



West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework:

*Content Standards and Learning Criteria
for Pre-Kindergarten*

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Framework of Effective Practices

Early experiences are critical to lay the foundation for children's life-long learning and success. Evidence now exists to provide us with information about what is most effective practice for early learning experiences. Based on this conclusive research, **curricula frameworks, early learning guidelines, ongoing assessment** of children's progress, and **program evaluation** have all been designed. These components work in an inter-related way to promote appropriate early education experiences and guide practitioners in providing quality experiences that are responsive to individual children and maximize learning and skill development.

All early learning programs benefit from using these components. Classrooms that are approved, participating WV Pre-k System classrooms are required by West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2525 to follow the requirements of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2525 sections regarding Standards for Preparing Students and Curriculum and Assessment. These sections require that WV Pre-k System classrooms adopt and implement an approved comprehensive curriculum and assessment as well as implement the standards for preparing students contained in the *WV Early Learning Standards Framework* (WV ELSF).

- **Comprehensive Curricula Frameworks** provide a blueprint for early educators to plan and implement intentional and thoughtful curriculum. A comprehensive curriculum provides information on how children learn, how the learning environment is set up, what kinds of materials to include, what kinds of experiences to offer, and how to guide children. Comprehensive curricula that are supported by effective scientifically based research allow practitioners to be responsive to individual children and communities while providing quality environments. The list of approved curricula and assessment

frameworks can be found at www.wvdhhr.org/oss/pieces/ta/curriculum.asp.



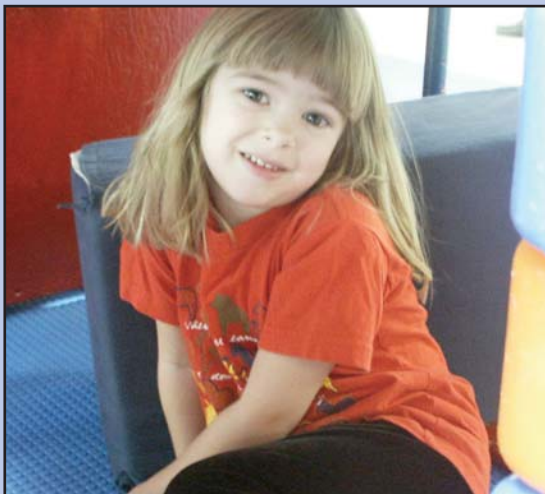
- **The West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework (WV ELSF)** outlines what children should know, understand and be able to do. Early learning standards communicate what content children should learn within the context of the comprehensive curriculum

framework. The WV ELSF provides a shared framework for practitioners, families, and policymakers to support early learning environments that are responsive to individual children and maximize learning. Greater opportunities for children's optimal development exist when a common definition of developmentally appropriate content guides early experiences.

- **Ongoing assessment** is an integral part of classroom programming that informs practitioners about where children are in relationship to the Learning Criteria. Ongoing observation of children provides early educators with important information to use in designing learning experiences to support each child's learning. The approved list of comprehensive curricula and assessment frameworks for WV Pre-k classrooms may be found at www.wvdhhr.org/oss/pieces/ta/curriculum.asp. Additionally, this document provides correlation information between the assessment frameworks and the WV ELSF learning criteria.
- **Curriculum enhancements** supplement or expand information to build on a program's approved WV Pre-k comprehensive curriculum and assessment. Supplements may provide more specific information about a particular content area. Selection and use of supplemental materials must utilize scientifically based research and support the philosophy and techniques of the comprehensive curriculum and the WV Pre-k System as defined in WVBE Policy 2525.

Implementation of supplemental materials may not use the following teaching strategies:

- Worksheets
- Periods of extended sitting and seat work at desks or tables
- Flashcards
- Prescribed sequence of content instead of responding to children's identified needs and interests
- Content areas taught in isolation
- All children practice the same skill at the same time
- Design does not support individualization or adaptation
- Peer to peer opportunities are not supported
- High level of teacher direction



Introduction to the WV Early Learning Standards Framework

Children, regardless of where they spend their preschool years, benefit from an enriched environment that supports maximum development and optimizes learning opportunities. In March 2002, the West Virginia legislature passed Senate Bill 247 that became West Virginia Code 18-5-44, a mandate for high quality early education programs for all four-year-old children and three-year-old children with identified special needs. These early education programs are now known as West Virginia Pre-kindergarten (WV-Pre-k). To support the provision of enriched environments for young children, a collaborative group of West Virginia early education professionals developed the



Early Learning Standards Framework, a document that is developmentally appropriate and based on what preschool children should know and learn. The standards are designed to serve as early learning guidelines for all children ages three through five, regardless of the setting.

The Early Learning Standards Framework is intended to guide practitioners in offering high quality early education environments that are responsive to individual children and maximize learning and skill development. Using this standards framework, educators can plan high quality learning experiences designed to promote school readiness skills for all children, including children with disabilities. The framework is not designed as an assessment tool, nor should it be used as a way to delay the entry of eligible children into kindergarten.

The development of the West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework was guided by a collaborative group of early educators, including representatives from public preschool, preschool special needs, Head Start, private faith-based preschools, child care, child care resource and referral agencies, parent education, higher education, West Virginia Department of Education, and West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. These representatives have worked together as the Partners Implementing an Early Care and Education System (PIECES) Quality Initiatives and Curriculum Committee. In addition to developing the WV ELSF, the committee also developed evaluation criteria, an evaluation tool, and the process for adoption of comprehensive curriculum and assessment systems.

The Early Learning Standards Framework is considered an integral part of an inter-related comprehensive curriculum and assessment system as defined by WVDE Policy 2525.

Guiding Principles

The West Virginia Board of Education has the responsibility for establishing high quality standards pertaining to all educational standards in all education programs (W. Va. Code 18-9A-22). The following principles were used in the development of the Early Learning Standards Framework and are to be considered in its usage.

- ◆ Opportunities for representation and symbolic thinking are essential elements in providing high quality early education programs. The ability to pretend and use symbols is at the foundation for symbolic and abstract thought leading to the development of academic skills such as math, science, and literacy. Children use representation and symbolic thinking across all domains to develop understanding of concepts and generalizations from concrete to abstract. The experiences that lead to a child's ability to think abstractly are embedded in the curriculum through opportunities for active exploration, pretend play, and symbolic communication.
- ◆ Children are active learners. Children learn through active involvement (exploring, playing, manipulating, and problem-solving). Adults have an essential role in purposefully guiding each child's development across all domains. Learning occurs best when content is combined with a responsive, interactive teaching style.
- ◆ Development and learning are interrelated. Early learning and areas of development interact and influence each other. The dynamic interaction of all domains of development must be considered. No domain of development should be addressed in isolation. All domains are interrelated and experiences related to the Early Learning Standards Framework should be integrated and offered daily or frequently as noted.
- ◆ Each child is an individual learner. Children go through similar stages of development but at individual rates. All children within an age group should not be expected to arrive at early learning criteria at the same time or with the same degree of proficiency.
- ◆ Children with special needs and those who do not speak English develop best in inclusive early education settings. Individualized modifications and adaptations will be designed to provide each child with opportunities to reach his or her full potential.
- ◆ Family involvement is critical. The family is the child's first and most important teacher and is integral to the success of the child as he/she progresses through school.
- ◆ Development and learning are embedded in culture. Early education settings and programs must be purposefully planned to expand the child's awareness and understanding of cultures and people different from him/herself.
- ◆ Experiencing the world is a young child's work, thus the classroom environment is a key factor in the provision of high quality learning experiences for young children. Classrooms should be designed and equipped in a manner that supports discovery, small group and individual learning, exploration, problem solving and development.

Definitions

- Domains:** Child development can be organized in broad categories of learning called domains. All domains are interrelated and experiences related to the Early Learning Standards Framework should be integrated and offered daily. The framework is organized in the following domains: Social and Emotional, The Arts, Physical Health and Development, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, and Science.
- Experiences:** Activities purposefully provided to foster each child's acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary to reach the Learning Criteria are called experiences. The framework provides examples of experiences that are reflective of effective practices. A state approved list of published curricula will provide comprehensive strategies for supporting the learning criteria.
- Learning Criteria:** The skills and knowledge children should develop and acquire within the context of the standard are called Learning Criteria. The framework has identified Learning Criteria within each domain and standard. The Learning Criteria were written to support each child's individual rate of development. Progress toward meeting the Learning Criteria will be measured along a developmental continuum within the state adopted early education assessment system.
- Performance Indicator:** The performance indicator is a benchmark of development. Children demonstrate their competence in a variety of ways. The framework lists examples of performance indicators for each Learning Criteria that may demonstrate every child's movement along the developmental continuum.
- Standard:** The standard is the category within the domain. The framework utilizes standards to sub-categorize each domain to delineate the criterion for development.

Social and Emotional Development

Supporting the social and emotional development of children during the formative years of early childhood is essential to their well-being and success in school and life. Children grow and learn within the context of positive social relationships. Social and emotional competency in early childhood is predictive of later success in other domains such as language and literacy.

Social and emotional development involves

- positive self-concept;
- appropriate social interaction and relationships;
- knowledge of family and community; and
- positive approaches to learning.



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Standard 1: Self-Concept	
Learning Criteria: Each child will progress in developing self-expression and awareness of self in terms of specific abilities, characteristics, and preferences.	
GUIDANCE	
Performance Indicators	Experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Makes positive statements about self ● Expresses pride in accomplishments ● Adjusts to new situations ● Demonstrates appropriate trust in adults ● Recognizes and expresses feelings in socially appropriate ways ● Demonstrates independence ● Acts out roles by imitating typical actions associated with the roles 	<p>Provide daily opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ interact with adults who encourage and support their efforts, accomplishments, ideas and interests □ interact with adults who use positive verbal and non-verbal language □ engage in activities that introduce new concepts in the context of familiar ones □ interact with adults who are dependable and consistent in their expectations □ engage in supportive conversations about their feelings □ make choices □ engage in activities that are self-directed and support discovery □ use props, puppets and costumes in dramatic role and pretend play

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Standard 2: Social Relationships**Learning Criteria:** Each child will progress in developing and demonstrating pro-social behaviors.

GUIDANCE

Performance Indicators

- Demonstrates affection in socially appropriate ways
- Expresses empathy or caring for others
- Demonstrates respect for others and their property
- Plays cooperatively
- Sustains interactions with peers
- Maintains an ongoing friendship with at least one other child
- Uses words and actions to assert self in socially acceptable ways
- Uses and accepts negotiation, compromise, and discussion to resolve conflicts
- Accepts guidance and direction from a variety of familiar adults
- Recognizes and respects appropriate authority
- Follows basic routines and rules for play and group participation

Experiences

Provide daily opportunities for children to:

- observe teachers and other adults who are respectful and empathetic in their interactions
- engage in purposeful and spontaneous activities that support the development of empathy, sensitivity and respect
- experience a learning environment where everyone is included, valued, and accepted
- express their thoughts, emotions, preferences and ideas
- solve problems and resolve conflicts independently or with appropriate guidance from familiar adults
- learn in an environment that is organized to promote age appropriate interaction
- experience guidance that is non-punitive, consistently provided and designed to promote positive behaviors





SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Standard 3: Knowledge of Family and Community	
Learning Criteria: Each child will progress in understanding their role and identity in the family and community.	
GUIDANCE	
<p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understands and describes the interactive roles and relationships among family members ● Identifies and describes the roles and relationships of community members ● Understands similarities and respects differences among people, such as genders, race, special needs, cultures, language, and family structures ● Identifies themselves as a member of groups within a community ● Identifies and describes locations and places in their environment 	<p>Experiences</p> <p>Provide daily opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ engage in conversations and activities related to their families and other families in the community ❑ interact with adults who model respectful and accepting attitudes and behaviors ❑ use materials such as books, toys, equipment, computer programs, and illustrations that provide them with images of all people engaged in everyday activities <p>Provide frequent opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ be exposed to a variety of experiences portraying community members and their roles, including books, props, and people ❑ participate in facilitated discussions related to diversity and acceptance ❑ use dramatic play and visual arts that are representative of familiar life situations

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Standard 4: Approach to Learning	
Learning Criteria: Each child will develop an intrinsic motivation for learning.	
GUIDANCE	
<p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participates in classroom activities ● Makes independent choices ● Initiates and extends activities ● Approaches tasks and activities with flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness ● Persists in and completes tasks, activities, projects, and experiences ● Maintains increasing concentration over a reasonable amount of time despite distractions and interruptions ● Recognizes and solves problems through active exploration, including trial and error and interactions with peers and adults ● Acknowledges accomplishments positively 	<p>Experiences</p> <p>Provide daily opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ participate in child initiated learning activities □ interact with adults who provide support and encouragement for spontaneous exploration and independent problem solving □ use varying materials and supplies that are interesting and relative □ experience a range of choices reflective of their interests □ observe teachers who model a variety of strategies for problem solving □ experience open-ended challenges and the encouragement to consider multiple solutions to problems □ engage in activities that are individualized and reflective of a continuum of learning



The Arts

Imagination and creativity are the foundation for new ideas. Flexible and creative thinking builds skills that are needed for problem solving, conflict resolution, leadership, and life long learning. Acknowledging the bodies of research in brain development, learning styles, and multiple intelligences, children benefit from daily opportunities for individual artistic expression of their ideas. Adults should respect, manage, and support the long term creation of extended projects by providing the opportunity for these projects to be continued. Eliciting the creative spirit of each child enhances the development of the whole child. As children experience opportunities to express themselves through artistic representation, development is enhanced in every domain of learning.



Through music and movement, children hear, discriminate, and respond to the various sounds of language, a skill required for phonological awareness.

Through the visual arts, children begin graphic representation, a precursor to writing.

Through dramatic play, stories are created and characters come to life.

The Arts involve

- music and movement;
- visual art; and
- dramatic play.

THE ARTS	
Standard 1: Music and Movement	
Learning Criteria: Each child will participate in a variety of music and movement activities.	
GUIDANCE	
<p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participates in music related activities ● Responds to and identifies particular musical elements such as rhythm and style ● Demonstrates an understanding of movement as it relates to music ● Sings with a group and on their own ● Uses a variety of instruments including non-traditional and natural objects ● Creates music through a variety of techniques 	<p>Experiences</p> <p>Provide daily opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ sing, dance, play instruments, and listen to music □ hear various types of music □ access musical material □ respond to music through spontaneous movement <p>Provide frequent opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ experience cultural diversity through music and movement □ interact with instruments including child created instruments □ express feelings, thoughts and ideas through musical media

THE ARTS

Standard 2: Visual Art

Learning Criteria: Each child will explore and become increasingly proficient in using a variety of art media and materials to create artwork and express ideas.

GUIDANCE

Performance Indicators

- Creates multi-dimensional artwork
- Explores color and texture using different mediums
- Expresses emotion and communicates ideas through creative artwork
- Shows increasing detail in artwork
- Creates artwork that reflects an idea, theme, or story

Experiences

Provide daily opportunities for children to:

- experiment with a variety of media such as clay, natural materials, wood, paper, crayons, chalk, paints, glue, paste, tape, staples, nails, and scissors
- express individuality through the use of art materials
- relate artistic expression to real life and imagination
- see child-related artwork displayed
- talk about their artwork
- use their imagination to create stories about the artwork they create or observe
- enjoy the process as well as the product of their work

Provide frequent opportunities for children to:

- observe art examples across time and cultures



THE ARTS

Standard 3: Dramatic Play

Learning Criteria: Each child will progress in using imagination and creativity to assume different roles in dramatic play.

GUIDANCE

Performance Indicators

- Engages in spontaneous dramatic play throughout the day in a variety of centers
- Tells and re-enacts stories
- Role-plays and improvises to communicate ideas
- Expresses ideas, feelings and emotions through dramatic play

Experiences

- Provide children with daily opportunities to:
- spontaneously choose dramatic play options or themes
 - interact with costume pieces, props, puppets, books, and pictures for dramatic play
 - re-enact stories
 - use imagination to create stories
 - engage in dramatic play through manipulation of figures such as small toy people and animals



Physical Health and Development

Physical health and development is foundational to fostering competence in all domains, including self-concept, reading, writing, scientific exploration and math. Children are active and physical beings who learn through interaction with their environments. As children grow and develop, they become more skillful and expressive in their movement and manipulation. Children should receive support and guidance as they engage in activities that refine their physical abilities. Early in life children can begin to develop knowledge and habits of healthy living.

Children develop at differing rates with a wide variety of abilities. As with all other domains, the physical environment must be adapted to meet the needs of every child.

Physical health and development involves

- fine motor;
- gross motor; and
- health practices.



PHYSICAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT	
Standard 1: Fine Motor	
Learning Criteria: Each child will progress in performing fine motor tasks with strength and control.	
GUIDANCE	
<p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manipulates small objects with precision ● Uses opposing hand movements ● Uses utensils and writing tools ● Begins to demonstrate self help skills such as buttoning and zipping ● Manipulates cutting and fastening tools ● Increases in accuracy of eye-hand coordination 	<p>Experiences</p> <p>Provide daily opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ interact with small manipulatives □ manipulate and use tools such as pencils, markers, crayons, chalk, garden implements, and hammers □ construct with a variety of materials □ practice self help skills with adequate time allowed □ work with materials that encourage snapping, lacing, buttoning, and zipping □ participate in finger-plays and songs using hand movements

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT	
Standard 2: Gross Motor	
Learning Criteria: Each child will progress in performing gross motor tasks with proficiency, balance and control.	
GUIDANCE	
<p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrates increased control in walking, running, hopping, and jumping ● Moves with emergent balance on lines, balance beams, curbs, riding equipment and play structures ● Ascends and descends stairs working toward the use of alternating feet ● Throws, catches objects, and bounces balls 	<p>Experiences</p> <p>Provide daily opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ move to music or rhymes ❑ practice running, walking, and other mobility activities ❑ play actively outdoors (weather permitting) <p>Provide frequent opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ climb stairs and on structures ❑ play with balls ❑ use riding equipment

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT	
Standard 3: Health Practices	
Learning Criteria: Each child will progress in recognizing and adopting good health practices.	
GUIDANCE	
<p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifies and makes healthy food choices ● Participates actively in games, outdoor play and other forms of exercise that enhance physical fitness ● Exhibits increased physical growth, strength, stamina, endurance and flexibility ● Expresses health needs ● Incorporates good health habits into routine of their day by following common hygiene practices: washing hands, brushing teeth, covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, using and disposing of tissues and napkins appropriately ● Uses toilet independently ● Demonstrates an understanding of the need for different apparel in different climate and weather conditions 	<p>Experiences</p> <p>Provide daily opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ participate in active games, movement opportunities and outdoor time ❑ observe adults making healthy lifestyle choices ❑ practice good health habits such as hand-washing, dental care, nose-blowing, sanitizing surfaces, and personal hygiene ❑ access toileting facilities on demand or when toilet-need cues are present <p>Provide frequent opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ make appropriate nutritional choices ❑ discuss weather and appropriate apparel ❑ discuss common hygiene practices through songs, stories, rhymes, and games