

# GUIDE TO EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENTS, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## WHAT MATTERS MOST IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS?

The skills children develop during their early years are the cornerstone for their future growth and development. To ensure children are ready to enter school prepared for success, they must have opportunities to develop competencies and skills across all domains of development, from social-emotional to language and literacy.

This means early childhood educators should:

- Provide effective classroom interactions and instruction connected to content and routines
- Use high-quality resources, including curriculum materials and assessment tools, to strengthen children’s development and learning

To help prepare all young children to be successful in kindergarten and beyond, teachers in all early childhood settings need strong and coordinated curriculum, assessments, and professional development that advance the quality and continuity of practice across early childhood and early elementary settings. Thus, all early childhood programs – child care, Head Start and school-based pre-K – should consider the following recommendations.

	DESCRIPTION	DISTRICT NEXT STEPS
<b>Curriculum</b>	<p>High-quality early childhood materials that support children’s achievement of the Birth to Five Standards should include activities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a logical and coherent progression of skills complexity over time;</li> <li>• Use repeated read alouds of appropriately complex texts;</li> <li>• Allow frequent and systematic practice of skills using hands-on approaches; and</li> <li>• Extend learning from the classroom to the home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the <a href="#">early childhood education curricular reviews</a> and <a href="#">K-2 curricular reviews</a> to understand the common characteristics of high-quality curriculum across the age spans.</li> <li>• Select and implement a <a href="#">Tier 1 early childhood education curriculum</a>.</li> <li>• Provide high-quality narrative and informational read aloud texts for infants and toddlers and preschoolers.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessments</b>	<p>High-quality assessments in early childhood should be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure children’s progress on early learning standards as they engage in daily activities;</li> <li>• Support each child’s learning; and</li> <li>• Plan ongoing instruction and activities based on children’s needs and interests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up the <i>GOLD</i>® system and support teachers to use this assessment system on an ongoing basis or to use assessment tools embedded in a <a href="#">Tier 1 curriculum</a>.</li> <li>• Schedule time for preschool teachers to meet with kindergarten teachers to use assessment data to improve transitions to kindergarten.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<p>Support for teachers should focus on helping them to use high-quality classroom interaction strategies that strengthen concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling for children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend different professional development sessions – which will cover curriculum, assessment, and improving interactions and instruction.</li> <li>• Network with early elementary colleagues at the <a href="#">Summit</a> and during the school year to exchange ideas and knowledge and reflect on how to adapt new practices.</li> <li>• After reviewing <a href="#">CLASS results</a> for your classrooms, consider the professional development options in the <a href="#">Vendor PD Course Catalog</a> and select the resources that best meet the needs of your teachers.</li> </ul>