

**Ohio’s Early Learning and Development Standards (Birth to Age 5): Implementation Guide**  
**Domain: Approaches toward Learning**

**Introduction**

The standards for approaches toward learning center on the foundational behaviors, dispositions and attitudes that children bring to social interactions and learning experiences. The standards include children’s demonstration of initiative and curiosity and their motivation to participate in new and varied experiences and challenges. These behaviors are fundamental to children’s abilities to take advantage of learning opportunities and to set, plan and achieve goals for themselves. This domain also includes children’s level of attention, engagement and persistence as they do a variety of tasks. These factors are consistent predictors of academic success (Duncan et al., 2007). Finally, children’s creativity, innovative thinking and flexibility of thought allow them to think about or use materials in unconventional ways and to express thoughts, ideas and feelings in a variety of media.

The strategies in this guidance document are not designed to be specific activities or “lesson plans.” Rather, they represent broad approaches to implementation in each strand that may help teachers create meaningful learning activities and experiences to support development and learning.

| Standard Statements   | Implementation Strategies   |
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| The child will:   | The teacher may:  |
| <b>Initiative</b><br><i>Initiative and Curiosity</i>  |   |
| <u>Infants</u><br><br>Show interest in people and objects   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make eye contact with infant during care routines (e.g., feeding, diapering, etc.).</li> <li>• Encourage children using positive expressions, smiles and language.</li> <li>• Place infants next to one another to foster and support interest.</li> <li>• Expose infant to pictures of multicultural/multiracial people and objects reflecting the cultures represented in the room.</li> <li>• Offer outdoor sensory experiences.</li> <li>• Use mirrors in places where infants can see themselves.</li> <li>• Play peek-a-boo for self-awareness and object permanence.</li> </ul> |
| <u>Young Toddlers</u><br>Explore the environment through a variety of sensory-motor activity.<br><br>Practice new skills with enthusiasm.<br><br>Demonstrate a willingness to try new activities and experiences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for children to explore different sounds.</li> <li>• Provide music reflective of children’s cultures and opportunities for movement and dance.</li> <li>• Provide an environment for children to explore and experience by engaging all their senses.</li> <li>• Offer toys with differing textures.</li> <li>• Provide materials and opportunities for open-ended play (loose parts play).</li> <li>• Allow space and time to enhance mobility and exploration.</li> <li>• Reinforce new experiences through teacher enthusiasm and smiles.</li> </ul>          |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help mobile children learn how to be careful around non-mobile children when they show interest in one another.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Experiment in the environment with purpose.</p> <p>Ask questions to gain information</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide nonfiction books, real pictures and environmental print.</li> <li>• Intentionally set-up the environment to allow children to choose and explore materials independently.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for messy play in the sensory table (sand and water).</li> <li>• Ask open-ended questions and model language throughout the day.</li> <li>• Encourage English language learners with limited English to use non-verbal responses, pointing, gesturing, as well as words and/or simple phrases – use child's response to model English without embarrassing "corrections."</li> <li>• Encourage children using positive expressions, smiles and language.</li> <li>• Provide new experiences by visiting places such as the park, public library or pumpkin patch.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Seek new and varied experiences and challenges (take risks).</p> <p>Demonstrate self-direction while participating in a range of activities and routines.</p> <p>Ask questions to seek explanations about phenomena or interest.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include large blocks of time for play and exploration in the daily schedule (e.g., a minimum of one hour).</li> <li>• Empower children to "call a meeting" to discuss problems affecting the classroom community (e.g., a concerned child asks to call a meeting because the block builders don't have enough room, so they build into the book nook so he can't get in to look at books. What can we do?).</li> <li>• Respond to children's interests by adding props, books and other materials to extend investigation and play.</li> <li>• Provide interest centers and allow children to make choices as to where to play.</li> <li>• Provide open-ended learning conversations with children based on daily classroom experiences. Encourage English language learners with limited English to use non-verbal responses such as pointing and gesturing, as well as words and/or simple phrases – use child's response to model English without embarrassing "corrections.."</li> <li>• Provide outside play on equipment where safe risks are possible. Ensure that English language learners understand safety rules; use pictures and real-life modeling outside to explain playground safety.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a variety of opportunities for individual activities, small and large group activities and peer interactions.</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Planning, Action and Reflection</i>   |   |
| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Act on the environment to meet needs or interests.</p> <p>Respond to people and objects in the immediate environment based on past experiences.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage infants in verbal and non-verbal conversations that use facial expressions, body language and changes in the tone of the voice.</li> <li>• Use daily routines to have positive interactions and conversations about what is happening or going to happen.</li> <li>• Offer tummy time with colorful toys and textures to explore.</li> <li>• Provide safe mobiles to reach and grab (e.g., floor “gym,” mobiles over changing tables, etc.).</li> <li>• Provide favorite or familiar toys or objects for continued exploration.</li> <li>• Describe actions during routine tasks.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Use a variety of ways to meet simple goals.</p> <p>Approach tasks with repeated trial and error.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model different ways to use simple tools to complete tasks (e.g., “Maybe we can use this long block to get the car from under the block shelf.”).</li> <li>• Observe to understand children’s cues and responses to the environment.</li> <li>• Provide simple toys that offer cause and effect opportunities. (NOTE: Toys should NOT BE BATTERY OPERATED to encourage exploration beyond pushing a button.)</li> <li>• Encourage children to try new strategies.</li> <li>• Be available to help children complete tasks beyond their levels of mastery.</li> <li>• Support children when they are frustrated and encourage them to try again.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Make choices to achieve a desired goal.</p> <p>Use previous learning to inform new experiences with people and objects in the environment.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark shelves and containers using pictures and words so the children can independently make choices and cleanup.</li> <li>• Remind children of choices they have made in the past (e.g., “Yesterday you chose to paint, and seemed to have a good time. Would you like to paint again today, or choose another place to play?”).</li> <li>• Allow children to tell where they are going to play and what they plan to do there.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Develop, initiate and carry out simple plans to obtain a goal.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for children to plan their play—what play area, what they plan to do, and with whom they’d like to play.</li> </ul>  |

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| <p>Use prior knowledge and information to assess, inform and plan for future actions and learning.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage children to create “written” work plans to revisit during class meeting and share the outcome of the plan. Have conversation about how they might extend the play the next day.</li> <li>• Encourage children to work in small groups on self-selected projects.</li> <li>• Engage children in making classroom rules and procedures for making the classroom community run smoothly.</li> <li>• Show interest in what children are doing and ask provoking/extending questions.</li> <li>• Use webbing with the children to find out what they know and to determine what they still want to find out. Create a plan with them as to how they will find the desired information. Modify appropriately for language level of English language learners.</li> </ul> |
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| <b>Engagement and Persistence</b><br><i>Attention</i>  |   |
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| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Demonstrate awareness of happenings in surroundings.</p>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move babies to different locations in the room, talking to them about what is happening in the room.</li> <li>• Place infants on mats where they can see each other.</li> <li>• Offer different textures and colors in the environment for infants to explore.</li> <li>• Frequently change pictures, books, music and toys reflective of infants’ culture in different settings, noticing and maintaining favorites in order for infants to remain secure.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Focus on an activity but is easily distracted.</p>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize outside distractions while engaging children in activities.</li> <li>• Limit the number of choices being offered at one time.</li> <li>• Offer simple games that are engaging (e.g., peek-a-boo, where’s the baby).</li> <li>• Use simple songs and finger plays with simple motions children can imitate.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Focus on an activity for short periods of time despite distractions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be flexible within each activity following the children’s leads regardless of the original plans.</li> <li>• Provide ample time and space for extended concentrated play.</li> <li>• Make materials accessible to allow for independence.</li> <li>• Set up the environment to eliminate distractions by placing similarly-related activities in the same parts of the room.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an atmosphere where the children’s interests have priority over planned activities.</li> </ul>   |

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| <p>Focus on an activity with deliberate concentration despite distractions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in play with children in order to learn their interests.</li> <li>• Eliminate possible distractions and then reintroduce low levels of distractions increasing to higher levels, as tolerated.</li> <li>• Provide high interest materials and activities.</li> <li>• Minimize visual clutter.</li> <li>• Play background music softly—if at all—to avoid it being a distraction.</li> </ul> |
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| <i>Persistence</i>   |  |
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| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Attempt to reproduce interesting and pleasurable effects and events.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use repetition of songs/nursery rhymes.</li> <li>• Play back and forth with infants using eye contact, smiles and sounds infants can imitate.</li> <li>• Read simple books to infants, using higher pitched tone of voice.</li> <li>• Model the use of simple toys.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Repeat actions intentionally to achieve goal.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently respond to children’s cues.</li> <li>• Offer cause and effect toys and simple games such as peek-a-boo.</li> <li>• Observe to know children’s interest and favorite toys.</li> <li>• Use familiar songs and finger plays consistently and introduce new ones as appropriate.</li> <li>• Read and re-read favorite books, including multicultural/multiracial/bi-lingual books reflective of community.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Engage in self-initiated activities for sustained periods of time.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce distractions and interruptions and support children’s repetitious activities.</li> <li>• Mark shelves and containers with pictures and words so children can make independent choices and participate in cleanup activities.</li> <li>• Provide additional materials to sustain play when appropriate.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Carry out tasks, activities, projects or experiences from beginning to end.</p> <p>Focus on the task at hand even when frustrated or challenged.</p> <p>Use different strategies when trying to solve a problem.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide ample time for children to engage in complex play or projects until they are satisfied. (NOTE: Requiring children to <i>clean up</i> after every activity or at the end of every day does not allow for satisfying, long-term, extended play experiences.)</li> <li>• Encourage completion of tasks through the use of positive feedback.</li> <li>• Assist the children in recognizing the source of any obstacle, suggest some problem-solving strategies and ask if the children can think of any others.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document children’s work so they can revisit experiences through conversations with adults or peers.</li> <li>• Encourage children—and provide space and opportunity—for projects or activities to be extended over periods of time (e.g., children make a sign asking others “Please do not touch” the city they are working on in the block area).</li> <li>• When trying to solve a problem, ask “What have you tried?” and “What else can you try?” allowing children to understand that trying many solutions is part of the problem-solving process.</li> <li>• Provide encouragement.</li> </ul> |
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| <i>Creativity</i>   |  |
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| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Make discoveries about self, others and the environment.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide interesting rattles, mobiles, toys and materials in a variety of colors and textures.</li> <li>• Provide sensory experiences outdoors.</li> <li>• Place infants in front of appropriate mirrors where they can see themselves and others.</li> <li>• Use music for specific purposes during daily routines and one-on-one activities.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Use objects in new ways.</p>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a variety of open-ended materials and opportunities for children to engage with them in many ways.</li> <li>• Encourage children to explore the environment.</li> <li>• Offer positive verbal and non-verbal feedback when children use items in new ways (be aware of culturally acceptable and non-acceptable non-verbal body language/gestures in English language learners’ culture — some U.S. customs are not considered polite to others).</li> <li>• Introduce and model possible uses of new toys and materials as they are added to the environment.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Use materials in new and unconventional ways.</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide appropriate open-ended materials and activities.</li> <li>• Add natural materials to the environment.</li> <li>• Give positive feedback and encourage solutions and ideas the children have.</li> <li>• Allow children to move materials from one area to another in play (e.g., moves a block to dramatic play to use as a telephone).</li> </ul>  |

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| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Use imagination and creativity to interact with objects and materials.</p> <p>Use creative and flexible thinking to solve problems.</p> <p>Engage in inventive social play.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer open-ended materials and experiences that promote discovery through interactions.</li> <li>• Have individual, small and large group discussions to find solutions to classroom problems. Encourage English language learners to point and use non-verbal means to contribute to discussions.</li> <li>• Provide dress-up materials and props that encourage different types of dramatic play.</li> <li>• Take field trips that add to the children's experiences so they can imitate them in creative play.</li> </ul> |
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| <p><i>Expression of Ideas and Feelings through the Arts</i></p>   |  |
| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Demonstrate preferences, pleasure or displeasure when interacting with various media.</p>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide music that is soothing and/or stimulating; photos of family members, animals, etc., at eye level or near the floor; materials in a variety of textures.</li> <li>• Gain understanding of the different cries and sounds of the infants in order to recognize signs of displeasure and discomfort.</li> <li>• Show pleasure for the experiences through verbal and non-verbal strategies.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Seek out experiences with a variety of materials and art materials based on preferences and past experiences.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer documentation of past experiences that is appropriate for the children to revisit.</li> <li>• Observe children to know what preferences they have.</li> <li>• Provide different types of art materials that are non-toxic and age/developmentally appropriate.</li> <li>• Model the use of materials through play with them.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Use self-selected materials and media to express ideas and feelings.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a variety of different materials and media for child-created projects that stress the process rather than the product.</li> <li>• Use music reflective of multiple cultures with words and actions that describe feelings and routines.</li> <li>• Allow children to decide which of their projects to display in the classroom or to place in a portfolio.</li> <li>• Provide pictures of each child for use throughout the classroom.</li> <li>• Record or videotape children as they are expressing their ideas. Play these back for the children</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Express individuality, life experiences, and what they know and are</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for the children to explore areas such as visual arts, music, dance, creative movement and drama.</li> </ul>  |

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| <p>able to do through a variety of media.</p> <p>Express interest in and show appreciation for the creative work of others.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display children’s work in the classroom and revisit it.</li> <li>• Place dictated stories on artwork when desired by the children.</li> <li>• Offer photos of art from successful artists for the children to study, describe and emulate.</li> <li>• Make class books of the experiences and work of the children.</li> </ul> |
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### Support for Differentiation

1. Accept children’s approximations and attempts and elaborate/expand on these as appropriate.
2. Scaffold each learner in his zone of proximal development.
3. Use assistive technology when appropriate. Assistive technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. For more information on specific strategies visit: <http://www.newton.k12.ks.us/at/examples.htm>.
4. Resources based on the *Universal Design for Learning* principles are available at [www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org).

### Support for English Language Learners

- Use multimedia such as videos, pictures and concrete objects to create connections with vocabulary words.
  - Use gestures and body language.
  - Speak slowly and enunciate clearly. Do not raise your voice.
  - Repeat information and review. If a child does not understand, try rephrasing in short sentences and simpler syntax.
  - Try to avoid idioms and slang words.
  - Try to anticipate words that might be unfamiliar and give explicit meaning to them.
  - Make use of the excellent language learning that occurs among children by supporting play and small-group activities.
  - Show children how much you enjoy them and appreciate their efforts to learn a new language.
- Adapted from Cecil, N.L. (1999) *Striking a balance: Positive practices for early literacy*. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway.

#### Resources:

*Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy and Learning*. California Department of Education. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/psenglearnersed2.pdf>.

*Guidelines for Addressing the Needs of Preschool English Language Learners*. Ohio Department of Education, Lau Resource Center.



[http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Special-Education/Limited-English-Proficiency-\(1\)/About-the-Lau-Resource-Center/Guidelines-for-Addressing-the-Needs-of-Preschool-English-Language-Learners-\(1\).pdf.aspx](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Special-Education/Limited-English-Proficiency-(1)/About-the-Lau-Resource-Center/Guidelines-for-Addressing-the-Needs-of-Preschool-English-Language-Learners-(1).pdf.aspx).

*Principles of Second Language Development*. Ohio Department of Education, Lau Resource Center. <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Limited-English-Proficiency/Research/Principles-of-Second-Language-Development-in-Teach#.Ukm8lvkzFC8.gmail>.

McGlothlin, Barry (1995). *Fostering second language development in young children: Principles and practices*. <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/23s607sr#page-1>.

Espinosa, L. (2008). Challenging common myths about young English language learners. The Foundation for Child Development. <http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/MythsOfTeachingELLsEspinosa.pdf>.