and help children to demonstrate appreciation of others.

4. **Program Standard:** *The program uses positive guidance techniques which further children's development of self-control, responsibility, and respect for self, others, and property.*

A Quality Program:
1. Uses positive, predictable, consistent, and constructive guidance (discipline) techniques (e.g., modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to more acceptable activities, meeting with individual children to discuss concerns).
2. Applies individually determined guidance practices based upon the child's developmental level using natural and logical consequences allowing children to assume greater responsibility for their actions.

3. Provides support to children in appropriately resolving their personal conflicts. (e.g., negotiating, helping, cooperating, talking with the person involved).
4. Has policies stating that depriving a child of snack, rest, or necessary toilet use or using disciplinary practices that involve shaming, hitting, or spanking are forbidden.

5. **Program Standard:** *The philosophy and the program's policies and practices support an appropriate environment and adult guidance for the participation of children with special needs and home languages other than English.*

A Quality Program:
1. Adapts materials and equipment so that all children can share in activities.
2. Provides and arranges space to make play equipment and materials accessible to all children.
3. Assists children, if necessary, in using and playing with materials.
4. Makes each adult responsible for each child in the program (e.g., every adult supports every child to meet their learning expectations).
5. Discusses with parents their expectations and goals for their children.
6. Adapts activities, makes accommodations, and uses other strategies that integrate children socially and enable them to participate in all activities, regardless of abilities or language status.

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Teaching Practices

Teachers use their understanding of child growth and development and their knowledge about the individual children in their group to organize the learning environment, implement the curriculum, and to help children further develop their capacities. Teaching practices encompass everything teachers do to facilitate children's development and learning including the way space is organized and provisioned, the nature of interactions with individuals and groups of children, scheduling, the management of transitions across the day, and grouping practices.

1. **Program Standard:** *The value of play is demonstrated throughout all aspects of the program and children have opportunities to use play to translate experience into understanding.*

    A Quality Program:
    1. Assures that administrators, teachers, and staff can articulate the value of play in relation to children's development.
    2. Plans and assures administrators, teachers, and staff participate in and reflect on professional learning experiences related to the value of play.
    3. Assures that administrators, teachers, and staff communicate the value of play to families.
    4. Assures that the value of play is reflected in the program's philosophy statement and curriculum.
    5. Provides a daily schedule that includes an extended block or blocks of time designated for free choice, play and exploration.
    6. Provides play opportunities for children individually and in groups both indoors and outdoors as weather permits.

2. **Program Standard:** *Activities are designed to help children learn concepts and skills through active manipulation of a wide variety of materials and equipment.*

    A Quality Program:
    1. Provides access to a variety of materials and technology for social, emotional, dramatic play, creative, music, movement, fine motor, large motor, mathematics, science and social studies experiences.
    2. Provides a large variety of age appropriate books and other literacy related materials throughout the classroom.
    3. Facilitates a child's exploration of writing in all areas of the classroom.

3. **Program Standard:** *The program is planned and implemented to permit children to learn from exploration, acquisition of skills and knowledge, practice, and application.*

    A Quality Program:
    1. Provides opportunities for children to engage in exploration of materials or concepts with which they have had little prior experience.

2. Provides opportunities for children to learn and practice prerequisite skills prior to engaging in the activity for which those skills are required.
3. Provides opportunities for teachers and children to be used as models in the learning process.
4. After prior knowledge has been established, provides children support to investigate and discover new knowledge.
5. Provides opportunities for teachers to be guides in facilitating children's involvement; enriching their learning experiences by affirming and extending their ideas; responding to their questions; engaging them in conversations; and, challenging them in their thinking.
6. Provides opportunities for teachers to encourage and capitalize on unplanned learning opportunities.
7. Exposes children to skills, concepts, or information they cannot discover on their own, through the use of teacher-initiated learning activities.

4. **Program Standard:** *Activities are designed so that concepts and skills are appropriately presented using a variety of methods and techniques.*

A Quality Program:
1. Designs activities for children that use the greatest number of senses.
2. Presents concepts to children using self correcting hands-on materials rather than through paper-pencil exercises or patterned activities.
3. Presents concepts multiple times using various materials and methods of instruction.
4. Makes activities and materials available for extended periods of time so children can repeat and expand on their previous experience and so that children's desire to repeat experiences can be encouraged by adults.
5. Makes additions to learning environments throughout time in order to enhance and expand concept development.
6. Incorporates language experiences which include repetition into children's daily activities.
7. Arranges for children to use technology materials and centers in a similar manner as other materials and centers (e.g., there is no special computer time).
8. Observes children carefully to identify their preferred ways of interacting with the environment, taking into account their skills and abilities.

5. **Program Standard:** *Technology tools are used to support the teaching practices.*

A Quality Program:
1. Provides technology tools for teachers to make instructional materials.
2. Incorporates the use of technology tools during ongoing child observation and assessment to keep records and to create reports about children and/or classroom activities.
3. Enables teachers to communicate with parents and other professionals via e-mail.
4. Provides technology tools for teachers to use the Internet to locate resources including appropriate Web sites for children and ideas for best teaching practices.

5. Provides technology tools for teachers to develop and produce photographs and video from digital media.
6. Locates resources for assistive technology.

6. Program Standard: *Formal and informal grouping practices are used to strengthen children's learning.*

A Quality Program:
1. Takes children's interests, friendships, and common needs into account when groups are formed.
2. Groups children primarily heterogeneously, using homogeneous subgroups on a limited and temporary basis and changing readily to accommodate varying rates of growth.
3. Provides children with opportunities to work and play in large groups, small groups, and individually.
4. Maintains child-adult ratios in accordance with the requirements of the particular program.

7. Program Standard: *Child-child interactions are encouraged through the use of learning experiences that include cooperative play, conflict resolution, and large, small, interest-based, and multi-age groupings.*

A Quality Program:
1. Structures environments to promote small groups of children working and playing cooperatively in self-selected and teacher-initiated activities.
2. Assures that the composition of groups is flexible and temporary depending on needs and the type of activity.
3. Groups children according to interests rather than ability whenever possible.
4. Views all children as valued group members.
5. Structures the environment so that adults move among groups and individuals, facilitating and monitoring children's involvement with activities and with one another.

8. Program Standard: *The daily routine/schedule is predictable, yet flexible.*

A Quality Program:
1. Develops schedules that include predictability and repetition, responds to a child's natural timetable, and takes advantage of teachable moments.
2. Schedules extended blocks of time so that children can become absorbed in learning experiences without interruption
3. Includes the creative arts, physical development (gross and fine motor), and literacy activities as regular components during the day.
4. Provides for cooperative groups, teacher-initiated, and child-initiated/choice activities.
5. Provides for active, quiet, large group, small group, paired, individual, independent, and guided activities.
6. Carefully plans, appropriately paces, and monitors learning activities.
7. Provides the physical space and time in the schedule for children to have moments of private time.
8. Nurtures children in a relaxed classroom atmosphere.

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9. Program Standard: *Routines and transitions between activities are smooth and kept to a minimum.*

A Quality Program:
1. Allows enough time so that routines and transitions are unhurried and purposeful.
2. Supports and plans for children who find transitions difficult.
3. Prepares for transitions and limits wait times.
4. Provides children with opportunities to participate in daily routines such as picking up toys.
5. Minimizes or eliminates pull-out programs and activities that take children away from the classroom to another location.
6. Appropriately prepares children and families for transitions to new or different programs/classrooms.
7. Gives all children notice to prepare for change, and explain to them what is happening and what will happen next.
8. Minimizes idle time in group settings.

10. Program Standard: *Adults use language and strategies which enhance children's language and critical thinking.*

A Quality Program:
1. Expects teaching staff to talk with children individually and in small groups and to take advantage of spontaneous events to talk with each child individually.
2. Expects teaching staff to ask children a variety of questions designed to stimulate extended response (e.g., minimizing "yes" or "no" response questions, increasing "why" and "how" questions).
3. Expects teaching staff to talk to children about the children's emotions and the emotions of others and about how to understand the perspective of another person.
4. Expects teaching staff to involve children in making choices and evaluating the consequences of the choices they have made.
5. Provides opportunities for children to contribute their ideas to class decisions and to help make class rules.
6. Involves children in planning, implementing, and evaluating some class activities.

11. Program Standard: *Teachers are enthusiastic models of life-long learning by providing children with many opportunities to explore, manipulate, investigate, and discover.*

A Quality Program:
1. Initially presents concepts to children via concrete, hands-on materials.
2. Makes concrete materials available on an on-going basis as needed to reinforce concepts.
3. Presents concepts several times throughout the year, using various methods and materials.
4. Presents simple skills prior to more complex skills.
5. Encourages children to take risks and use trial and error as a valuable way of learning.

Facilities, Materials, and Equipment

Early childhood programs assure that the learning environment, materials, and equipment promote the curriculum, children's well-being, and program quality. To a much greater degree than in programs for older children, the learning environment is a physical representation of the curriculum. Since so much of young children's development and learning take place through their senses and as a result of direct interaction with materials of all kinds, the kind and quality of the toys and other learning materials play a critical role in advancing their development. Items must be adequate and appropriate to children's age, developmental levels, and relate to what they are learning.

1. **Program Standard:** *The facility is safe and secure and complies with the legal requirements of the local, state, and/or federal licensing or accrediting agency having jurisdiction over the program.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Has a current child care center license.
   2. Complies with all facility requirements of the sponsoring agency or legislation.
   3. Makes provisions for all children, including those with disabilities, to ensure their safety, comfort, and participation.
   4. Assures that staff and parents are knowledgeable of all safety policies and procedures that apply to the program.

2. **Program Standard:** *The indoor physical space is organized into functional learning centers that can be recognized by the children and that allow for individual activities and social interactions.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Provides at least 50 square feet per child of usable space in classrooms.
   2. Organizes the classroom space into learning centers using child sized furniture and equipment, age appropriate shelving, low walls, and/or other items to separate the areas.
   3. Organizes the classroom space to include areas where a child can be away from the group and able to be observed by staff.
   4. Provides space for each child to store personal belongings and projects.
   5. Addresses different curricular/developmental domains (e.g., aesthetic, emotional, language, cognitive, sensory, social, physical) and instructional strategies at each learning center.
   6. Allows children to move from one area to another without obstructions.
   7. Organizes materials for children's easy access.
   8. Prominently displays children's work in the classroom.

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3. **Program Standard:** *The outdoor physical space is safe and allows for individual activities and social interactions.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Provides at least 75 square feet per child of usable outdoor play space, which includes a variety of safe surfaces and elevations (e.g., soil, grass, sand, hard, flat, elevated).
   2. Keeps children protected from unsafe areas (e.g., streets, parking lots, driveways, swimming pools).
   3. Provides playground equipment of suitable size for the age of the children and accessible to children with disabilities.
   4. Provides materials and equipment suitable for use outdoors.

4. **Program Standard:** *Equipment, toys, materials, and furniture reflect the curriculum, are age-appropriate, safe, and supportive of the abilities and developmental level of each child served.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Provides materials, equipment and activities that reflect children's culture, diversity, developmental abilities, individual learning styles, and home language.
   2. Provides instructional adjustments and adaptive devices for children with disabilities to ensure their learning, comfort, and participation.
   3. Provides safe, appropriate, and sufficient equipment, toys, materials, and furniture that support the learning expectations and encourage each child to experiment and explore.

5. **Program Standard:** *Computer software used in the program is developmentally appropriate for young children and reflects the program's curriculum and technology tools are integrated into the learning environment.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Locates computers and other technology tools within classrooms.
   2. Locates computers and printers adjacent to one another to promote children's interaction.
   3. Provides child-sized computer furniture so that screens are at children's eye level.
   4. Provides other classroom materials that reflect items portrayed in software programs.

Child Assessment and Program Evaluation

Young children present special challenges for assessment. Growth and development is most rapid during early childhood and is often uneven and greatly influenced by children's environments. Young children do not understand testing in the same way older children do. Children may be harmed if the wrong instruments are used in the wrong way. Such inappropriate practices often result in the use of faulty information to make program placements or to alter children's learning opportunities. Options for gathering and reporting information are numerous. It is critical that those selected are sensitive to cultural, racial, class, gender, linguistic, and ability differences among children and families.

Knowing how children are doing as a result of participating in a program or set of services is of critical importance to teachers, parents, program leaders and local, state and federal agencies having responsibilities for the programs. Each of these stakeholders may have different reasons for needing the information quality child assessment can bring, but in the end, the most important stakeholder is the child (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2003).

1. **Program Standard:** *The program uses information gained from a variety of child assessment measures to plan learning experiences for individual children and groups.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Uses sound developmental and learning theory to plan and conduct child assessment.
   2. Uses assessment tools and processes that are continuous, ongoing, cumulative, and in the language that the child understands.
   3. Primarily uses children's involvement in ordinary classroom activities, not artificially contrived tests, to gauge children's growth.
   4. Uses a variety of instruments and processes to document children's growth, development, and learning over time (e.g., observation and anecdotal reports; teacher questions; parent, provider, and child interviews; products and samples of children's work; teacher-constructed or standardized checklists; children's self-appraisals).
   5. Arranges assessment so that it does not bring added stress for children or teachers.
   6. Uses assessment results from a variety of sources as a guide for curriculum and teaching decisions and the need for intervention for individuals and classrooms.
   7. Uses results from more than one assessment method to determine the need for and plan of intervention.

2. **Program Standard:** *The program uses information from child assessments to effectively communicate children's progress with their parents.*

   A Quality Program:
   1. Recognizes that parents have essential information about their children's growth and development that can help staff work effectively with their children.
   2. Frequently shares information with parents on both a formal and an informal basis about reasonable expectations for children's growth, development, and learning.

3. Uses a combination of methods to share information about children's progress and challenges at formal and informal parent/teacher conferences (e.g., work samples, anecdotal records, photos, narrative reports).
4. Arranges to share information about children's progress with non-custodial parents.
5. Uses newsletters and Web pages to convey information about the program's activities and projects that support children's learning and growth (e.g., descriptions of assessments used).

3. **Program Standard:** *The program uses appropriate assessment tools to help identify children who may require additional specialized programs and interventions.*

A Quality Program:
1. Uses valid and reliable screening tools and procedures to determine whether children require further evaluation.
2. Informs parents of the types and purposes of the screening in advance of the screening, the results of those screenings, and the purposes and results of subsequent evaluations.
3. Uses specialists to evaluate and diagnose children whose growth and development falls outside age appropriate guidelines as determined by screening processes.
4. Gives parents the opportunity to review their child's records in a timely manner and secures written consent if additional evaluation is proposed.
5. Uses reliable and valid standardized assessment tools for meeting requirements for federal funding accountability or other purposes.
6. Uses teacher observations and parent feedback to supplement data collected by standardized instruments.

4. **Program Standard:** *The program implements program evaluation processes to learn how the program can be improved and be accountable.*

A Quality Program:
1. Bases its annual program evaluation on its current program philosophy, goals and objectives.
2. Involves families, staff and a variety of community members in an annual review of all program components and uses program evaluation results to develop and implement a plan for improvement.
3. Uses child assessment results, program assessment, and other data to evaluate how well the program is meeting its goals.
4. Evaluates teachers and administrators with methods that reflect the program's philosophy and curriculum, and develops professional goals based on these evaluations.
5. Regularly reviews the improvement plan and assesses progress throughout the year.
6. If applicable, cooperates in providing data required by legislation and/or agencies administering the program.

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5. <u>**Program Standard:**</u> *Assessment tools used for any purpose are those best suited for the purpose, which meet professional standards, and which are used in an appropriate manner.*

<u>**A Quality Program:**</u>
1. Assures that teaching and administrative staff have expertise related to the most valid and reliable assessment measures and procedures needed for the particular assessment.
2. Seeks assistance from knowledgeable professionals when selecting and using assessment tools.
3. Uses instruments only for the purpose(s) intended (e.g., does not use screening tools to make decisions about placement or to assess progress).
4. Uses the least intrusive tools needed for the specific purpose of the assessment (e.g., avoids using standardized tests for decisions about curriculum and teaching or to convey information about children's progress to their parents).

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**Early Learning Expectations for
Three- and Four-Year-Old Children**

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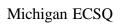# Early Learning Expectations for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children

Introduction

In the 1992 document, *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten through Second Grade,* Michigan attempted to define what young children ages four to eight might reasonably be expected to know and be able to do and what they should be learning in high quality programs and settings. In 1992, student expectations were set mostly for the end of elementary school, the end of middle school, and the end of high school, so it seemed important to indicate what children should be learning in the preschool and primary years. The developers wanted to make sure that children would have the opportunity to learn content and acquire appropriate skills within a wide developmental period. Now that children's achievement is measured yearly beginning in third grade, it has become necessary to define the expectations for student achievement on an annual basis beginning in kindergarten, and by extension, to isolate the learning and development expectations for children before they enter formal schooling. These expectations are meant to emphasize significant content appropriate for preschoolers at this very special time in their lives, to protect them from an underestimation of their potential <u>and</u> from the pressure of academic work meant for older children.

These expectations are not meant to prevent children from enrolling in age-appropriate learning experiences or to exclude them from needed services and supports. High quality preschool and prekindergarten settings, in centers, homes, and throughout the community, provide children experiences and opportunities that allow them to meet these expectations.

This section of *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten* is meant to apply to all three- and four-year-old children in Michigan, both those whose development is typical and those who are of differing abilities and backgrounds. It recognizes that young children's growth, development, and learning are highly idiosyncratic. Young children learn at different rates in the various domains of their development and not all children master skills and content within a domain in the same order, although there are patterns to their development. All domains of child development are important to the success of early learners; the domains and learning and development within them are interrelated, and dissected here only to be able to discuss them.

The sections that follow are organized with a brief introduction to the domain and content area, followed by statements about children's learning. Each "early learning expectation" is illustrated by several items indicating how children typically exhibit their progress toward meeting that expectation. These items are not meant to be exhaustive; children will demonstrate their progress in many ways.

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Approaches to Learning

Children approach their learning in different ways. Adults who provide early care and education programs should take children's unique attitudes, habits, and learning styles into consideration when planning for them. The learning environment should be designed to support and increase children's initiative, curiosity, engagement, persistence, invention and imagination in their work and play. The important role of positive attitudes and dispositions, and openness to new tasks and challenges cannot be overemphasized. Children should have experiences and opportunities that foster the promotion of self-initiated learning. How children approach their learning is closely related to their social, emotional, intellectual, language, and physical development.

1. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children show increasing initiative and curiosity about their work and play in all areas of the curriculum.*

   Children typically:
   1. Choose to participate in an increasing variety of tasks and activities using all five senses.
   2. Make choices and value decisions, as they solve the problems in their work and play.
   3. Become more comfortable with taking risks and with generating their own ideas.
   4. Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, inventiveness, and confidence.
   5. Grow in eagerness to learn about and discuss a growing range of topics, ideas, and tasks.
   6. Demonstrate comfort with open-ended questions and problems.
   7. Value the uniqueness of their own work.

2. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children show increasing engagement and persistence in their work and play in all areas of the curriculum.*

   Children typically:
   1. Grow in abilities to persist in and complete a variety of tasks, activities, projects, and experiences.
   2. Demonstrate increasing ability to set goals and develop and follow through on plans.
   3. Show growing capacity to maintain concentration in spite of distractions and interruptions.
   4. Begin to demonstrate the ability to follow a sequence of steps to create a finished project.
   5. Grow in the ability to plan individually, in small groups, and with the whole class.

3. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children show increasing invention and imagination in their work and play in all areas of the curriculum.*

   Children typically:
   1. Experiment, explore, and ask questions freely.
   2. Try new things and take risks.
   3. Problem solve using a variety of strategies.
   4. Grow in their ability to elaborate on their original ideas.
   5. Increasingly show originality and flexibility in their work.
   6. Use more and more complex scenarios in play.
   7. Explore movement, music, and a variety of artistic modes.

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Social and Emotional Development

To develop socially and emotionally, children need to develop the capacity to experience, express, and gain self-control over their emotions and social interactions. Children learn and thrive when they feel emotionally secure with and socially connected to adults who provide nurturing relationships and positive early learning experiences. When children feel emotionally secure and physically safe, they feel more confident to explore their environment and to learn.

An environment that is responsive to each child and that is predictable and consistent strengthens a child's confidence in approaching new challenges and enhances the development of trusting and healthy relationships. In the preschool years children grow in the ability to participate in the larger world beyond the family–to serve as a resource, to negotiate, to lead and follow, and to be actively involved in their relationships with others.

1. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children develop and exhibit a healthy sense of self.*

   Children typically:
   1. Develop greater self awareness.
   2. Continue to develop personal preferences.
   3. Demonstrate growing confidence in expressing their feelings, needs and opinions.
   4. Become increasingly more independent.
   5. Recognize and have positive feelings about their own gender, family, race, culture and language.
   6. Identify a variety of feelings and moods (in themselves and others).

2. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children show increasing ability to regulate how they express their emotions.*

   Children typically:
   1. Grow in their capacity to avoid harming themselves, others, or things around them when expressing feelings, needs and opinions.
   2. Grow in their ability to follow simple, clear, and consistent directions and rules.
   3. Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully more and more of the time.
   4. Begin to know when and how to seek help from an adult or peer.
   5. Manage transitions and follow routines most of the time.
   6. Can adapt to different environments.

3. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children develop healthy relationships with other children and adults.*

   Children typically:
   1. Increase their ability to initiate and sustain age-appropriate interactions with peers and adults.
   2. Begin to develop and practice the use of problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
   3. Recognize similarities and differences in people (gender, family, race, culture, language).

4. Increase their capacity to take another's perspective.
5. Show increasing respect for the rights of others.
6. Show progress in developing and keeping friendships.
7. Participate successfully as a group member.
8. Demonstrate an increasing sense of belonging and awareness of their role as a member of a family, classroom, and community.

Intellectual Development

In the early years intellectual development and brain development are integrally linked. Young children acquire, adapt, practice, apply, and transfer knowledge in order to construct new or expanded concepts and make sense of their world. By observing, exploring, manipulating, listening, reflecting, and making inferences, children become capable of more complex thinking. They are able to use their experiences and knowledge in increasingly advanced ways.

Having knowledge of the major cognitive characteristics of children enables parents, teachers and caregivers to support their cognitive development and learning across the curriculum. Intellectual development across content areas (e.g., language and early literacy, math, science, social studies) is interrelated. These expectations cross and have application in all of them, thus supporting children's learning across the curriculum.

1. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children explore with increasing understanding the physical characteristics and relationships of objects and happenings in their environment.*

   Children typically:
   1. Explore and identify the characteristics of objects, including their similarities and differences.
   2. Progress from categorizing objects and events using one attribute to categorize the same set of objects or events in multiple ways.
   3. Can provide reasons for grouping objects in particular ways.
   4. Can classify objects and events by identifying sets of large groups (e.g., all horses and all dogs are animals, all houses are buildings).
   5. Can progress from sequencing objects and events by using one attribute to sequencing the same set of objects or events in multiple ways, providing reasons for sequencing in particular ways.

2. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children represent what they understand about the world through actions, objects, and words.*

   Children typically:
   1. Recognize symbols in the environment (e.g, traffic signals, signs).
   2. Use symbols to represent their thoughts and ideas through play and expressive language.

3. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children gain, organize, and use information in increasingly complex ways.*

   Children typically:
   1. Gather information and learn new concepts through experimentation and discovery, making connections to what they already know.
   2. Share through words or actions the acquisition of increasingly complex concepts.

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4. Early Learning Expectation: *Children move from solving problems through trial and error to beginning to use varied strategies, resources, and techniques to test out possibilities and find solutions.*

Children typically:
1. Demonstrate problem-solving skills in their hands-on activities.
2. Increase their ability to observe attentively.
3. Increase their ability to ask questions appropriate to the circumstance.
4. Increase their ability to predict outcomes by checking out and evaluating their predictions.
5. Try a variety of ways of solving problems.
6. Demonstrate enjoyment in solving their own problems.

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Language and Early Literacy Development

Children begin to communicate at birth. During the preschool years they are emerging as language users and developing competence as listeners, speakers, readers, writers and viewers. Each of the language arts is strengthened by integrated literacy experiences in print-rich environments in homes, neighborhoods, and in early learning settings.

Having knowledge of the major characteristics of children's language development in the three- and four-year old age range enables parents, teachers and caregivers to provide support and strengthen children's emerging competence. Intentional learning experiences which support the early learning expectations outlined below will help young children become motivated and efficient communicators who listen, speak, read, write, and view effectively for meaningful purposes.

1. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to understand written language read to them from a variety of meaningful materials, use reading-like behaviors, and make progress towards becoming conventional readers.*

   Children typically:
   A. In comprehension strategies:
   1. Retell a few important events and ideas they have heard from written materials (e.g., in stories and in books about things and events).
   2. Enlarge their vocabularies both with words from conversation and instructional materials and activities.
   3. Use different strategies for understanding written materials (e.g., making predictions using what they already know, using the structure of texts, linking themselves and their experiences to the written materials, asking relevant questions).
   4. Demonstrate reading-like behaviors with familiar written materials [i.e., moving from labeling pictures to creating connected stories using book language (e.g., "Once upon a time . . ."); using patterns and vocabulary that occur in printed material to making use of printed text (e.g., trying out what one is learning about words and sounds)].
   5. Talk about preferences for favorite authors, kinds of books, and topics and question the content and author's choices (critical literacy).

   B. In print and alphabetic knowledge:
   1. Show progress in identifying and associating letters with their names and sounds.
   2. Recognize a few personally meaningful words including their own name, "mom," "dad," signs, and other print in their environment.
   3. Participate in play activities with sounds (e.g., rhyming games, finger plays).

   C. In concepts about reading:
   1. Understand that ideas can be written and then read by others.
   2. Understand that one of the goals of reading is to understand what the author wants you to know.
   3. Understand print and book handling concepts including directionality, title etc.
   4. Understand that people read for many purposes (e.g., enjoyment, information, to understand directions).

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5. Understand that printed materials have various forms and functions (e.g., signs, labels, notes, letters, types).
6. Develop an understanding of the roles of authors and illustrators.

2. __Early Learning Expectation:__ *Children begin to develop writing skills to communicate and express themselves effectively for a variety of purposes.*

__Children typically:__
1. Understand that their ideas can be written and then read by themselves or others.
2. Use a variety of forms of early writing (e.g., scribbling, drawing, use of letter strings, copied environmental print) and move toward the beginning of phonetic and/or conventional spelling.
3. Begin to develop an understanding of purposes for writing (e.g., lists, directions, stories, invitations, labels).
4. Represent their own or imaginary experiences through writing (with/without illustrations).
5. Write familiar words such as their own name.
6. Attempt to read or pretend to read what they have written to friends, family members, and others.
7. Show beginnings of a sense of the need to look over and modify their writings and drawings (e.g., adding to picture or writing).
8. Develop greater control over the physical skills needed to write letters and numbers.

3. __Early Learning Expectation:__ *Children develop abilities to express themselves clearly and communicate ideas to others.*

__Children typically:__
1. Use spoken language for a variety of purposes (e.g., to express feelings, to ask questions, to talk about their experiences, to ask for what they need, to respond to others).
2. Show increasing comfort and confidence when speaking.
3. Experiment and play with sounds (e.g., rhyming, alliteration, playing with sounds, and other aspects of phonological awareness).
4. Continue to develop vocabulary by using words learned from stories and other sources in conversations.
5. Speak in increasingly more complex combinations of words and in sentences.
6. Understand the roles of the participants in conversation (e.g., taking turns in conversation and relating their own comments to what is being talked about; asking relevant questions).
7. Take part in different kinds of roles as a speaker (e.g., part of a group discussion, role playing, fantasy play, storytelling and retelling).
8. Use nonverbal expressions and gestures to match and reinforce spoken expression.
9. Show progress in speaking both their home language and English (if non-English-speaking children).
10. If appropriate, show progress in learning alternative communication strategies such as sign language.

4. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children grow in their capacity to use effective listening skills and understand what is said to them.*

  Children typically:
  1. Gain information from listening (e.g., to conversations, stories, songs, poems).
  2. Show progress in listening to and following spoken directions.
  3. Show progress in listening attentively, avoiding interrupting others.
  4. Respond with understanding to speech directed at them.
  5. Understand the concept and role of an audience (e.g., being part of an audience, being quiet, being considerate, looking at the speaker).
  6. Understand and respond appropriately to non-verbal expressions and gestures.
  7. Show progress in listening to and understanding both their home language and English (if non-English-speaking children).

5. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to develop strategies that assist them in viewing a variety of multimedia materials effectively and critically.*

  Children typically:
  1. View multimedia materials for a variety of purposes (e.g., to gain information, for pleasure, to add to their understanding of written materials).
  2. Use different strategies for understanding multimedia (e.g., making predictions using what they already know, using the structure of the media, linking themselves and their experiences to the content of the media, asking relevant questions).
  3. Begin to compare information across sources, question the content and producer's choices, and discriminate between fantasy and reality (critical viewing).

6. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children develop positive attitudes about themselves as literate beings--as readers, writers, speakers, viewers, and listeners.*

  Children typically:
  1. Choose to read, write, listen, speak, and view for enjoyment and information, and to expand their curiosity.

7. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to understand that communication is diverse and that people communicate in a variety of ways.*

  Children typically:
  1. Understand that some people communicate in different languages and other forms of English.
  2. Become aware of the value of the language used in their homes.
  3. Become aware of alternate forms of communication (e.g., Braille, sign language, lip reading).
  4. Begin to understand the value and enjoyment of being able to communicate in more than one language or form of communication.

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Creative Development

The creative arts include the visual arts (drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, fiber, and multimedia), instrumental and vocal music, creative movement, and dramatic play (puppetry, story telling, mime, and role playing). Support for children's creative development is essential to foster their appreciation of the arts and their competence, self-reliance, and success. Children's learning in all domains is enhanced by the integration of the creative arts with other areas of the curriculum. Teachers who encourage creativity nurture self-esteem and mutual respect. Children whose questions, individuality, and originality are honored see themselves as valued persons who can succeed in school and life.

1. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children show how they feel, what they think, and what they are learning through experiences in the visual arts.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can use their own ideas to draw, paint, mold, and build with a variety of art materials (e.g., paint, clay, wood, materials from nature such as leaves).
   2. Begin to plan and carry out projects with increasing persistence.
   3. Begin to show growing awareness and use of artistic elements (e.g., line, shape, color, texture, form).
   4. Create representations that contain increasing detail.

2. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children show how they feel, what they think, and what they are learning through listening, participating in, and creating instrumental and vocal music experiences.*

   Children typically:
   1. Participate in musical activities (e.g., listening, singing, finger plays, singing games, and simple performances) with others.
   2. Begin to understand that music comes in a variety of musical styles.
   3. Begin to understand and demonstrate the components of music (e.g., tone, pitch, beat, rhythm, melody).
   4. Become more familiar with and experiment with a variety of musical instruments.

3. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children show how they feel, what they think, and what they are learning through movement experiences.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can respond to selected varieties of music, literature, or vocal tones to express their feelings and ideas through creative movement.
   2. Begin to show awareness of contrast through use of dance elements (e.g., time: fast/slow; space: high/middle/low; energy: hard/soft).
   3. Begin to identify and create movement in place and through space.

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4. Early Learning Expectation: *Children show how they feel, what they think, and what they are learning through dramatic play.*

Children typically:
1. Grow in the ability to pretend and to use objects as symbols for other things.
2. Use dramatic play to represent concepts, understand adult roles, characters, and feelings.
3. Begin to understand components of dramatic play (e.g., body, voice).
4. Contribute ideas and offer suggestions to build the dramatic play theme.
5. Begin to differentiate between fantasy and reality.

5. Early Learning Expectation: *Children develop rich and rewarding aesthetic lives.*

Children typically:
1. Develop healthy self-concepts through creative arts experiences.
2. Show eagerness and pleasure when approaching learning through the creative arts.
3. Show growing satisfaction with their own creative work and growing respect for the creative work of others.
4. Can use alternative forms of art to express themselves depending on the avenues available to them (e.g., through the visual arts, if hearing impaired; through listening to music, if physically impaired).
5. Are comfortable sharing their ideas and work with others.
6. Use the creative arts to show their appreciation for the beauty in nature.
7. Begin to develop their own preferences for stories, poems, illustrations, forms of music, and other works of art.
8. Begin to appreciate their artistic heritage and that of other cultures.
9. Can talk about their creations with peers and adults.
10. Begin to develop creative arts vocabulary.

Physical Development and Health

Good physical health and well-being, and a safe environment contribute to improved learning (e.g., cognitive skills, the promotion of agility and strength, neural processing, kinesthetic confidence, general body competence, and overall autonomy). Physical development (fine and gross/large motor) is important to the achievement of general health. Gross motor development enhances body awareness, understanding of spatial relationships, and cognitive growth. Fine motor development fosters dexterity as well as coordination of the hand and eye when using the small muscles of the fingers and hands in a variety of activities.

Children learn to value their bodies and keep themselves healthy and safe. In the preschool years children improve movement skills, cooperative and social interaction skills, and develop greater knowledge about the importance of physical activity and exercise. They begin to learn that their behavior affects their health and safety and recognize that not all children can participate in activities in the same way.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

1. <u>**Early Learning Expectation:**</u> *Children increase their ability to understand and control their bodies and learn that regular physical activity can enhance their overall physical, social, and mental health.*

   <u>**Children typically:**</u>
   1. Begin to recognize and learn the names of body parts and their locations.
   2. Begin to understand spatial awareness for themselves, others, and their environment.
   3. Participate actively and on a regular basis, in games, outdoor play, and other forms of exercise that enhance physical fitness.

2. <u>**Early Learning Expectation:**</u> *Children experience growth in gross motor development and use large muscles to improve a variety of gross motor skills in both structured and unstructured settings.*

   <u>**Children typically:**</u>
   1. Begin or continue to develop traveling movements such as walking, climbing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, and galloping.
   2. Show their ability to use different body parts in a rhythmic pattern.
   3. Show increasing abilities to coordinate movements (e.g., throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing balls, using the slide and swing) in order to build strength, flexibility and stamina.

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3. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children experience growth in fine motor development and use small muscles to improve a variety of fine motor skills both in structured and unstructured settings.*

Children typically:
1. Develop and refine motor control and coordination, eye-hand coordination, finger/thumb and whole-hand strength coordination and endurance using a variety of age-appropriate tools (e.g., scissors, pencils, markers, crayons, blocks, putting together puzzles, using a variety of technology).
2. Use fine motor skills they are learning in daily activities (e.g., dressing themselves).

4. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children participate in activities that encourage self-motivation, emphasize cooperation, and minimize competition.*

Children typically:
1. Learn to cooperate with others through games and other activities and actions that show a growing knowledge of the rights of others.
2. Take pride in their own abilities and increase self-motivation.
3. Begin to develop an appreciation and respect for the varying physical abilities and capabilities of others.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND NUTRITION

5. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to have knowledge about and make age-appropriate healthy choices in daily life.*

Children typically:
1. Show growing independence in keeping themselves clean, personal care when eating, dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth, use of tissues for nose-blowing (and their disposal), and toileting.
2. Grow in understanding of the importance of good health and its relationship to physical activity.
3. Talk about ways to prevent spreading germs and diseases to other people.
4. Develop an understanding of basic oral hygiene.
5. Begin to be able to recognize activities that contribute to the spread of communicable diseases (e.g., sharing of cups, eating utensils, hats, clothing, foods).
6. Can begin to recognize some symptoms of disease or health issues (e.g., a sore throat is not a "sore neck") and common instruments used in diagnosing disease (e.g., thermometer, x-ray machines).
7. Begin to become aware of activities, substances, and situations that may pose potential hazards to health [e.g., smoking, poisonous materials, edible, non-edible items (e.g., plants/berries), medications (appropriate use of)].

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6. Early Learning Expectation: *Children recognize that they have a role in preventing accidents or potential emergencies.*

Children typically:
1. Begin to learn appropriate safety procedures (e.g., in the home, at school, as a pedestrian, outdoors, on the playground, with vehicles, with bicycles, around bodies of water).
2. Identify persons to whom they can turn for help in an emergency situation.
3. Begin to know important facts about themselves (e.g., address, phone number, parent's name).
4. Become aware of issues relative to personal safety (e.g., inappropriate touching, good and bad secrets, learning how to say 'No' to inappropriate touching by any other person, recognizing when to tell an adult about an uncomfortable situation).
5. Begin to learn the correct procedure for self-protection in emergency situations (e.g., tornados, fire, storms, gun fire, chemical spills, avoidance of other's blood and vomit).

7. Early Learning Expectation: *Children become aware of and begin to develop nutritional habits that contribute to good health.*

Children typically:
1. Grow in their understanding of the importance of eating nutritious meals and snacks at regular intervals.
2. Begin to listen to body signals of hunger and fullness, learn to choose how much to eat at meals and snacks, and are able to convey their needs for food to adults.
3. Use age/developmentally-appropriate eating utensils safely and correctly.
4. Become aware of foods that cause allergic reactions for some children and/or other dietary needs or restrictions.

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Early Learning in Mathematics

Young children's early understandings of mathematics are broad in scope and extend well beyond numbers and counting. Problem solving is the central focus of the mathematics curriculum from the early years onward. How children's early understandings are supported and extended by their parents and caregivers/teachers enable them to use and expand their knowledge. Mathematical experiences involving interactions with the environment, materials, peers and supportive adults give children opportunities to build, modify, and integrate simple mathematical concepts.

1. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to develop processes and strategies for solving mathematical problems.*

   Children typically:
   1. Try to solve problems in their daily lives using mathematics (e.g., how many napkins are needed).
   2. Generate new problems from every day mathematical situations and use current knowledge and experience to solve them (e.g., distribute crackers).
   3. Begin to develop and use various approaches to problem solving based upon their trial and error experiences.
   4. Begin to talk about the processes and procedures they used to solve concrete and simple mathematical situations.

2. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to develop skills of comparing and classifying objects, relationships and events in their environment.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can describe, match, and sort.
   2. Identify likenesses and differences.
   3. Can place objects or events in order, according to a given criterion (e.g., color, shape, size, time).
   4. Recognize that the same group can be sorted and classified in more than one way.
   5. Can describe why they group or sequence in a particular way.

3. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to develop the ability to seek out and to recognize patterns in everyday life.*

   Children typically:
   1. Recognize, describe, copy, extend, and create simple patterns with real objects and through pictures.
   2. Identify patterns in their environment.
   3. Investigate patterns and describe relationships.
   4. Recognize patterns in various formats (e.g., things that can be seen, heard, felt).

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4. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to develop skills of sorting and organizing information and using information to make predictions and solve new problems.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can generate problems that involve predicting, collecting, and analyzing information.
   2. Use simple estimation to make better guesses.

5. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children explore and discover simple ways to measure.*

   Children typically:
   1. Show an awareness that things in their environment can be measured.
   2. Begin to understand concepts of weight.
   3. Show an awareness of the concept of time, beginning with the recognition of time as a sequence of events.
   4. Recognize personal time as it relates to their daily life (e.g., breakfast, snack).
   5. Show an awareness of temperature as it affects their daily lives.
   6. Use beginning skills of estimation in solving everyday measurement problems (e.g., about how many cookies are needed for a small group of children).
   7. Begin to use non-standard (e.g., length of hand) measures for length and area of objects.
   8. Begin to understand that tools (e.g., rulers, scales, counters) can be used to measure properties of objects and amounts.

6. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children can translate a problem or activity into a new form (e.g., a picture, diagram, model, symbol, or words) by applying emerging skills in representing, discussing, reading, writing, and listening.*

   Children typically:
   1. Participate regularly in informal conversations about mathematical concepts and number relationships.
   2. Talk about their own mathematical explorations and discoveries using simple mathematical language and quantity-related words.
   3. Show growth in understanding that number words and numerals represent quantities.
   4. Begin to use symbols to represent real objects and quantities.
   5. Make progress from matching and recognizing number symbols to reading and writing numerals.
   6. Recognize that information comes in many forms and can be organized and displayed in different ways.
   7. Begin to record their work with numbers in a variety of simple concrete and pictorial formats, moving toward some use of number symbols.
   8. Begin to understand that simple concrete and representational graphs are ways of collecting, organizing, recording, and describing information.

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7. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to develop an understanding of numbers and explore simple mathematical processes (operations) using concrete materials.*

   Children typically:
   1. Develop an increasing interest and awareness of numbers and counting as a means for determining quantity and solving problems.
   2. Match, build, compare, and label amounts of objects and events (e.g., birthdays in the week) in their daily lives.
   3. Make progress in moving beyond rote counting to an understanding of conceptual counting (one-to-one correspondence).
   4. Recognize and match number symbols for small amounts with the appropriate amounts.
   5. Show progress in linking number concepts, vocabulary, quantities and written numerals in meaningful ways.
   6. Use cardinal (e.g., one, two) and ordinal (e.g., first, second) numbers in daily home and classroom life.
   7. Understand how numbers can be used to label various aspects of their lives (e.g., house number, phone number, ages of classmates).
   8. Develop an increasing ability to count in sequence up to ten and beyond.
   9. Begin to describe comparative relationships (e.g., more/less/same number of objects or quantities).
   10. Begin to develop the ability to solve problems involving joining, separating, combining, and comparing amounts when using small quantities of concrete materials.

8. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children build their visual thinking skills through explorations with shape and the spaces in their classrooms and neighborhoods.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can make models, draw, name, and/or classify common shapes and verbally describe them in simple terms.
   2. Investigate and begin to predict the results of combining, subdividing, and changing shapes.
   3. Begin to recognize and appreciate geometric shapes in their environment.
   4. Begin to build an understanding of directionality, order, and positions of objects through the use of words (e.g., up, down, over, under, top, bottom, inside, outside, in front of, behind).

Early Learning in Science

A science program for young children provides them with a better understanding of the world around them and how it works through building on their natural sense of wonder and curiosity. Early learning expectations for science model the nature of scientific inquiry which has at its core the opportunity to ask and answer questions and apply problem-solving skills. Children bring their emerging skills in mathematics to their experiences and use their growing abilities in representing ideas through language and the creative arts to portray their scientific knowledge.

The early science program uses active hands-on experiences to foster positive attitudes toward science and form the basis for later and more sophisticated understandings. This requires adults to model the same attitudes and sense of wonder about the world around them.

1. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children develop positive attitudes and gain knowledge about science through observation and active play.*

   Children typically:
   1. Demonstrate curiosity about and interest in their natural environment that leads them to confidently engage in activities related to science.
   2. Ask questions related to their own interest and observations.
   3. Talk about their own predictions, explanations and generalizations based on past and current experiences.
   4. Expand their observational skills (e.g., extending the time they observe, being able to describe and confirm their observations by using a variety of resources).
   5. Begin to participate in simple investigations (e.g., asking questions manipulating materials; anticipating what might happen next; testing their observations to determine why things happen).

2. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children show a beginning awareness of scientific knowledge related to living and nonliving things.*

   Children typically:
   1. Demonstrate a growing ability to collect, talk about, and record information about living and non-living things (e.g., through discussions, drawings).
   2. Begin to categorize living and nonliving things in their environment based on characteristics they can observe (e.g., texture, color, size, shape, temperature, usefulness, weight).
   3. Use observation skills to build awareness of plants and animals, their life cycles (e.g., birth, aging, death) and basic needs (e.g., air, food, light, rest).
   4. Begin to describe relationships among familiar plants and animals (e.g., caterpillars eat leaves).
   5. Begin to describe the places familiar plants and animals in their neighborhood live (e.g., city, drainage ponds, parks, fields, forests).
   6. Demonstrated greater knowledge and respect for their bodies (e.g., describe visible parts of the human body and their functions).

7. Observe and can describe and compare the motions of common objects in terms of speed and direction (e.g., faster, slowest, up, down).
8. Understand the way simple tools work through their play with common toys (e.g., wheels, pulleys, gears, screws).

3. <u>Early Learning Expectation:</u> *Children show a beginning awareness of scientific knowledge related to the earth.*

   <u>**Children typically:**</u>
   1. Can talk about observable characteristics of different seasons.
   2. Can talk about the observable properties of earth materials (sand, rocks, soil, water, and living organisms.
   3. Can talk about major features of the earth's surface (streams, hills, beaches) when found in the children's neighborhood and neighborhoods that they visit.
   4. Begin to describe weather and its changing conditions (e.g., wind, rain, snow, clouds).
   5. Talk about ways to be safe during bad weather.

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Early Learning in the Social Studies

Children study their social world from the moment of birth. By the time they are three- and four-years-old, children are becoming increasingly sophisticated in observing and understanding their social world (Chard, 1998). The preschool classroom is a perfect laboratory for children to learn the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to live in an interdependent democratic society as adults. The balance of age appropriate content and the use of inquiry to learn more about the people in their families and neighborhoods, the earth they live on, the people who live on the earth, and the study of their histories, will give young children the skills they will need as citizens of a democracy. At this age, learning in the social studies is closely related to children's social emotional development.

1. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to understand and interpret their relationship and place within their own environment.*

   Children typically:
   1. Include representations of various physical features (e.g., roads, bodies of water, buildings) in their play.
   2. Use and understand words to indicate size.
   3. Use and understand words for location and direction.

2. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to recognize that many different influences shape people's thinking and behavior.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can talk about personal information (e.g., name; family members; and, by four, knowledge of personal traits, address, telephone number).
   2. Begin to recognize themselves as unique individuals and become aware of the uniqueness of others.
   3. Show an understanding of family and how families are alike and different.
   4. Talk about ways members of a family can work together to help one another.
   5. Begin to recognize that people celebrate events in a variety of ways.
   6. Grow in understanding of and respect for differences among cultural groups, as well as their contributions to society.
   7. Participate in creating their own classroom celebrations.

3. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children show growth in their understanding of the concept of time and begin to realize that they are a part of a history, which includes people, places, events, and stories about the present and the past.*

   Children typically:
   1. Use words to describe time (e.g., yesterday, today, tomorrow).
   2. Can talk about recent and past events.

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4. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children begin to learn about the reasons for rules and laws, the importance of a democratic process, and the responsibilities of being a member of a classroom, a family, and a community.*

   Children typically:
   1. Grow in their understanding of the need for rules for their learning environment.
   2. Begin to understand consequences of following and breaking (disobeying) rules.
   3. Can identify people (e.g., parents, teachers, bus drivers, lunchroom helpers) who have authority in their home and early learning programs (e.g., who helps them make rules, who tells them when they are breaking a rule, who helps enforce rules).

5. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children increase their understanding about how basic economic concepts relate to their lives.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can talk about some of the workers and services in their community.
   2. Can talk about some of the ways people earn a living.
   3. Begin to understand that people pay for things with a representation of money (e.g., currency, checks, debit cards, credit cards).
   4. Make simple choices about how to spend money.

6. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children increase their understanding of the relationship between people and their environment and begin to recognize the importance of taking care of the resources in their environment.*

   Children typically:
   1. Begin to identify what families need to thrive (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, love).
   2. Can participate in improving their environment (e.g., pick up litter, recycle, plant trees and flowers, conserve lights, water and paper).

Early Skills in Using Technology

Technology is an everyday part of today's society, its influence continues to increase, and it will be an increasing feature of the future lives of today's young children. Technology is a broad term which includes a variety of tools (e.g., cameras, recorders and players, computers, telephones, Internet Web sites, electronic storybooks, and television). Recent research supports young children's age-appropriate use of technology to support and extend learning and development under the guidance of adults who understand how to use it appropriately.

1. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children explore and use various types of technology tools.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can describe and creatively use a variety of technological tools independently or with peer or adult help.
   2. Understand that technology tools can be used throughout the day.
   3. Follow directions to use computers and other technology tools.

2. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children can name various components of computer systems and use various input devices.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can name components (e.g., screen, printer, mouse, disks, CD, keyboard).
   2. Use adaptive devices to operate a software program as necessary.

3. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children work cooperatively with others while using technology tools.*

   Children typically:
   1. Talk, ask questions, solve problems, and share ideas with peers and adults, when using computers and other technology tools.
   2. Explain to others how a device or program works.
   3. Work cooperatively when other children are present at the computer.
   4. Begin to state and follow rules for using the computer.

4. **Early Learning Expectation:** *Children demonstrate responsible handling of technology equipment.*

   Children typically:
   1. Can keep foreign materials (e.g., play dough, water, paint, crayons, chalk, and small toys) away from equipment surfaces and openings.
   2. Can learn to handle equipment gently and avoid dropping items.
   3. Can learn to avoid turning computers off during operation.

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Glossary

Administrative/Supervisory Personnel: Personnel at the program and/or local district level (e.g., program directors, specialists, and school district level or building principals/administrators/ supervisors) who are responsible for administering, supervising, and leading early childhood education program services, activities, and instructional staff.

Advisory Council: A volunteer group convened to advise the program leaders regarding planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the early childhood program. The advisory council is typically comprised of parents and interested community members. Advisory councils may be established as a requirement of the sponsoring agency or legislation and within the framework of policies and practices as established by the council and the program's governing body.

Age Appropriate: Experiences and a learning environment that are designed to match predictable stages of children's growth and development across all domains (social, emotional, intellectual, language, creative, and physical).

Assessment: A systematic procedure for obtaining information from observation, interviews, portfolios, projects, tests, and other sources that can be used to make judgments about characteristics of children or programs.

Assistive Technology: Any item, piece of equipment, product or system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of anyone with disabilities.

Auxiliary Staff: Personnel who are responsible for delivering support services offered by the program and/or required by federal or state regulations (e.g., nurses, Title I staff, special education consultants, speech/language therapists, school psychologists, social workers).

Child Development Associate Credential (CDA): Nationally recognized performance-based credential awarded through the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, an independent subsidiary of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. A CDA credential is awarded for competence in working with children birth to five years of age and is roughly equivalent to completing one year of college level work in early childhood.

Child-initiated: Experiences which offer children a wide range of opportunities to directly experience and manipulate new ideas and objects (e.g., choosing from a variety of activities throughout the day; creating their own ideas for art projects, block constructions, or dance improvisations; creative play materials which encourage children to question, experiment, and pretend).

Collaboration: Initiatives which involve people from different agencies/programs joining together to work toward a common goal. The result is a shared endeavor with members eventually committing themselves as much to the common goal as to the interests of participating agencies. Agency autonomy is therefore limited, and the effort involves high contact (including the potential for high conflict) and is usually quite conspicuous to the outside world. An example would be the decision to build and jointly operate a community center that houses school, recreational, and social service components.

Community Collaborative Council: An organized group representative of the community and its family- and child-serving programs. Such a council typically serves as a communication link among programs and provides direction in planning, developing, implementing, and reviewing the early childhood education initiatives within the community.

Development and Learning: The process of change in which the child comes to master more and more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and interacting with people and objects in the environment. Development involves both a gradual unfolding of biologically determined characteristics and the learning process. Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, habits and values through experience and experimentation, observation, reflection, and/or study and instruction.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice: The process of making decisions about the care and education of children based on three important kinds of information:
- What is known about child development and learning
- What is known about the strengths, interests and needs of each individual child
- Knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live

Early Childhood Care and Education: Provision of purposeful programs and services, public or private, aimed at guiding and enhancing the social, emotional, intellectual, language, creative, and physical development of young children.

Early Childhood Special Education (formerly Pre-Primary Impaired—PPI): Federally and state mandated services for children with verified disabilities. These services may be provided in a self-contained classroom operated through a local school district or intermediate agency or in an inclusive setting at the local district or community level.

Early Childhood Specialist: A qualified person employed by or available to an early childhood program who has responsibility for the evaluation of the program and the instructional staff.

Early Childhood (ZA) Endorsement: Endorsement on an elementary teaching certificate recommended by Michigan colleges and universities upon completion of a twenty-hour early childhood education program. May be required by the Michigan Department of Education or other funders for some preschool/prekindergarten programs.

Early Learning Expectation: Statements that describe expectations for the learning and development of young children across the domains (social, emotional, intellectual, language, creative, and physical).

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Evaluation: The measurement, comparison, and judgment of the value, quality or worth of children's work and/or of their schools, teachers, or a specific educational program based upon valid evidence gathered through assessment.

Family: People related to each other by blood, marriage, adoption, or legal guardianship. Family members include biological parents (custodial and non-custodial), adoptive parents, foster parents, step-parents, grandparents and other relatives of significance to the child, and all siblings (half, step, full). In addition, any individual who has extensive contact with the child and/or is a significant person in the child's life could be included.

Family Collaboration/Partnership: Refers to respecting family members as equal partners in all phases of the early childhood program. Families are integrated into the early childhood program through opportunities to plan and participate in all stages of program development and implementation. Supportive opportunities encourage family members to expand their knowledge of child development, increase parenting skills, extend children's learning at home, and utilize community resources.

Family Literacy: Programs which serve the entire family and which involve parents and children in interactive literacy activities, training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children, parent literacy, and an early childhood program.

Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs): Statements of essential knowledge and skills for K-12 developed to respond to the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requirement that states implement grade level assessments based on rigorous academic standards. GLCEs do not represent the entire richness of a curriculum, but do highlight that which is essential for all students to know and be able to do.

Head Start Child Outcome Standards: A framework of outcome statements which apply to the federal Head Start program including eight domains, 27 domain elements, and related indicators intended to be reflective of what children should know or be able to do by the end of Head Start or entry into kindergarten.

Head Start Performance Standards: Quality standards which apply to the federal Head Start program and which address all aspects of early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, and program design and management.

Inclusion: The principle of enabling all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities. Natural settings include the home and local early childhood programs.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A written education plan for a child with disabilities developed by a team of professionals and the child's parent(s); it is reviewed and updated yearly and describes how the child is presently doing, what the child's learning needs are, and what services the child will need.

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Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): Refers both to a process and a written document required to plan appropriate activities and interventions that will help a child with a disability (birth through age two) and his or her family progress toward desired outcomes.

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: A federal program that provides funding to states to support the planning of service systems and the delivery of services, including evaluation and assessment, for young children who have or are at risk of developmental delays/disabilities. Funds are provided through the Infants and Toddlers Program (known as Part C of IDEA) for services to children birth through two years of age, and through the Preschool Program (known as Part B-Section 619 of IDEA) for services to children ages three to five.

Integrated approach: Children's learning activities and experiences presented through projects or thematic units involving many areas of the curriculum instead of through isolated subject areas.

Learning environment: Physical representation of the curriculum which includes the climate, teaching practices, and materials and equipment.

Michigan School Readiness Program: Michigan's targeted, publicly-funded prekindergarten program for four-year-old children who may be "at risk" of school failure. Each child must have two of the 25 identified risk factors; more than 50 percent of the children must be low income. Both center-based and home-based models are available. All programs must provide strong family involvement/parent education components as well as preschool education.

Non-paid Personnel: Parents and other volunteers.

Paraprofessional: An individual who works under the supervision of a teacher; also, associate or assistant teacher.

Parent Involvement: An early childhood program component which recognizes the central role of parents in their children's development and establishes a working partnership with each parent through written information, orientation to the program, home visits, and through regular opportunities for dialogue via parent conferences, participation on advisory committees, needs assessments, participation as classroom volunteers, and flexible scheduling of meetings and events.

Professional Development: Refers to opportunities for early childhood staff to receive ongoing training to increase their preparation and skills to care for and educate children. These include in-service training, workshops, college courses and degree programs, teacher exchanges, observations, coaching, seminars, mentoring, and credentialing programs.

Program Standard: Widely accepted expectations for the characteristics or quality of early childhood settings in homes, centers and schools. Such characteristics typically include the ratio of adults to children; the qualifications and stability of the staff; characteristics of adult-child relationships; the program philosophy and curriculum model, the nature of relationships with families; the quality and quantity of equipment and materials; the quality and quantity of space per child, and safety and health provisions.

Public Act 116: Licensing rules for child care centers promulgated by the authority of Section 2, of Act Number 116 of Public Acts of 1973 to the Michigan Department of Social Services which set forth the minimum standards for the care and protection of children. The rules apply to agencies, centers, or public and private schools providing child care services (Head Start, preschool full-day child care, before-and after-school, less than 24 hours) to children aged 2 ½ weeks to 13 years.

Screening: The use of a brief procedure or instrument designed to identify, from within a large population of children, those who may need further assessment to verify developmental and/or health risks.

Standardized Assessment Tool: A testing instrument that is administered, scored, and interpreted in a standard manner. It may be either norm-referenced or criterion-referenced.

Support Staff: Persons, whether paid or volunteer, employed by the program in such positions as food service, clerical, custodial, and transportation.

Teacher: The qualified person assigned the primary responsibility for planning and carrying out the program within an early childhood classroom. The teacher may work in partnership with other teachers or with paraprofessionals and has primary responsibility for the planning, organizing, and managing all aspects of the classroom learning environment; the assessment, diagnosis, and reporting of the individual learning and developmental needs of the children; and the establishment of cooperative relationships with families and colleagues.

Test: One or more questions, problems, and/or tasks designed to estimate a child's knowledge, understanding, ability, skill and/or attitudes in a consistent fashion across individuals. Information from a test or tests contributes to judgments made as a part of an assessment process.

Transition: (1) Procedures and activities that support the family and facilitate the child's introduction to new learning environments (e.g., home to school, from preschool to kindergarten, from one school to another, from one grade to another, and from one country to another). (2) Within the program's daily schedule, transition also refers to the process of shifting from one activity or place to another.

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Note: The developers wish to acknowledge the work of similar groups in many states. The guidelines and standards documents from other states were an invaluable resource in completing this work. A compendium of such documents may be found at *Building a System of Standards to Support Successful Early Learners: The Relationship Between Early Learning Standards, Program Standards, Program Quality Measures and Accountability* retrieved 11-01-04, from http://www.ccsso.org/projects/scass/projects/early_childhood_education_assessment_consortium/publications_and_products/3688.cfm.