



PLANNING FOR HIGH-QUALITY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS: Building a Foundation for School Success

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Foreword

Early childhood education is an effective means to provide all children an equitable opportunity to succeed in their educational careers and in life. Young children who are engaged in school are more likely to succeed academically and less likely to drop out as they grow older.

In the first few years of life, 700 neural connections form every second in the brain¹. Children begin to form relationships and identities very early in life. Therefore, we must provide a strong educational foundation for children to form identities as learners. In order to accomplish this vital task, school systems, teachers, and community members must build strong foundational relationships and promote high expectations for children and their families.

In 2017, the Board of Regents Early Childhood Workgroup established a Blue Ribbon Committee to better align the State's early care, preschool, and early childhood education policies and to create a comprehensive plan. The workgroup's overarching vision is to transform the birth to age eight early care and education system in the State of New York. The committee envisions a New York where ALL CHILDREN thrive from birth, flourish in preschool, enter a school-age program on a trajectory of success, and are academically proficient in third grade by growing up healthy and having opportunities for high-quality early learning experiences that are culturally, linguistically and developmentally appropriate."

Planning for High-Quality Prekindergarten Programs reflects the commitment of the New York State Education Department to increase the availability of high-quality prekindergarten programs. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to those responsible for planning and implementing prekindergarten programs for three- and four-year-old children. It provides a framework for teachers and others who work with young children of diverse abilities, cultures, languages, and experiences to create environments and to develop curricula, instruction, and assessment strategies that support all children as learners. It is based on the recognition that teachers need many and varied opportunities to nurture and refine their craft in order to respond effectively to the diverse needs of the children with whom they will interact during their teaching careers.



¹ Center on the Developing Child (2007). *The Science of Early Childhood Development* (In Brief). Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

Introduction

Planning for High-Quality Prekindergarten Programs is designed to inform and support the work of the teachers, administrators, and program developers who are responsible for assuring that prekindergarten programs provide children of diverse abilities, cultures, languages, and experiences with the foundational skills needed to master the challenges of kindergarten and beyond. It outlines the characteristics and expectations of a high-quality prekindergarten program and reinforces the idea that children's success in achieving the State's learning standards begins during the early years. This guide may serve as a hands-on resource for teachers, as a self-assessment guide for administrators, and as a planning tool for staff developers.

This guide serves as a companion document to other curricula and assessment materials developed by the Department and State partners. Please visit the Office of Early Learning's resources at the NYSED.GOV website for resources that support this document, such as the *New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards, Core Body of Knowledge, New York State Early Learning Guidelines, Developmentally Appropriate Practice Briefs and Topic Briefs: Linguistically Diverse Learners* and the *NYS Next Generation P-12 Learning Standards*.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Planning for High-Quality Prekindergarten Programs is based on the same guiding principles that were used in the development of *The New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards*.

1

All children are capable of learning, achieving and making developmental progress. The Standards are intended for all children regardless of economic, linguistic, and cultural differences or physical, learning, and emotional challenges.

2

Children develop at different rates, and each child is unique in their own development, growth, and acquisition of skills. Appropriate and reasonable supports and accommodations, including home language, trauma, and behavior supports must be provided to empower all children to succeed.

3

Children are active learners. A primary approach to learning is through purposeful play. Intentional planning promotes rich learning experiences that encourage participation, involve multiple contexts, and engage the senses that help children explore their environment.

4

Early development and learning are multi-dimensional. Children's learning is integrated and occurs simultaneously across all domains, which are interrelated and interactive with one another.

5

Children learn in the context of interactions and relationships with family members, caregivers, teachers, and other children in their immediate environment and in their community.

6

The family is a significant contributor to children's lifelong development and learning. Actively engaging caregivers in the early education of their children is essential to children's success in the elementary classroom and later learning.

7

The Standards may be used as tools to empower parents, teachers, and caregivers to better support and enhance young children's development and learning.

8

The Standards acknowledge, respect, and embrace children's diverse backgrounds, heritage, cultures, and linguistic experiences.

9

The Standards are guided by research, stakeholder feedback, and effective practices to strengthen instruction and educational experiences across all settings. They are systemically aligned with all of the New York State P-12 Learning Standards, performance indicators for bilingual and preschool special education, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children guidelines.

SECTION I

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Attending a high-quality prekindergarten program can have a positive effect on a child's future as a learner. Standards of quality emanate from beliefs about the nature of young children as they grow, develop, and learn (see **Section II Children as Learners**). The goals and expectations for children who participate in standards-based, culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining, high-quality programs are derived from these beliefs. Additional standards of quality may be articulated by a program's funding source, accreditation requirements, or regulatory authority, including provisions governing prekindergarten programs for children who have special needs and/or who are language-diverse Emergent Multilingual Learners. NYSED provides information on Special Education programming in preschools at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/preschool/home.html>. Information on identifying and educating Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten can be found at <http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/emergent-multilingual-learners-prekindergarten-programs>. Successful prekindergarten programs are those that establish a process for ongoing program evaluation and self-study to document and guide movement toward achievement of the goals and objectives of the program.

Prekindergarten programs for three- and four-year old children need to incorporate the below-listed, universally recognized standards in their design.

Facilities

The first measure of quality for any facility is that it meets basic health and safety criteria. The specific health and safety criteria that apply to a program may vary based on locality, program sponsorship, and applicable licensing/registration requirements. Classrooms and playgrounds are age-appropriate and respond to how children develop and learn. Both indoor and outdoor spaces adhere to regulatory agency space requirements. The equipment and materials that support learning are easily adapted to the diverse interests, needs, and abilities of the children and follow a developmental trajectory. Individuals with special needs have easy access to the indoor and outdoor spaces and the materials that they include. Appendix 1 provides a basic Health and Safety Checklist that may be used by teachers, administrators, and program planners to assess existing and potential sites. This checklist is not all inclusive, and its use does not replace any local, state, or federal requirements that may apply to a program.

Staff

In quality prekindergarten classrooms, teachers, paraprofessionals (teaching assistants and teachers' aides), and other staff have an in-depth knowledge of child development and how young children learn. Research documents the positive correlation between the experience and training of staff and the quality of a program. Staff persons have access to ongoing professional development opportunities, in order to increase their understanding of child development and learning, developmentally appropriate instructional practices, and the New York State prekindergarten learning standards.

Teachers in public school prekindergarten programs must possess certification for teaching in the early childhood grades. It is most beneficial for staff members to be proficient in the home languages of their students and families.

Additionally, teachers in community-based organizations must meet the qualifications of the licensing, regulatory, and/or funding agency. For State-funded prekindergarten programs, teachers in community-based organizations must be certified or have a three-to-five-year plan for obtaining Early Childhood certification (Birth-Grade 2), and during the hours of prekindergarten operation, there must be an onsite supervisor who is certified in early childhood or childhood education.

Program administrators have administrative training as well as experience in working with prekindergarten children. Provisions are made for all staff to receive ongoing support and supervision through a dynamic process of professional learning and performance evaluation.

Program Leadership

In high-quality prekindergarten programs, leaders demonstrate a commitment to developmentally appropriate instructional practices and are a source of ongoing support to the classroom staff. Leaders ensure that teachers have the materials and knowledge necessary to provide an enriching experience. Leaders observe classrooms to provide feedback, plan professional learning opportunities based on those observations, and design policies that support high-quality prekindergarten experiences.

Group Size

The ratio of children to adults may vary slightly, depending upon the funding source and/or regulatory oversight. The maximum group size for State-administered prekindergarten programs is 20 students. Classes of 18 or fewer students must be staffed by a teacher and one paraprofessional (teaching assistant or teacher's aide). Classes of 19 or 20 students must be staffed by a teacher and two paraprofessionals.

Curriculum and Instruction

Decisions about research-based curricula and instruction for prekindergarten programs are informed by an understanding of general developmental patterns; knowledge of children's individual characteristics; awareness of the cultural, linguistic, and social contexts that shape the child's experience; learning standards, which outline expectations for what children should know and be able to do; and the scope and sequence of each content area.

Curriculum content may evolve from the learning standards, observations of children's interests, questions that children ask, or shared experiences within the natural environment. Additionally, teachers inform content based on the formative and summative observational data they have compiled. Learning experiences for children include a variety of concrete activities presented in meaningful contexts. These experiences are integrated across content and developmental areas and augmented with a variety of diverse, linguistically and culturally responsive activities and materials that may be adapted to meet the unique needs of individual children (see **Section V Curriculum and Instruction**).

Assessment

Assessment occurs within the context of children's everyday experience as they interact with the people and materials in the learning environment. Beginning with the information and observations shared by family members as the child moves from home to the school, such as home language, assessment continues as teachers devise a plan for keeping track of children's progress. Assessments and the subsequent plan are to be linguistically and culturally responsive. Tracking children's progress includes ongoing communication with the family and with other professionals who work with the child (see **Section VI Dimensions of Assessment**).

Family Engagement

Family members play a critical role in supporting the growth and development of their children. In high-quality prekindergarten programs, families are viewed as partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program. Opportunities are available for parents and guardians to actively participate in the education of their children; in the decision-making related to the program; and in other activities that address their roles as parents, workers, and citizens.

Where space permits, it is desirable that an area be designated for parent meetings, training sessions, and informal gatherings. Schools create environments conducive to the active involvement of families by planning ways to establish rapport, by responding to opportunities to connect families with needed services, and by providing a variety of options for families to become partners with schools. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), requires communication with families in their indicated preferred language. For linguistically and culturally responsive family and community engagement strategies, see <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement>.

Additional Considerations

Toileting

Toileting is a developmental skill that is learned by each child at an individual rate and is not a skill that can be developed overnight. Including the family in development of a plan that supports the child using the toilet independently is essential. It is important to follow the goals and objectives of the individualized education programs for preschool students with disabilities. Remember that toilet training is a learning experience for the child and that they should never be embarrassed when they have an accident.

Mealtime

Mealtime in the prekindergarten classroom is an important part of a young child's development and learning. There are many learning opportunities to be planned for when mealtime is included in the instructional day. This may include experiences with food, encouraging self-help skills, language and vocabulary development, and mealtime behavioral expectations.

Mealtime can provide a natural environment for young learners to share in English language and home language conversations that build relationships with peers and adults. Mealtime should be a positive experience for each child and should include meaningful adult-child interactions and opportunities for learning. As part of the use of mealtime as an instructional strategy, teachers should sit at tables with children, engage in conversations, and promote healthy eating habits.

Naptime

Naptime is not included in the instructional day; however, the New York State Education Department's Office of Early Learning suggests that all programs serving prekindergarten students provide a regularly scheduled nap or rest time for all students who attend a full-day program. During this time, students are encouraged to rest, relax, and nap. Quiet activities should be provided for students who do not nap.



SECTION II

CHILDREN AS LEARNERS

The purpose of this section, **Children as Learners**, is to provide those who plan, implement, and administer prekindergarten programs with information to help them understand the uniqueness of three- and four-year old students. This section includes the characteristics of young learners, principles of child development, a description of play as active learning, and some typical behaviors of young learners and their teachers.

Principles of Child Development

Development is a combination of maturation and learning. Substantial research and reflection on good practice suggests that development in young children:

- Occurs simultaneously in all areas of the child’s development—social, emotional, linguistic, intellectual, and physical;
- Is interdependent—each area of development affects the others;
- Occurs in sequential stages;
- Progresses from simple to complex;
- Occurs at different rates for different children, and
- Is critically affected by a child’s culture, environment, and experience.

It is crucial that teachers of three- and four-year old students understand these aspects of development and their implications for teaching and learning. Teachers need to know what to do and how and when to do it. It is equally important that teachers be able to articulate why they have made a particular decision or employed a specific strategy. The initial step in this process is for teachers to have firsthand knowledge of the normative and predictable aspects of child development, as well as behavioral characteristics that are observable during the early years. This knowledge guides teachers as they undertake the second step in the process: to get to know each child as an individual through ongoing interaction and assessment techniques, such as those described in **Section VI Dimensions of Assessment**.

In classrooms, teachers’ knowledge of how children develop and learn is used to inform practice. Teachers’ decisions about how best to support growth and learning during the early years are guided by principles of child development derived from the predictable sequence of human development. The chart below reflects key principles of child development and what is known about the strengths, interests, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds of children. Included with each principle are implications for teaching that help ensure that prekindergarten programs are providing meaningful learning experiences for young children.

Child Development Principles	Implications for Teaching
The physical, social and emotional, cognitive, and language domains of child development are interrelated. Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan learning experiences that help students make connections across domains (e.g., language development influences social interaction; physical ability affects cognitive development). • For Emergent Multilingual Learners, ensure that all learning experiences support each child’s home language, in addition to English.
Development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize the learning environment in accordance with knowledge of child development. • Provide materials that children can use alone (puzzles, books), alongside others (sand or water play, painting at an easel), or as part of a group (dramatic play, blocks). • Provide materials with varying degrees of difficulty, such as simple and complex puzzles, and manipulatives that are both easy and difficult to assemble. • For Emergent Multilingual Learners, ensure that the home language is incorporated into the learning environment.

Child Development Principles	Implications for Teaching
<p>There are variations in the sequence of development from child to child; individual children may develop more rapidly in one area than in another.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualize the curriculum to reflect each child’s varied strengths, needs, interests, temperaments, learning styles, cultures, English language abilities, and home language abilities for Emergent Multilingual Learners in prekindergarten. • Allow children to work at their own pace and provide multiple points of entry into projects and activities.
<p>Optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for children to work with materials that challenge them at their current level of development, and, for Emergent Multilingual Learners, in both their home language and the English language.
<p>Development proceeds in predictable directions toward greater complexity, organization, and internalization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classrooms should be equipped with materials at varying skill levels that are rotated to allow for greater complexity of development. • Plan activities to allow children to practice simpler skills prior to introducing activities that require more complex skills. For example: allow children to run, jump, hop, and skip prior to introducing activities that require more coordination, such as walking on a balance beam or riding a two- or three-wheel bike. • For Emergent Multilingual Learners, materials and activities should reflect an understanding of first and second language acquisition while providing rich opportunities for both home language and English language development.
<p>Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social, cultural, and linguistic contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a classroom environment that welcomes, respects, and celebrates diversity among students, including language diversity. • Plan curriculum opportunities that take into account the increasing diversity of language and cultural contexts of young children and their families. • For Emergent Multilingual Learners in prekindergarten, in addition to English, encourage the development of each child’s home language.
<p>Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience, as well as culturally transmitted knowledge, to construct their own understanding of the world around them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan curriculum opportunities for children that provide firsthand opportunities for social interaction; physical manipulation of materials; observation of objects, including natural phenomena; questioning; reflecting; drawing conclusions; and the use of multiple languages.
<p>Development and learning result from the interaction between biological maturation and the environment, which includes both the physical and social worlds in which children live.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure flexible learning experiences that respond to ongoing changes in the environment and children’s growing ability to work cooperatively within the group. • For Emergent Multilingual Learners, plan appropriately, considering the stage of each student’s home language and English acquisition processes.
<p>Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills, as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the supportive environment that children need to transfer existing knowledge to new situations (including the use of home languages), practice new skills, and try out more complex experiences. • Change the environment to reflect the current topic of study or theme. • Plan activities that challenge children just beyond their skill mastery level, including each Emergent Multilingual’s home and English language levels.
<p>Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify children’s strengths, interests, learning styles, experiences, cultures, and home languages. • Plan a variety of experiences to help them use their preferred modes of learning and language and represent what they know and can do as they paint, draw, build structures, engage in role play, or respond to music. • Extend learning experiences beyond the classroom to the outdoor play area.

Developmental Milestones for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children

Developmental milestones are a set of skills that most children accomplish by a certain age. While these milestones typically occur within a certain age range, the development of each child, including the home language and English language development of an Emergent Multilingual child, is unique. By looking at different developmental milestones, teachers are able to understand how children typically develop and plan more appropriately for individual children. The following chart highlights key developmental milestones within each domain of children's development.

Domain Area	Three Year Old	Four Year Old
Social/ Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies actions of adults and friends • Shows affection for friends • Understands "mine," "his," and "hers" • Shows wide range of emotions • May be upset by changes in routine • Starts taking turns when playing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays "mom" and "dad" • Cooperates with other children • Is more creative with make believe play • Enjoys doing new things • Talks about likes and interests • Would rather play with other children than alone
Communication/ Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks well enough for strangers to understand them most of the time • Asks many questions • Can name familiar things • Carries on a conversation, using 2 to 3 sentences • Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps • Answers simple questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tells stories • Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as using pronouns like "he" and "she" • Knows first and last name and can tell you • Sings songs or says a poem from memory (Like "Wheels on the Bus" or "Itsy Bitsy Spider") • Participates in stories about a variety of topics
Cognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds towers of 6 or more blocks • Understands what "two" means • Copies a circle with a crayon or pencil • Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts • Turns pages of a book one at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays board and/or card games • Understands the idea of counting • Draws a person with some body parts • Starts to copy some shapes and letters • Tells you what is going to happen next in a story or book • Understands the idea of "same" and "different"
Physical Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbs well • Runs easily • Walks up and down stairs one foot on each step • Has basic ability to kick and throw a ball • Stacks, sorts, and strings items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hops and stands on one foot for up to 2 seconds • Catches a bounced ball most of the time • Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food • Eats with utensils • Pedals consistently when riding a tricycle
Approaches to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretends and uses imagination during play • Wants to do favorite activities over and over again • Can remain engaged in an activity for at least 5 minutes • Chooses one activity over another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts multiple ways to solve a problem • Demonstrates willingness to try new experiences • Seeks assistance when something seems unclear • Maintains focus on a task for up to 10 minutes.

Characteristics of Prekindergarten Learners

Please note that the classroom practices suggested for three-year-old students are also age appropriate in classrooms of four-year-old students.

Characteristics of Prekindergarten Learners	Classroom Practices for Three-Year-Old Students	Classroom Practices for Four-Year-Old Students
Prekindergarten learners are concrete thinkers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to develop background knowledge • Opportunities to learn about objects and how they work through hands-on exploration activities • Talk about what comes next in the daily schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to figure things out for themselves and solve problems • Add to whole group circle time age-appropriate calendar activities, such as predicting the day of the week, counting the days of the month, predicting what number comes next and how to write the number as children are developmentally ready for those concepts/skills
Prekindergarten learners use “make-believe” as part of their everyday living.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide open-ended materials (e.g., large boxes, square/rectangular pieces of fabric) • Provide both male and female gender-related clothing items in dramatic play • Change classroom learning areas to coincide with the classroom theme/topic of study • Provide a variety of props that reflect children’s daily lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add puppets or flannel board pieces to extend stories • Use books to extend play • Provide opportunities for children to re-create life experiences in the dramatic play area (for example, after a trip to the firehouse, let them use recyclable materials to create a fire truck that is based on their observations made during the field trip)
Prekindergarten learners are curious and interested in their surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a visually appealing learning environment • Provide well-stocked learning centers that are labeled with both pictures and words • Create a child-centered learning environment, making sure that all materials that are accessible to children are child appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide displays that are interactive/purposeful (e.g., a word wall that focuses on new words for the theme/topic of study that are taken down and placed in the writing center at the conclusion of the study)
Prekindergarten learners begin to have increased attention spans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set realistic expectations for whole group activities (for example, circle time is interactive and no longer than 10 minutes) • Provide small group experiences that are engaging and hands on and that end when there is a lack of interest shown by the children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for projects to extend over several days, in order to sustain four-year-old children’s increasing interest in their work • As children become more engaged, extend interactive whole group learning experiences
Prekindergarten learners begin to carry out tasks to completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow children opportunities to select the play area in which they are interested, the materials that they want to use, and ample time to use the materials • Allow children, through the use of a center management system, to change centers, if allowable, when they are no longer interested in the center that they are currently in • Build extra time into the daily schedule, in order to allow children to successfully put away materials • Allow age-appropriate wait time when children are completing tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide learning experiences that span several days • Allow children’s ideas to guide instruction (for example, when completing a study when the topic/theme is community helpers, have the children decide what community helpers they want to study, then develop a plan of how to study those whom they picked) • Provide small group activities that are based on skill level and allow the activities to span more than one day
Prekindergarten learners can work independently, at times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 1/3 of the daily schedule for choice time • Develop a center management system that allows children to choose centers that they are interested in • Set up learning experiences during which children can work alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide daily quiet activities that are targeted at a particular skill of an individual child (for example, during a relaxation period, the children may assemble name puzzles) • When children first arrive in the morning, provide an individual activity (e.g., a sequencing activity)

Characteristics of Prekindergarten Learners	Classroom Practices for Three-Year-Old Students	Classroom Practices for Four-Year-Old Students
Prekindergarten learners demonstrate originality, creativity, and imagination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to use age-appropriate art materials independently to create original works of art • Provide open-ended questions to children, in order to expand creativity and imagination • During choice time, move throughout the room, join in with children's play in learning centers, and follow their lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide book-making materials, in order to allow children to create their own stories • Provide additional age-appropriate props in all of the learning centers, in order to expand creativity • Provide a question-of-the-day and allow children to use their imaginations to answer the question
Prekindergarten learners accept new challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide new materials that are just above their current developmental level, in order to present a challenge to the student • Provide age-appropriate jobs • Recognize the temperaments of individual children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide interactive computer software that allows children to practice skills that they are mastering • Add more materials to classroom learning areas, in order to encourage children to incorporate new materials into their play schemas (for example, additional unit blocks to enable children to make larger structures)
Prekindergarten learners develop self-control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for children to participate in small and whole group activities • Set up well-defined learning centers with expectations of how many children each center can accommodate • Provide activities during which children have to use self-control; for example, taking turns using equipment on the playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide social stories during whole group experiences, during which children have to discuss the characters' use of self-control • Provide opportunities for the children to make decisions (for example, what game should we play on the playground today?) • Encourage children to plan what materials they will use and how they will use them, when going to a learning center during choice time
Prekindergarten learners develop pre-reading skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to age-appropriate books, including board books and books on CD • Model book-handling skills • Repeat read-aloud sessions • Engage in conversations after read-aloud sessions, in order to support children's thoughts about the story • Rotate books to coincide with the theme/topic of study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make opportunities to retell or dramatize stories • Ask clarifying open-ended questions during read-aloud sessions, in order to allow children to expand their answers • Use books to investigate the theme/topic of study
Prekindergarten learners begin to develop control of their bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide planned and spontaneous daily music and movement experiences • Provide open-ended, gross motor experiences daily, indoors and/or outdoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide activities during which children have to use their bodies at different speeds (for example, running in place versus running on the playground) • Provide obstacle courses that challenge children to move in many ways
Prekindergarten children become more confident in the use of written and spoken language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to hear new vocabulary words used in context • Provide time for children to engage in conversations in order to expand vocabulary • Provide developmentally appropriate exposure to letters and letter sounds; for example, through the use of individual and peer names • Allow time to draw or "write" freely, recognizing that scribbling and mark making are an initial stage in the writing process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to use language in a variety of ways (for example, to explain and seek information) • Plan opportunities for letter and word learning to take place during shared reading and writing activities • Create opportunities for children to see letters in many different contexts • Provide experiences that assist children in connecting word sounds with word names and symbols

Play is Active Learning

Play is a critical part of the growth and development of children ages birth through eight years. Children are learning when they explore, discover, investigate, role play, and use tools and materials in creative ways. Play is closely linked to cognitive, social, emotional, language, and physical development. It is the chief vehicle that children use to express themselves verbally and nonverbally, to draw on past experiences, and to use their perceptual-motor abilities. Through play, children can test ideas, develop self-regulation skills, be creative, and learn about the world. Young children's play may be characterized in many different ways. In the chart below², play is described from a social interaction point of view. This framework reflects young children's ability to engage in more than one kind of play activity as they move freely from one activity to the next. At any given time, a group of children may be observed engaging in any of the behaviors described below. It is important to recognize that children in any group will be at various stages in play and social development. Some children will show characteristics of different stages, depending on the context of their play and their cultural background. A child may be observed building an elaborate block apartment building with one or more peers and playing out the arrival of firefighters and the rescue of victims. The same child may later watch from the sidelines as others climb on the jungle gym. It is expected that children will move toward more frequent engagement in cooperative or socio-dramatic play.

Play Behavior	Description
Onlooker behavior	Playing by watching or conversing with other children engaged in play activities.
Solitary, independent play	Playing by oneself.
Parallel play	Playing, even in the middle of a group, while remaining engrossed in one's own activity. Children playing parallel to each other sometimes use each other's toys, but always maintain their independence.
Associative play	Sharing materials and talking to each other, but not coordinating play objectives or interests.
Cooperative play	Organizing themselves into roles with specific goals in mind (e.g., assigning the roles of doctor, nurse, and patient when playing hospital).

Outdoor Play

Although outdoor play may traditionally be thought of as play during which less learning takes place, research continues to reveal that intentional, well-designed outdoor play can greatly contribute to children's learning and development, including language development³. Cognitively, children are exposed to new concepts and vocabulary outside. Socially and emotionally, children are more likely to use their imaginations and build self-confidence as they actively play and interact with nature. More explicitly, the physical benefits of children playing outside are that they get exercise and are able to move freely while learning and interacting with the environment⁴. Some suggested activities include⁵:

- Having a picnic
- Going on a nature walk to collect various items; invite multilingual family members along to help name items in the children's various home languages
- Using magnifying glasses to examine aspects of nature
- Counting and collecting different types of leaves and rocks
- Using items that are not normally used outdoors, like paint brushes and easels

2 Adapted from: Back-to-Basics: Play in Early Childhood by Jill Englebright Fox, Ph.D.

3 http://outdoorclassroomproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Child-Initiated_Experiences_in_the_Nature_Explore_Classroom.pdf

4 <http://www.teachpreschool.org/2009/10/preschoolers-should-go-outside-everyday/>

5 <http://www.teachpreschool.org/2009/10/preschoolers-should-go-outside-everyday/>

SECTION III

THE LEARNER-CENTERED ENVIRONMENT

The classroom is a place where children are actively engaged in creating meaning. The room itself and the spaces or learning centers in the room should invite children to explore, converse, inquire, build, and create individually and as part of the classroom community. Teachers design classrooms so that they serve as extensions of their responsibility to shape and foster learning.

Even before they enter school, children have learned that different environments require different behaviors. For example, a four-year-old child knows that a ride in the car requires climbing into a car seat and buckling up. A visit to grandparents may mean behaving differently from the way that the child behaves at home. Teachers build upon such prior learning when they arrange their classrooms and equip learning centers. They must design the environment so that the arrangement of centers in the room and the array of available materials and supplies help children understand the kinds of behaviors and interactions expected in each area.

A quality classroom is arranged so that children are able to:

- Establish trust and cooperate with others
- Feel safe and secure enough to take learning and language risks
- Develop independence through making choices and being responsible for cleaning up
- Focus on what they are doing and stay engaged in their work
- Acquire skills and concepts as they select and use materials

Part of the instructional task of teachers is that of manager and decision maker. Among the most important decisions made by the teaching team are those pertaining to the design of the environment. In the role of designer of the environment, the teaching team:

- Sends specific, concrete messages to children about what is expected and valued
- Influences learning by the inclusion of specific materials and equipment
- Supports and extends curriculum and instruction
- Builds a sense of community
- Validates, honors, and nurtures the children's diverse cultures and languages
- Creates an aesthetically pleasing climate
- Attends to the health and safety of the children in the group

Classrooms should allow children to feel that:

- This is a safe and comfortable place.
- I belong here and I am valued.
- I can make friends and share.
- I know what I'm expected to do.
- I can do interesting work here.
- I can find what I need and put things back where they belong.
- I can make choices.
- I am challenged to try new things.
- I can use and share all of my languages.

Setting Up Classroom Learning Centers

As prekindergarten teachers design learning centers, it is important that they:

- Are mindful of the varying strengths, skills and abilities, cultures, languages, experiences, and developmental levels of individual students
- Are intentional and purposeful in the selection of materials and activities that they provide
- Plan concrete, hands-on activities for student-directed learning in each learning center
- Eliminate worksheets and rote activities
- Plan for meaningful interactions and opportunities for extended conversations with all students. Throughout the day, Emergent Multilingual Learners are to be encouraged to converse with one another in the language or languages that they feel most comfortable speaking. Teachers should converse with students in their home languages, when possible, as well as in English.
- Allow sufficient time for students to self-select learning center activities, become engaged, and to explore and experiment with the materials and activities that they choose (approximately one-third of the daily schedule)
- Provide space for displays of children's work

The below are examples of learning center arrangements and are followed by tips to help teachers as they design their classrooms. Teachers should tailor center set-up to the materials and equipment available in individual classrooms while making learning centers developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for the children in their classroom. When there are various languages spoken in the classroom, families can help label the center areas in the languages spoken at home. When there are many languages in a classroom, labeling in the other languages can be rotated throughout the year.



What happens in a blocks and building center?

In the blocks and building center, young children have opportunities to use their imagination to create structures, such as buildings, bridges and ramps, and engage in dramatic play. As children create structures, they negotiate how to make blocks balance and how they can stabilize the structure to prevent it from falling over. They also identify shapes, learn new action words and positional words, collaborate with others, describe what they are doing, and problem solve.

Teachers can plan to use the blocks and building center to support children's learning in multiple ways. For example, teachers may create an activity where children can work independently or in small groups to build a structure, use it as a free play center option, and/or as a station to work with small groups of children or individual children to observe, build specific skills, and differentiate instruction.



Teachers ensure that the blocks and building center offers:

- A location away from foot traffic, with enough space for building substantial structures
- Shelving to hold sets of several different types of blocks and building materials (e.g., wooden blocks, connecting blocks, foam unit blocks, multiple shapes of blocks)
- Props, materials, and accessories that extend block and building play (e.g., figurines, vehicles, road signs, ramps)
- Selections of books and texts about building and landscapes; rotated to link to specific themes and/or learning goals (considerations for threes and younger fours: board books)
- Non-toxic art materials and supplies for children to use to plan and create additional structures and accessories (considerations for threes and younger fours: chunky writing utensils, safety scissors)

What happens in a dramatic play center?

Dramatic play is a key opportunity for children to express themselves and learn about the world around them. While dramatic play should cross into multiple learning areas (e.g., pretending to be scientists in the science center, an engineer in blocks), preschool classrooms should include a fixed dramatic play center. This learning center provides opportunities for children to explore different roles and real-world situations, using authentic tools and materials. This is a creative space that can be altered according to the theme or special project (e.g., into an office, restaurant, pet adoption center, grocery store, firehouse, service station, etc.)

Teachers can plan to use the dramatic play center to support children's learning in multiple ways throughout the day. For example, teachers may add props and materials to reinforce or extend a book topic or abstract concept, convert the area to align with the theme, use it as an open-ended free play center option, as a social and emotional support area, and/or as a station to work with small groups of children or individual children to observe, build specific skills, and differentiate instruction.



Teachers ensure that the dramatic play center offers:

- Space for up to four children in a noisy area of the room
- Variety of props for dramatic expression that reflect diversity in gender, culture, and occupations
- Play equipment and furniture that can be moved and converted (e.g., table and chairs, shelving, kitchen, safety mirror, benches, storage bins, etc.)
- Play props and materials that promote dramatic play and role playing (e.g., office equipment, workshop items, puppets, pretend food, dress-up clothes, dolls and figurines, cash register, pretend money, stuffed animals, etc.)
- Authentic props and materials (e.g., calculators, writing materials, clipboards, art materials for making signs and props, coupons, newspapers, etc.)
- Props to extend book experiences, such as flannel boards and pieces, puppets, and other story character figurines that can be used to recreate stories or represent experiences
- Multiple text types, including narrative, informational, and other kinds of texts; books with diverse characters and topics; and books at varying levels (Include board books for three and young four year old children)

What happens in a literacy center?

While books, texts, and writing materials should be part of every center in a prekindergarten classroom, the literacy center is a specialized and designated area. Literacy centers provide opportunities for children to fully engage with books, text materials, writing materials, and tools, such as computers and devices, to meet literacy goals. A rich collection of age appropriate books, text materials, and writing materials and tools provides opportunities for children to explore the parts of books and print conventions, engage in pre-reading and reading, explore new vocabulary and concepts, talk about story elements, listen to stories, explore writing and drawing, and practice using technology tools.

Teachers can plan to use the literacy center to support children's learning in multiple ways throughout the day. For example, teachers may create an activity where children can work independently or in small groups on specific projects, use it as a free play center option, and/or as a station to work with small groups of children or individual children to observe, build specific skills, and differentiate instruction.



Teachers ensure that the literacy center offers:

- A quiet, comfortable, cozy area of the classroom with natural light if possible
- Books and texts (about 20) that are on display, forward facing and rotated often according to current interests, topic, and/or theme (considerations for threes and younger fours: board books)
- Additional books in labeled bins, at children's eye level, organized by theme or genre
- Multiple text types, including narrative, informational, and other kinds of texts; books with diverse characters and topics; and books at varying levels
- Props to extend book experiences, such as flannel boards and pieces, puppets, and other story character figurines
- Books in multiple formats (e.g., listening on CD, digital books, interactive books)
- Writing materials with pencils, markers, crayons, and pens, and materials to write on such as paper and book making materials; alphabet and numeral strips and stamps (considerations for threes and younger fours: chunky writing utensils)
- Word wall or rings of words in the writing center depicting topic/theme-based words; common words and rare words with illustrations or depictions (focus on age-appropriate name recognition activities, for threes)
- Computers/devices with developmentally appropriate games and activities linked to learning goals; scheduled to ensure equity (limit time and use, based on age)

What happens in a creative arts center?

A creative arts center is a specialized area where children have opportunities to explore multiple art forms to express themselves artistically and experiment with a variety of materials. Creative arts includes visual arts, music, theatre, dance, and movement. A creative arts center is a dedicated area where children are free to express emotions and ideas, experiment with art forms and materials, practice fine motor skills and movement, actively explore how things work, use their imaginations, and listen for distinct sounds.

Teachers can plan to use the creative arts center to support children's learning in multiple ways throughout the day. For example, teachers may create an activity where children work independently or in small groups on theme-based art projects, use it as an open-ended free play center option, as a social and emotional support area, and/or as a station to work with small groups of children or individual children to observe, build specific skills, and differentiate instruction.



Teachers ensure that the creative arts center offers:

- Dedicated space near a clean-up area
- Multiple work surfaces for individuals and groups (e.g., tables, easels, floor areas)
- Illustrated books and sample artwork, at children's eye level, organized by theme or genre and inclusive of multiple cultures and art forms (considerations for threes and younger fours: board books)
- Displays of children's artwork and storage for ongoing projects
- Variety of drawing, painting, and natural materials for exploring color, form, and texture (e.g., brushes, straws, paint, crayons, different sizes of paper) (considerations for threes and younger fours: chunky writing utensils, finger-paint, safety scissors)
- Three-dimensional objects for creating art (e.g. paper tubes, play dough, modeling clay, packing peanuts)
- Audio station for listening to different styles of music
- Musical props and instruments for exploring dance, music, and sound
- Materials for creating instruments (e.g., boxes, rubber bands, strings)

What happens in a cozy area?

The cozy area is a space where a child can go to be by themselves. The area may be for a child who just wants some alone time to relax their body. The area should not be used as a “time out” area when a child is having a rough time but instead should be an area where a child may choose to go.

Teachers can use the cozy center to support children’s learning in multiple ways. For example, teachers may create an activity where children can learn about a specific emotion by putting pictures up that demonstrate the emotion and having writing supplies that allow the child to draw a picture and/or write a story about a time they demonstrated that emotion. The cozy center is an area where children can learn how to use deep breathing and other techniques to relax their body. As with any learning center in the room, the teacher should demonstrate how to use the materials in the center and talk about the use of the center as a private space for one child at a time.



Teachers ensure the cozy area offers:

- A location near a quieter learning center such as the book, writing or creative arts center
- Soft furnishings (i.e. soft chair, oversized pillow, cushions, etc.) for the child to sit, lay, or stretch out on
- A selection of soft materials such as dolls, animals, or puppets
- A selection of non-fiction and fiction books about feelings including board books for threes and younger fours
- A selection of sensory bottles and tactile items the child may fidget with (i.e. small fidget balls that can be squished in their hands)
- A non-breakable mirror that the child can use to see their reflection in
- A bin with writing materials such as small clip boards, paper of assorted colors and sizes, and writing utensils
- Emotion faces that the child may point to if they want to convey an emotion and are unable to articulate it
- Pictures of meditation, deep breathing, or yoga poses the child could practice in the space
- A listening center with soft music a child can listen to

What happens in a math center?

The math and manipulatives center provide opportunities for children to explore number sense, measurement, one-to-one correspondence, and patterns. A math center ensures a dedicated space where objects can be manipulated, sorted, ordered, quantified, and measured. Objects should be organized with labeled bins that are easily accessible and of interest to children. The math center should include age-appropriate games, puzzles, texts, and writing materials of varying degrees of difficulty, in order to engage all children. In the math center, children can use math manipulatives to model their thinking and demonstrate their understanding of concepts.

Teachers can plan to use the math center to support children's learning in multiple ways. For example, teachers may create a series of math activities and games during which children can work independently or in small groups to problem solve, use it as a free play center option, and/or as a station to work with small groups of children or individual children to observe, build specific skills, and differentiate instruction.



Teachers ensure that the math and manipulatives center offer:

- Workspaces for children to work with materials, including tables and floor areas
- Shelving to hold sets of several different types of objects, sorting bins, graph paper, materials for making patterns, etc.
- Manipulatives, such as pegs, sorting materials, Cuisenaire rods, nesting and linking cubes, shape patterns, counting beads, measuring tools, scales, etc.
- Posted math visual aids such as number lines (including flat number lines), number lists and representations, calendars (use of calendars time should be interactive and is not age appropriate for three-year olds), simple graphs, etc.
- Games and activities: games that rely on counting, puzzles (knobbed puzzles for threes and younger fours), pattern games, games with dice or number spinners, matching games, math computer games and apps
- Selections of books and texts that feature counting, themes with shape patterns, comparisons (considerations for threes and younger fours: board books)

What happens in a sensory center?

A sensory center is a designated area where children explore sand and water or other appropriate materials at a specially designed table by using a variety of props to extend experiences and language. Children have opportunities to use materials to try out simple experiments, to measure, to compare, and to problem solve. Working individually or in small groups, children learn to negotiate materials and space, describe, ask questions, experiment, and play creatively.

Teachers can plan to use the sensory center to support children's learning in multiple ways throughout the day by including math and science experiences. For example, children may pour water from one container to another in the water table and learn about measuring. In the sand table, they may mist the sand, which gives children an opportunity to use both dry and wet sand. Teachers may change the materials in the table to coincide with themes. For example, when studying plants, they may add soil to the table or, when learning about the sense of touch, they may provide materials of different textures.



Teachers ensure that the sensory center offers:

- Specialized space near a clean-up area
- Table or area specifically designed for sand, water, or other sensory play
- Smocks to protect clothing from getting wet or soiled
- Interesting materials that are rotated, in order to provide a variety of sensory and language experiences such as hay, dirt/mud, snow, pretend or real grass, oobleck (cornstarch and water), bubbles, or finger paint
- Props to extend play and talk at the sand table, such as figurines, cars and trucks, scoops, buckets, or paper with scissors for cutting
- Props to extend play and talk at the water table, such as small water droppers or basters, sink and float materials, or adding colors to the water
- Mop, broom, and dustpan for cleaning up spills

What happens in a science and discovery center?

In the science and discovery center, young children have opportunities to observe, gather, and explore objects. Early learners are naturally curious, and the science and discovery center can provide an opportunity for children to engage in experiments and observations, problem solve, talk about and record observations, and think about what it means. The science and discovery center provides hands-on opportunities for young children to explore abstract concepts and develop understanding of new vocabulary.

Teachers can plan to use the science and discovery center to support children's learning in multiple ways. For example, teachers may create a lab where children can work independently or in small groups on special experiments, use it as a free play center option, and/or as a station to work with small groups of children or individual children, in order to observe, build specific skills, and differentiate instruction.



Teachers ensure that the science and discovery center offers:

- A location near sunlight for growing plants
- Workspaces and tables for individuals and groups to conduct experiments and make observations (e.g., wall space, tables, floor areas)
- Displays and collections of natural objects (e.g., rocks, leaves, sand, dirt, roots) and depictions of science-related topics (e.g., posters, models, graphics, digital displays, videos)
- Variety of tools and materials for using senses, observing, and experimenting (e.g., natural materials, magnifiers, art supplies for recording, measuring devices, trays, droppers, etc.)
- Selections of books and texts about science, rotated to link to specific themes and/or learning goals (e.g., earth and space, living things, physical properties) (considerations for threes and younger fours: board books)
- Selections of games and puzzles that are related to science areas, such as healthy bodies, animals, weather, living things, space, movement, etc.
- Paper and writing materials to draw or record observations (considerations for threes and younger fours: chunky writing utensils)

What happens in a writing center?

In the writing center children have opportunities to use materials to experiment with writing (e.g., drawing, scribbling, making letters and letter-like forms, random letter strings, pretend writing, invented spelling, etc.). Writing centers are specialized spaces stocked with paper and writing/drawing materials; however, writing opportunities should be encouraged beyond the writing center by providing functional writing experiences connected to routines and play-related writing opportunities across centers.

Teachers can plan to use the writing center and other centers to scaffold children's writing skills based on what individual children know and understand. By experimenting with materials in the writing center children are learning about print and the meaning of print and are starting to make print-sound connections. Creating name cards for each child with his/her picture and name and using a similar card in the center management system will allow children to begin to recognize their name in print. Pointing out letters and words during the morning meeting and read aloud sessions will allow children to see that print has meaning, which will spark enthusiasm for incorporating writing across centers and play.



Teachers ensure that the writing center offers:

- A table and chairs to accommodate at least two children
- A variety of writing implements that includes markers, crayons, colored pencils, and regular pencils (considerations for threes and younger fours: chunky writing utensils, finger-paint, safety scissors)
- A variety of sizes of paper that includes lined and unlined paper
- Upper-case and lower-case alphabet stamps and ink pads
- A word wall or rings of words depicting topic/theme-base words; common words, and rare words with illustrations or depictions
- A variety of ABC books that allow children to expand vocabulary while identifying upper- and lower-case letters (considerations for threes and younger fours: board books)
- Environmental prints, such as fronts of cereal boxes or snack boxes, that are gathered together in a book for students to use
- Word strips with a picture and a word that coincide with the current or previous themes, bound together for children to use as a sample
- Materials for making simple books, including a stapler or paper fasteners
- Clipboards with paper and pencils attached or white boards with dry erase markers and an eraser, so that children can take the clipboards around the room to write (if the child is developmentally ready)
- Letter tiles or magnetic letters for sorting

SECTION IV

KEY DOMAINS OF CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Programs for prekindergarten children in New York State provide an opportunity for the development of skills, abilities, and attitudes that are foundational to children's future school success. Both the *New York State Early Learning Guidelines* (for children three years of age) and the *New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards* (for children aged four years of age) organize the development of young children into five distinct, but interrelated, domains. Below is a brief description of each domain:

DOMAIN 1: Approaches to Learning

How children become involved in learning and acquire knowledge. Domain areas include: Play and Engagement in Learning; Creativity and Imagination; Curiosity and Initiative; and Persistence.

DOMAIN 2: Physical Development and Health

Children's physical health and ability to engage in daily activities. Standard areas include: Physical Development; Physical Fitness; Health and Well-Being; and Health and Safety.

DOMAIN 3: Social and Emotional Learning

The emotional competence and ability to form positive relationships that give meaning to children's experiences in the home, school, and larger community. Domain areas include: Self Concept and Self Management Skills; Self Awareness and Relationships with Others; Decision-Making Skills; and Adaptability.

DOMAIN 4: Communication, Language, and Literacy

How children understand, create, and communicate meaning. This domain includes: Background Knowledge; Vocabulary Development; Foundations in Reading and Writing; and Speaking and Listening.

DOMAIN 5: Cognition and Knowledge of the World

What children need to know and understand about their world and how they apply what they know. This domain includes: Mathematics; Science; Social Studies; the Arts; and Technology.

SECTION V

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Instruction in Prekindergarten Classrooms

The overall goal of prekindergarten instruction is to build a foundation for children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. The primary focus of instruction is to provide learning experiences in meaningful contexts and to provide many and varied opportunities for children to: extend their knowledge of facts, concepts, words, and ideas; develop self-help, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and motor skills; explore their feelings about themselves, their peers, and the adults in their immediate environment; and develop positive outlooks on learning, such as curiosity, cooperation, and caring.

Since the adoption of prekindergarten learning standards, educators across New York State are challenged to identify curriculum and instructional strategies that will strengthen children's ability to achieve the standards. In a high-quality prekindergarten program, these strategies are based on knowledge of how children develop and learn, as well as what they already know and what they need to know and be able to do. Planning acknowledges that learning is playful, interactive, interdisciplinary, and connected. It also recognizes and provides for a balance between individual and group needs, between active and quiet times, and between teacher-directed and child-selected activities. Teachers influence what children learn by preparing the learning environment and providing an array of materials and equipment that students may use to explore, investigate, solve problems, and find answers to their questions.

Roles of Teachers

Instruction includes the deliberate ways that teachers influence what, where, when, how, and with whom children learn. Teachers assume many roles as they design learning environments, arrange materials in a variety of learning centers, and plan daily routines and transitions. As teachers gain awareness of how young children learn, grow, develop, and change, and as they recognize the interdependence between the myriad roles that they assume on a daily basis, they learn how to use each role to inform and enhance their work with children. They also learn to be responsive to the diverse abilities, cultures, languages, and experiences of all children while balancing their roles in response to each child's changing needs and interests.

As facilitators and managers:

Teachers plan and orchestrate the availability of a variety of learning experiences. They include a rich array of materials and props in clearly defined learning centers, in order to capture and sustain children's interest. They provide the blocks of time and flexibility in scheduling that children need to explore the learning environment and make choices among the wealth of materials and activities provided in the classroom and outside. They adjust the daily schedule, in order to accommodate a specific theme or project, and designate space to display collections or individual samples of children's work. Teachers are always alert to situations or occurrences that require them to make on-the-spot decisions in regard to redirecting behavior, responding to children's questions, and incorporating materials that challenge children's natural curiosity and creativity. Teachers arrange the learning environment, in order to influence what and how children learn. They also help children use oral language, in order to negotiate their place in small groups and in the broader classroom community.

As they observe children's interactions in the classroom, teachers plan ways to extend children's knowledge and enrich their experiences by:

- Adding or rearranging materials to respond to children's expressed needs and interests or their perceptions of children's needs, capabilities, and interests
- Adapting the equipment and materials, in order to accommodate children's special needs
- Providing additional experiences that challenge children's understanding of how things work or what things mean
- Modeling appropriate oral communication, in English and in the students' home languages

- Demonstrating how to use equipment and materials in new and different ways
- Working with children one-on-one or in small groups, in order to help them develop skills or understand concepts

As observers:

Teachers are attuned to the flow of the classroom and the engagement of children in small and large groups, as well as individual children. The teacher focuses on behaviors that indicate how children are building on or extending their knowledge of the world. The teacher captures these behaviors in a systematic way by recording anecdotal notes and collecting samples of children's work to review with the children, other adults who work with the children, and the children's families. Teachers also observe and record a variety of behaviors, such as: which activities children select and how often; how children use materials; how children express what they understand; and with whom children interact and how often. The observations and work samples provide ongoing documentation of what children know and are able to do. This documentation informs curriculum development, instruction, and assessment and helps teachers to make decisions regarding how to continually adapt the learning environment to meet the diverse and changing needs of children.

As models and demonstrators:

Teachers are actively engaged in suggesting to children different ways to extend knowledge, develop skills, and use language as they participate in various learning experiences. Teachers may introduce, to small or large groups, new materials, such as an eggbeater, a new batch of green play dough, or large photographs of animals found in different environments. After a field trip to the zoo, the teacher may have a group meeting to allow the children to talk about what they observed on the trip. As the teacher records their experiences on a chart, the four-year-old children may be asked to point to words that begin with a specific letter or sound. "Let's look for words that begin with the letter L. Yes, lion and leopard both begin with the letter L."

Teachers frequently use precise language to describe what children are doing ("I see that the bridge you are making is wide enough for two cars.") or to help children think about different ways to use words to express feelings ("Did you tell Joshua how it made you feel when he pushed you?"). Teachers also model expected behavior, as a way to redirect children's actions. For example, after observing a child hitting a doll, the teacher might gently pick up the doll and place it in a rocking chair, saying "I am very angry that you broke my glasses because they help me see to read. I need you to sit quietly for a little while." When conflicts occur within the group, it may be necessary for an adult to intervene. Teachers may describe what they saw or heard and suggest ways to correct the conflict. "I don't think that James meant to drop the paintbrush on your shoe. Can you help me remind him to put his brush in the paint jar before he moves away from the easel?"

As reflective listeners:

Teachers interact with children on a daily basis and may become active participants or "play partners," as children work in the different learning centers of the classroom. As children pretend to make soup in the dramatic play area, use blocks to reconstruct a building that they saw on a neighborhood walk, or attempt to reproduce the illustrations on the cover of their favorite book, teachers listen receptively and use precise language to describe what children are saying and doing. Teachers use their interactions with children as opportunities to record observations and reflect on ways to modify the learning environment, in order to respond to children's needs and interests.

As nurturers:

Teachers recognize and support children's strengths and interests through positive reinforcement and praise. As they get to know the unique characteristics and abilities of each child, teachers find ways to safeguard the individual child within the group by: allowing children to experience learning at their own pace; encouraging children to explore and make meaning of the different facets of the learning environment; providing opportunities for children to express their ideas and share their experiences with their peers; maintaining a learning environment in which children can thrive because they feel safe, can express their feelings, and are respected as important members of the group; encouraging children to participate in cooperative learning experiences when they are ready to become part of the classroom community; and taking advantage of "teachable moments" to extend learning and build bridges to new understandings and to ideas already introduced.

Curriculum Requirements

School districts that operate State-administered prekindergarten programs are expected to select and implement written curricula or curricula frameworks that are evidenced-based (meaning that research has been conducted regarding the relationship between the curriculum and children's learning), as well as developmentally appropriate (meaning that it addresses the key domains of children's development). The written curricula or curricula frameworks selected by a school district must:

- For three-year-old students, align with the *New York State Early Learning Guidelines*; and
- For four-year-old students, align with the *New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards*; and
- Ensure continuity with the district's Kindergarten-Grade 3 curriculum.

Preschool Students with Disabilities

When implementing prekindergarten curricula, teachers and administrators should be mindful of the needs of individual students. The program should implement appropriate modifications and provide additional supports to preschool students with disabilities, in order to ensure their more effective inclusion in the full range of the program's activities. Preschool students with disabilities may need specially designed instruction and related services that are designed to address their disabilities and ensure their participation in age-appropriate activities with their typically developing peers. Each preschool student with a disability has an individualized educational program (IEP), which documents his/her individual goals, supports, and services as determined by his/her needs, strengths, and abilities. These individual supports, accommodations, and services are designed to assist the child in meeting the goals in his/her IEP, as well as in achieving the learning standards. With the appropriate services and supports, students with disabilities can participate in prekindergarten experiences with their nondisabled peers and be held to the same high standards and expectations as those without disabilities.

Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten

The New York State Education Department is committed to advancing educational equity in our State, in order to ensure that all students, including our youngest learners, succeed and thrive in school. Early educational experiences should provide culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining learning opportunities that value diverse children, their families, and their communities.

Early childhood education plays an essential role in preparing young language-diverse Emergent Multilingual Learners for later success in school. It provides children with the opportunity to develop basic foundational skills in language and literacy in both their home languages and in English. It is, therefore, essential to actively support home language development in children. Research demonstrates that children who are provided rich first language experiences acquire a second language, such as English, more quickly and proficiently than those who are not given opportunities to develop their first language.

As with other skills, children develop along a continuum, with many factors contributing to the acquisition process of both their home languages and of English. The diverse background knowledge that each child brings to the task of learning English has to be acknowledged, respected, and embraced as part of each child's educational experience.

In collaboration with the Committee on Bilingual Education in Prekindergarten Programs, which is comprised of educators and advocates who promote the advantages of multilingualism through English and home language development, NYSED has developed the Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile and Process, in order to identify the existing languages and linguistic experiences of all prekindergarten students and to meet the needs of those who speak a language other than English through instructional strategies that support both English and home language development. For more information, see **Appendix 3** Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten.

Integrating Instruction Across Domains

Integrated learning experiences provide opportunities for children to develop oral language, math awareness, social competencies, and science concepts that are the foundation for growth and learning at the primary level. Teachers may develop holistic experiences around a specific topic or theme, or around a question posed by one of the children. No matter what sparks the idea for a learning experience, teachers need to remember that concepts related to the learning

experience may be integrated across domains. For example, as children are learning to categorize objects according to shape, size, color, or texture, they are also learning words that describe each of the objects and categories, as well as how to work cooperatively with their peers to complete a task.

The planning webs shown on the following pages are examples of age-appropriate experiences that provide opportunities for children to develop skills and content knowledge through exploration of topics that are meaningful to them. Each web illustrates how a topic or idea may be integrated into different classroom learning centers to provide multiple ways for children to access learning. Such complex, integrated planning may be captured by a graphic organizer that depicts the interrelationships between learning centers and/or curriculum areas, as opposed to a more linear approach to planning. The Winter Animals, Transportation, and Pets learning webs were created with three-year-old students in mind but can be modified for four-year-old students. The Trip to the Bakery, Pond Habitats, and Farm Animals learning webs are examples of experiences for four-year-old students but can be modified and used with three-year-old students.

Trip to the Bakery Web Explanation

The Trip to the Bakery is an example of planning to extend an experience after a field trip. After the trip to the bakery, the teacher reflects on the children's conversations and choice of activities. The web serves as a method of organizing ideas about how to further extend the children's' experiences in all of the interest areas.

The Trip to the Bakery learning experience provides a reflection on the kinds of activities that students may engage in as a result of visiting a neighborhood bakery. The trip was planned as an extension of a classroom experience that included several cooking activities. Cooking provided children with an opportunity to read picture recipes during group time and follow the recipes with the assistance of an adult, who worked with small groups to prepare oatmeal for breakfast, vegetable soup for lunch, or bread for snack. The children were introduced to words such as *boil*, *stir*, *mix*, and *beat*. They used tools such as wooden spoons, vegetable peelers, whisks, and eggbeaters. They counted out the number of cookies or muffins for students at each table. The dramatic play area was equipped with props (playdough, rolling pin, cookie cutters, muffin tins, plastic mixing bowls), in order to help students role play.

The Trip to the Bakery demonstrates the reciprocity between language and experiences. The focus of the teacher's planning is the use of math-related words for shapes, amounts, weights, and sequences. Language introduced during the trip is reinforced during group meetings (a pound of sugar, a dozen donuts). The teacher's careful attention to equipping the learning centers encourages students to use math words to describe their activities in the context of their play.





The following pages present two additional learning experiences, using the same principles described for The Bakery.



Pond Habitats

Dramatic Play:

- Fishing on a plastic mat
- Have students paint a box to be a canoe or fishing boat with oars, tackle box, life jacket, etc.
- Pond picnic and birdwatching with props

Sensory:

- Nest building with clay, twigs, leaves, fibers
- Create a pond in a sensory table by using sand and water, rocks, plastic aquarium plants, plastic ducks, fish, turtles, insects, etc.

Math/Manipulatives:

- Butterfly matching game
- Pond animal pattern mats
- Turtle bingo, using turtles for markers
- Flannel board with pond animals and plants. Arrange from smallest to largest and then reverse the order.

Language/Literacy:

- In the Tall, Tall Grass-Denise Fleming
- Jump Frog, Jump!-Robert Kalan
- In the Pond-Anna Milbourne & Mat Russell
- What's In the Pond? – Anne Hunter
- From Tadpole to Frog- Wendy Pfeffer
- Pond Circle- Betsy Franco
- Butternut Hollow Pond- Brian J. Heinz

Music/Movement:

- "The Green Grass Grows All Around" song
- "Duck, Duck, Goose" game - gross motor
- "Move like a _____" movement using pond animals
- "Five Speckled Frogs" – counting

Creative Arts:

- Mural of pond life - children paint background and add pond life as they learn about different parts of the ecosystem
- Easel painting with twigs/brushes made with pond grass
- Sand art
- Display Monet's water lily paintings, to inspire children for easel painting

Blocks:

- Add plastic bugs, fish, turtles, plants, stuffed beavers, ducks, and raccoons
- Add blue fabric for children to use as a pond

Technology:

- Internet videos of ponds and pond life
- Photo document a walk to the pond to show on a Smart Board
- With a tablet, photo document the hatching and growth of tadpoles. Make a display board with photos of frog life cycle

Science:

- Display terrarium of real pond water with a shop light to view small plant and animal life. Supply magnifying glasses.
- Study the frog life cycle in a classroom terrarium
- Learn about some different species that have webbed feet and why (ducks, frogs, turtles, otters, beavers)
- How do lily pads float? (sink/float experiments)

Farm Animals

Dramatic Play:

- Create a farm stand
- Have children paint large boxes and assemble them into a tractor
- Provide a "planting" prop box with gardening gloves, aprons, watering cans, flower pots, artificial flowers and vegetables, etc.
- Create a pretend chicken coop with stuffed chickens, paper bag nests, egg cartons, and plastic eggs for collecting and counting

Sensory:

- Use hay in the sensory table
- Use grain, cornmeal, oats in a variety of ways
- Alternate tools, tractors, farm animals, silos, wheels, spoons, tubes
- Scrubbing vegetables in sensory table with soapy water, scrub brushes, plastic vegetables, etc.
- Finger paint with "mud" (chocolate pudding)

Music/Movement:

- "Old McDonald" – identify animal sounds in a song
- "Five Little Ducks" – finger play
- "On the Farm" – finger play, counting
- "The Farmer in the Dell" – game gross motor
- "Duck, Duck, Goose" – game gross motor
- "Horses" – stop, go, gallop, prance, etc. gross motor, follow directions

Language/Literacy:

- The Big Red Barn – Margaret Wise Brown
- Barnyard Banter – Denise Fleming
- The Cow Who Clucked – Denise Fleming
- The Little Red Hen (can be acted out) – various authors
- From Egg to Chicken – Gerald Legg
- The Rusty Trusty Tractor – Joy Cowley
- Barnyard Dance – Sandra Boyton
- Name and tell about different farm animals
- Dictate the sounds that different farm animals make
- Story retell

Creative Arts:

- Create toilet paper roll farm animals
- Supply milk cartons for students to make and decorate tractors with paint, buttons, wood bits, etc.
- Easel painting with bundled straw
- Corn-on-the-cob (roll corn through paint)
- Create tractor prints: "driving" tractor through paint and across paper

Blocks:

- Add farm animals, barn, tractors to block area
- Have children paint boxes to represent the different buildings that you might find on a farm (silo, barns, farmhouses, etc.)

Technology:

- Software games that are farm-themed
- Photo document farm trips to show on the smart board
- On tablets, document the hatching and development of chicks

Science:

- Plant seeds
- Visit a working farm
- Discover ways in which animals are useful to people
- Visit a sheep farm during shearing and learn about products that come from sheep

Math/Manipulatives:

- Graph favorite farm animal
- Guess the number of seeds in a container
- Counting baskets of eggs/match to a number
- Matching mom and baby card game
- Sheep counting math game (roll die, pick # of cotton balls with clothes pin and put in a basket)

The Pets, Winter Animals, and Transportation Webs have been designed to use with **three-year-old students** but can be modified for use with four-year-old students.



Creative Arts:

- Feather painting
- Collage with bird seed, feathers, "fur", straw
- Clay pets- paint when dried
- Pet shaped sponges for painting
- Pet stamps
- Paw print art
- Squishy fish- resealable sandwich bag, gel, and fish (taped shut)

Sensory:

- Add bird seed and small scoops
- Add feathers
- Create an aquarium
- "Pet wash"- add bin of mud and bin of soapy water- wash the plastic animals mud off

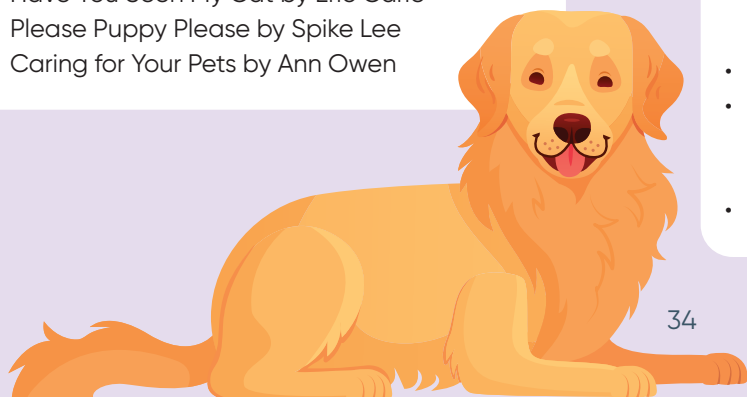
Music/Movement:

- Pet movements
- Animal Action (Greg & Steve)
- Five Kittens (fingerplay)
- My Puppy (fingerplay)
- Pet Yoga

Language/Literacy:

Fiction and non-fiction book choices for example:

- Good Dog, Carl by Alexandra Day
- Not Norman A Goldfish Story by Kelly Bennett
- Mom Cat Has Three Kittens by Denise Fleming
- Have You Seen My Cat by Eric Carle
- Please Puppy Please by Spike Lee
- Caring for Your Pets by Ann Owen



Pets

Dramatic Play:

- Transform area into a pet store or veterinarian's office
- Add animal medical equipment and veterinarian clothing
- Add vests and name tags (pet store)
- Transform shelves to small kennels
- Add stuffed animals, pet toys and dishes
- Label everything that may be in a typical pet store or veterinarian's office
- Cash register
- Pet shopping bags
- "Waiting room" chairs & accessories

Math/Manipulatives:

- Bird seed number tray-tracing numbers in bird seed
- Feed the dog counting game
- Gold fish math game
- Pet memory
- Pet match – parents and babies

Blocks:

- Add pet figurines, rocks, leaves, and tree rings
- Add cardboard tubes, felt pieces, boxes, to make homes
- Add snake, reptile, and fish figurines

Technology:

- Build an animal kennel with loose parts (wooden blocks, straws, craft sticks, cardboard, foam, etc.)
- Build a pet by using loose parts (recyclable materials, small plastic bottles, pipe cleaners, etc.)
- Add pet x-rays at the light table

Science:

- Display terrarium of real pond water with a shop light to view small plant and animal life. Supply magnifying glasses.
- Study the frog life cycle in a classroom terrarium
- Learn about some different species that have webbed feet and why (ducks, frogs, turtles, otters, beavers)
- How do lily pads float? (sink/float experiments)



Winter Animals

Sensory:

- Snow in different size containers
- Leaves, acorn, straw and wood chips in the sensory table
- Play dough and clay to make winter animal shapes

Dramatic Play:

- Create bear den and decorate
- Puppet play with different animals
- Create forests and decorate
- Story Reenactment

Math/Manipulatives:

- Counting Teddy hibernation math game
- Sorting and counting hibernating versus non-hibernating animals

Language/Literacy:

- Bear Snores On- Karma Wilson
- Over and Under the Snow- Kate Messner
- The Animals Winter Sleep- Lynda Graham Barker
- Hibernation Station- Michelle Meadows
- Time to Sleep- Denise Flemming
- The Hat by Jan Brett
- Animals in the Winter by Henrietta Bancroft

Creative Arts:

- Snow painting
- Painting with colored ice cubes
- Shaving cream in shallow pans for children to write in
- Create own winter scene by using natural elements such as sticks, acorns, leaves, and paper

Blocks:

- Add forest animals and natural materials, such as leaves, grasses and artificial turf
- "Blankets" of snow with white felt/fabric, quilt batting, or pillow stuffing
- Add log blocks, trees, colored glass tiles

Music/Movement:

- Bear is Sleeping song
- 5 Little Bears fingerplay
- Hibernation song
- Freeze game

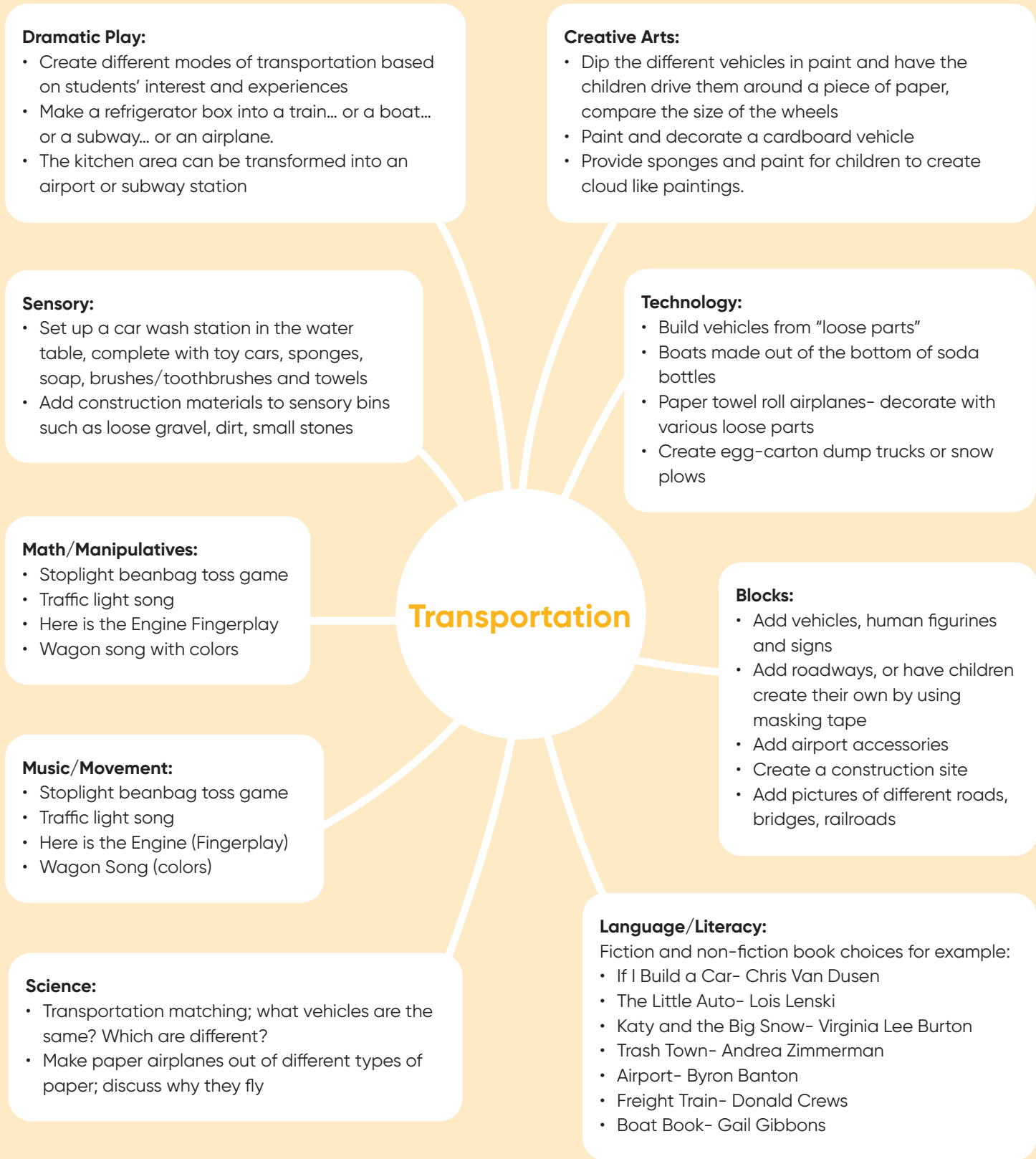
Technology:

- Building animal dens with play dough and wooden sticks or toothpicks
- Build bird feeders
- Make animals out of handmade clay such as hedgehogs

Science:

- Match baby hibernating animals to their parents
- Match animals to their habitats
- Identify the different paw prints that the animals make in play dough or paint





Routines and Transitions

Routines are purposeful procedures that ensure a predictable order to the day, as well as the effective use of time, space and materials. Research has shown that schedules and routines influence children's emotional, cognitive, and social development. Routines provide children with a sense of control and help them feel more comfortable in the classroom. When children understand what is expected of them, there is a reduction in behavior problems, such as tantrums and acts of aggression⁶.

Transitions are also critical when planning daily schedules. Transitions can be over-utilized in prekindergarten settings. It has been found in certain settings that almost half of children's time was spent transitioning from one activity to another or engaging in a personal care routine, rather than participating in experiences that support their growth and development.⁷ Planning for transitions requires teachers to consider the kinds of behaviors that children must develop in order to respond to change and work toward increasing independence. For children, transitioning from one activity, learning center, or other space in the building/outdoors may result in confusion, frustration, and challenging behaviors. Strategies that support smooth transitions include:

STRATEGY	EXAMPLE
Verbal cues and reminders before transitions	"We have five minutes until snack time"
Positive feedback after transitions	"Thank you for cleaning up the block area"
Non-verbal cues	Post daily schedule with pictures and words at children's eye level, and reference frequently
Let children move individually from one area to another	When children are finished hanging up their backpacks, they can go choose an activity
Plan a balance in level of activity	Gym/outdoor play, followed by a snack (opportunities for both active and less active experiences)
Adults help those who have a difficult time during transitions	Teachers pair with children who regularly have difficulties during transitions, such as making a child the teacher's helper
Minimize wait time for children	Have planned and purposeful activities available for children as they transition

⁶ Routines and Transitions Section Adapted from: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/wwb3.pdf>

⁷ Early, D., Iruka, I., Ritchie, S., Barbarin, O., Winn, D., Crawford, G., Frome, P., Clifford, R., Burchinal, M. Howes, C., Bryant, D., Pianta, R. (June 2010). How Do Pre-kindergarteners Spend their Time? Gender, Ethnicity, and Income as Predictors of Experiences in Pre-kindergarten Classrooms. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25 (2).

Considerations for Planning

CONSIDERATION	Yes	No
Approximately one-third of the daily schedule is designated for children to engage in self-initiated activities, to work individually and/or in self-selected groups in learning centers.	Y	N
The daily schedule provides a balance between individual, small group, and large group experiences.	Y	N
There is time for adults to interact with individual children.	Y	N
There is a balance of active and quieter experiences throughout the day.	Y	N
There is time to practice and master skills in learning centers, complemented by the introduction of new materials, topics, and or concepts by an adult.	Y	N
The classroom is divided into clearly defined, well-equipped learning centers including, but not limited to: dramatic play; blocks and construction; library, language arts, technology/media; science and nature; mathematics and manipulative materials; writing; creative arts; sand and water play and music.	Y	N
The daily schedule includes time for outdoor learning experiences to be provided daily (weather permitting).	Y	N
Thoughtful transitions are planned throughout the day.	Y	N
The district has implemented written curricula or curriculum framework that are evidenced-based (meaning research has been conducted regarding the relationship between the curriculum and children's learning), as well as developmentally appropriate (addresses the key domains of child development) and aligns with the applicable learning standards or benchmarks.	Y	N
The district implements appropriate modifications and provides additional supports to enable the more effective inclusion of children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in the full range of the program's activities.	Y	N
The district implements appropriate modifications and provides additional supports to ensure that Emergent Multilingual Learners in prekindergarten, or children who speak languages other than English at home, are provided equal access to the program and opportunities to achieve the same program goals and standards as other participating children.	Y	N
Instructional teams are provided opportunities for shared planning.	Y	N
Families are provided opportunities to be an active participant in their child's learning both inside and outside of the classroom.	Y	N

Sample Full-Day Schedule for Prekindergarten Students

The daily schedule provides a predictable, consistent routine for children, which maximizes engagement and minimizes the occurrence of challenging behaviors. This sample daily schedule is based on a five-hour full-day prekindergarten program. The schedule should be revised to consider district or program assigned mealtimes and, if applicable, times for participation in special area classes. The blocks of time provide a framework for developmentally appropriate experiences. When redesigning the schedule to meet the needs of your program, remember that 1/3 of the day should be allocated for self-initiated activities.

Program Time: 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Sample Schedule for Three-Year-Old Children

Arrival, preparation, and transition activities 15 minutes (9:00–9:15)

During this time, children arrive and are greeted at the door by a staff member. They put their belongings in their personal space and choose a table activity or floor activity. Teachers will have prepared the environment prior to arrival by placing age-appropriate manipulatives, puzzles, or other materials on the tables or floor spaces. Children should choose which activity they would like to participate in while they are waiting for their friends to transition into school.

Group meeting 10 minutes (9:15–9:25)

Group meetings for three-year-old students should be kept to a maximum of ten minutes or less. Group meeting time should be used to describe the events of the day, as a time to take attendance, and to do some fingerplays and songs that are related to the theme or topic of study.

Music & Movement 10 minutes (9:25–9:35)

Three-year-old children are very active. Providing a balance of active and inactive activities when developing the daily schedule is key. Having a ten-minute opportunity to move after periods of sitting helps get children ready to focus and get out their excess energy.

Handwashing and Snack 20 minutes (9:35–9:55)

Building in transition times are important for three-year-old students. During this time, children can transition from music and movement, wash their hands, use the bathroom, and have a snack. Snacks should be served family style and should be age appropriate and healthy. If students are eating breakfast upon arrival to school, snack time may not be required. When snack time is counted as part of the 5-hour instructional day, the NYSED mealtime guidance practices must be implemented.

Sample Schedule for Four-Year-Old Children

Arrival, preparation, and transition activities 15 minutes (9:00–9:15)

During this time, children arrive and are greeted at the door by a staff member. They put their belongings in their personal space and choose a table activity or floor activity. Teachers will have prepared the environment prior to arrival by placing age-appropriate math manipulatives, writing materials, puzzles, or other materials on the tables or floor spaces. Children should choose which activity they would like to participate in while they are waiting for their friends to transition into school.

Group meeting 15 minutes (9:15–9:30)

Group meetings for four-year-old students should be kept to a maximum of 15 minutes or less at the beginning of the year and may extend to 20 minutes, as students' attention span warrants. Group meeting time should be used to describe the events of the day through an interactive morning message, as a time to take attendance, to read a short story, or to do some fingerplays and songs that are related to the theme or topic of study.

Music & Movement 10 minutes (9:30–9:40)

Four-year-old children are very active. Providing a balance of active and inactive activities when developing the daily schedule is key. Having a ten-minute opportunity to move after periods of sitting helps get children ready to focus and get out their excess energy.

Handwashing and Snack 15 minutes (9:40–9:55)

Building in transition times are important for four-year-old students. During this time, children can transition from music and movement, wash their hands, use the bathroom, and have a snack. Snacks should be served family style and should be age appropriate and healthy. If students are eating breakfast upon arrival to school, snack time may not be required. When snack time is counted as part of the 5-hour instructional day, the NYSED mealtime guidance practices must be implemented.

Sample Schedule for Three-Year-Old Children**Choice time
60 minutes (9:55–10:55)**

Choice time is when students can choose the learning center (dramatic play, blocks, creative arts, etc.), choose the materials to use within the learning center, and create their own play schemas. Purposefully planned learning centers should include a connection to the theme or topic of study (see curriculum web examples located in this guide). Children need to have enough time to plan the materials they will use and to execute their ideas. This includes time to think about how they will play/use the materials, to assign roles if they are participating in a group play schema, and to develop the schema. Three-year-old children may stay in one center for the entire hour or may spend smaller amounts of time in centers. It is expected that the child may move to another center during choice time if their interests warrant. Depending on the developmental level of play that the individual child is in, the child may choose to play alone, side-by-side a peer (but not playing with the peer) or may play with a small group of students.

**Small groups
15 minutes (10:55–11:10)**

Small group times should be a time to work on a skill that the students are developing. For example, students may be developing their cutting skills, so the small group may consist of tearing paper and then using scissors for students who are ready. Small group time should be hands-on and relate to the theme or topic of study. Worksheets or other rote activities are not developmentally appropriate for three-year-old children.

**Outdoor choice time
40 minutes (11:10–11:50)**

Children should be outdoors daily, weather permitting. Districts should establish guidelines that determine when the weather is too hot or too cold for students to go outdoors. During this time, the teacher may provide materials such as tricycles, balls, hoops, or an obstacle course to enhance the development of gross and fine motor skills. Age-appropriate playground equipment should be used by the children. Upon returning indoors, children should wash their hands.

**Lunch
40 minutes (11:50–12:30)**

Mealtimes offer children an opportunity to practice self-help skills when using family style dining practices which includes hand washing. Providing opportunities for children to converse during mealtimes with both adults and peers will build expressive and receptive communication skills. When mealtime is counted as part of the 5-hour instructional day, the NYSED mealtime guidance practices must be implemented.

Sample Schedule for Four-Year-Old Children**Choice time
60 minutes (9:55–10:55)**

Choice time is when students can choose the learning center (dramatic play, blocks, creative arts, etc.), choose the materials to use within the learning center, and create their own play schemas. Purposefully planned learning centers should include a connection to the theme or topic of study (see curriculum web examples located in this guide). Children need to have enough time to plan the materials they will use and to execute their ideas. This includes time to think about how they will play/use the materials, to assign roles if they are participating in a group play schema, and to develop the schema. Four-year-old children may stay in one center for the entire hour or may spend smaller amounts of time in centers. It is expected that the child may move to another center during choice time if their interests warrant. Depending on the developmental level of play that the individual child is in, the child may choose to play side-by-side a peer (but not playing with the peer) or may play with a small group of students. Students may ask if the play structures they have created can be left up to continue the play the next day or later in the day if time warrants.

**Small groups
20 minutes (10:55–11:15)**

Small group times should be a time to work on a skill that the students are developing. For example, students may be developing their letter recognition skills, so alphabet BINGO or a name recognition game may be an activity. Small group time should be hands-on and relate to the theme or topic of study. Worksheets or other rote activities are not developmentally appropriate for four-year-old children.

**Outdoor choice time
40 minutes (11:15–11:55)**

Children should be outdoors daily, weather permitting. Districts should establish guidelines that determine when the weather is too hot or too cold for students to go outdoors. During this time, the teacher may provide materials such as tricycles, balls, hoops, or an obstacle course to enhance the development of gross and fine motor skills. Age-appropriate playground equipment should be used by the children. Upon returning indoors, children should wash their hands.

**Lunch
40 minutes (11:55–12:35)**

Mealtimes offer children an opportunity to practice self-help skills when using family style dining practices which includes hand washing. Providing opportunities for children to converse during mealtimes with both adults and peers will build expressive and receptive communication skills. When mealtime is counted as part of the 5-hour instructional day, the NYSED mealtime guidance practices must be implemented.

Sample Schedule for Three-Year-Old Children**Read-aloud
15 minutes (12:30–12:45)**

Read-aloud sessions should be interactive. Drawing the children's attention to the parts of a book, how to hold a book and turn the pages, while discussing the setting, characters, and plot. A balance of fiction and non-fiction books should be included in read-aloud sessions. Repeated read-alouds reinforce key vocabulary words and allow children to participate more as they become familiar with the book.

**Quiet activities
30 minutes (12:45–1:15)**

Providing thirty minutes of quiet activities helps the child learn to relax and self-regulate their bodies. Quiet activities may include working individually or with a partner on a puzzle or with manipulatives, listening to a recorded book, "writing or drawing" in journals, or doing yoga exercises. Nap time may not be included as instructional time in a five-hour program. Programs can extend the time beyond five hours to include a nap time period. Additional guidelines about nap time can be found on the OEL web-site.

**Outdoor choice time
30 minutes (1:15–1:45)**

See the description of outdoor time above.

**Group meeting and departures
15 minutes (1:45–2:00)**

Students prepare their belongings and can say good-bye to teachers and friends as the program comes to an end. The end of the day is a transition period for children. They may be going home, to extended care programs, or with another caregiver. It is important for the transition to be smooth at the end of the program day so that the experience is positive and not chaotic or rushed for the child.

Sample Schedule for Four-Year-Old Children**Read-aloud
20 minutes (12:35–12:55)**

Read-aloud sessions should be interactive. Drawing the children's attention to the parts of a book, how to hold a book and turn the pages, while discussing the setting, characters, and plot. A balance of fiction and non-fiction books should be included in read-aloud sessions. Repeated read-alouds reinforce key vocabulary words and allow children to participate more as they become familiar with the book. During this time, four-year-old students may be able to listen to more than one story, depending on the length of the book.

**Quiet activities
20 minutes (12:55–1:15)**

Providing twenty minutes of quiet activities helps the child learn to relax and self-regulate their bodies. Quiet activities may include working individually or with a partner on a puzzle or with manipulatives, listening to a recorded book, "writing or drawing" in journals, or doing yoga exercises. Nap time may not be included as instructional time in a five-hour program. Programs can extend the time beyond five hours to include a nap time period. Additional guidelines about nap time can be found on the OEL web-site.

**Outdoor choice time
30 minutes (1:15–1:45)**

See the description of outdoor time above.

**Group meeting and departures
15 minutes (1:45–2:00)**

Students prepare their belongings and can say good-bye to teachers and friends as the program comes to an end. The end of the day is a transition period for children. They may be going home, to extended care programs, or with another caregiver. It is important for the transition to be smooth at the end of the program day so that the experience is positive and not chaotic or rushed for the child.

Sample Half-Day Schedules for Prekindergarten Students

This sample daily schedule is based on a two-and-a-half-hour half-day prekindergarten program. The schedule should be revised to consider district or program assigned snack times and, if applicable, times for participation in special area classes. The blocks of time provide a framework for developmentally appropriate activities for a prekindergarten program. When redesigning the schedule to meet the needs of your program, remember that 1/3 of the day should be allocated for self-initiated activities.

Program Time: 9:00 a.m.–11:30a.m.

Sample Schedule for Three-Year-Old Children

Arrival, preparation, and transition activities

15 minutes (9:00–9:15)

During this time, children arrive and are greeted at the door by a staff member. They put their belongings in their personal space and choose a table activity or floor activity. Teachers will have prepared the environment prior to arrival by placing age-appropriate manipulatives, puzzles, or other materials on the tables or floor spaces. Children should choose which activity they would like to participate in while they are waiting for their friends to transition into school.

Group Meeting/ Music & Movement

15 minutes (9:15–9:30)

Group meetings for three-year-old students should be kept to a maximum of ten minutes or less for sitting activities and incorporate movement activities after ten minutes. Group meeting time should be used to describe the events of the day, read a story, sing songs and provide movement activities that are related to the theme or topic of study.

**Choice time
60 minutes (9:30–10:30)**

Choice time is when students can choose the learning center (dramatic play, blocks, creative arts, etc.), choose the materials to use within the learning center, and create their own play schemas. Purposefully planned learning centers should include a connection to the theme or topic of study (see curriculum web examples located in this guide). Children need to have enough time to plan the materials they will use and to execute their ideas. This includes time to think about how they will play/use the materials, to assign roles if they are participating in a group play schema, and to develop the schema. Three-year-old children may stay in one center for the entire hour or may spend smaller amounts of time in centers. It is expected that the child may move to another center during choice time if their interests warrant. Depending on the developmental level of play that the individual child is in, the child may choose to play alone, side-by-side a peer (but not playing with the peer) or may play with a small group of students.

Sample Schedule for Four-Year-Old Children

Arrival, preparation, and transition activities

15 minutes (9:00–9:15)

During this time, children arrive and are greeted at the door by a staff member. They put their belongings in their personal space and choose a table activity or floor activity. Teachers will have prepared the environment prior to arrival by placing age-appropriate math manipulatives, writing materials, puzzles, or other materials on the tables or floor spaces. Children should choose which activity they would like to participate in while they are waiting for their friends to transition into school.

Group Meeting/ Music & Movement

20 minutes (9:15–9:35)

Group meetings for four-year-old students should be kept to a maximum of twenty minutes or less for sitting activities and incorporate movement activities after fifteen minutes. Group meeting time should be used to describe the events of the day through an interactive morning message, to read a story, sing songs and provide movement activities that are related to the theme or topic of study.

**Choice time
60 minutes (9:35–10:35)**

Choice time is when students can choose the learning center (dramatic play, blocks, creative arts, etc.), choose the materials to use within the learning center, and create their own play schemas. Purposefully planned learning centers should include a connection to the theme or topic of study (see curriculum web examples located in this guide). Children need to have enough time to plan the materials they will use and to execute their ideas. This includes time to think about how they will play/use the materials, to assign roles if they are participating in a group play schema, and to develop the schema. Four-year-old children may stay in one center for the entire hour or may spend smaller amounts of time in centers. It is expected that the child may move to another center during choice time if their interests warrant. Depending on the developmental level of play that the individual child is in, the child may choose to play side-by-side a peer (but not playing with the peer) or may play with a small group of students. Students may ask if the play structures they have created can be left up to continue the play the next day or later in the day if time warrants.

Sample Schedule for Three-Year-Old Children**Cleanup, handwashing, and snack
15 minutes (10:20–10:45)**

Building in transition times are important for three-year-old students. During this time, children can clean up the materials they were using during choice time, wash their hands and use the bathroom, and have a snack. Snacks should be served family-style and should be age-appropriate and healthy. When snack time is counted as part of the 5-hour instructional day, the NYSED mealtime guidance practices must be implemented. If students are eating breakfast or lunch upon arrival to school, snack time may not be required.

**Outdoor choice time
30 minutes (10:45–11:15)**

Children should be outdoors daily, weather permitting. Districts should establish guidelines that determine when the weather is too hot or too cold for students to go outdoors. During this time, the teacher may provide materials such as tricycles, balls, hoops, or an obstacle course to enhance the development of gross and fine motor skills. Age-appropriate playground equipment should be used by the children. Upon returning indoors, children should wash their hands.

**Group meeting and departures
15 minutes (11:15–11:30)**

Students prepare their belongings and can say good-bye to teachers and friends as the program comes to an end. The end of the day is a transition period for children. They may be going home, to extended care programs, or with another caregiver. It is important for the transition to be smooth at the end of the program day so that the experience is positive and not chaotic or rushed for the child.

Sample Schedule for Four-Year-Old Children**Cleanup, handwashing, and snack
15 minutes (10:35–10:50)**

Building in transition times are important for four-year-old students. During this time, children can clean up the materials they were using during choice time, wash their hands and use the bathroom, and have a snack. Snacks should be served family-style and should be age-appropriate and healthy. When snack time is counted as part of the 5-hour instructional day, the NYSED mealtime guidance practices must be implemented. If students are eating breakfast or lunch upon arrival to school, snack time may not be required.

**Outdoor choice time
30 minutes (10:50–11:20)**

Children should be outdoors daily, weather permitting. Districts should establish guidelines that determine when the weather is too hot or too cold for students to go outdoors. During this time, the teacher may provide materials such as tricycles, balls, hoops, or an obstacle course to enhance the development of gross and fine motor skills. Age-appropriate playground equipment should be used by the children. Upon returning indoors, children should wash their hands.

**Group meeting and departures
10 minutes (11:20–11:30)**

Students prepare their belongings and can say good-bye to teachers and friends as the program comes to an end. The end of the day is a transition period for children. They may be going home, to extended care programs, or with another caregiver. It is important for the transition to be smooth at the end of the program day so that the experience is positive and not chaotic or rushed for the child.

SECTION VI

DIMENSIONS OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting what children know and are able to do. It reflects the many ways that children learn and the diversity of their experience, language, and cultural backgrounds. It also provides important information about how children engage in learning and when they learn. In addition to observing, recording, and collecting information on how children behave and perform in various settings on a regular basis, teachers may also use the results of developmental checklists, completed at regular intervals, and other valid and reliable assessment tools. Ongoing assessment includes the input of specialists in areas such as speech, psychology, Bilingual Education, English as a New Language, and occupational and physical therapy. In addition to English, assessment needs to be conducted, as required, in the language best understood by the child. The results of assessments are used to plan and modify curricula, instructional strategies, daily classroom routines, and the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Assessment also helps teachers reflect on and modify their own practice, and share children's progress with families.

Teachers and teacher assistants use a variety of methods to keep track of children's progress toward the goals and objectives of the program. They consistently observe and document children's interactions with the people and materials in the environment. Teachers also collect samples of children's work over specified periods of time. When teachers have maintained careful records on children, they can use this information to support requests for additional health and community services. A teacher may request an evaluation by a specialist to assess a child's language, vision, or hearing. A teacher might also refer a child for a more formal evaluation because of general, undefined concerns about a child's development in one or more areas.

New York State's *Core Body of Knowledge* lists several core competencies regarding observation and assessment for use by professionals working with young children:

- Use observation and assessment tools to support children's development and learning
- Practice responsible assessment
- Build positive, productive assessment partnerships with families and colleagues
- Practice responsible reporting of assessment results
- Use observation and assessment to plan and modify environments, curricula, and teaching
- Practice responsible formal evaluation and reporting procedures

Details on these core competencies can be found in the *Core Body of Knowledge*, available at <http://www.earlychildhood.org/pdfs/CoreBody.pdf>.

Types of Assessment

Screening

In New York State, each school district must conduct a screening for all new entrants. For the purposes of Part 117 of the Commissioner's Regulations, screening is the use of a brief procedure designed to provide information that allows the district to distinguish from the general population those children who fit into one or more of these three categories: possibly gifted, possibly a preschool student with a disability, and possibly an English Language Learner. This screening is performed only once, preferably prior to the start of the school year but no later than December first. For those students starting the program after December first, they should be screened within fifteen days of enrollment. The results of the screening may indicate the need for further diagnostic evaluation.

Developmental Baseline

Developmental baseline assessments are usually formally conducted at the beginning of the school year. It is a comprehensive pre-assessment that provides a thorough evaluation of the skill level, abilities, and/or knowledge that a child possesses before beginning formal instruction. Information collected from this assessment can be used to make instructional decisions and can serve as a comparative measure to determine student growth throughout the year. State-administered

Pre-K programs are required to use a valid and reliable assessment tool to establish a developmental baseline for each student.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring takes place throughout the school year and is used to evaluate the current learning of a child as it compares to the child's learning goals. Using a child's authentic work is an effective way to capture this information. Based on what is observed and collected, instruction can be modified.⁸

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is a measure of learning at a particular point in time, used to determine instructional success.⁹ It is typically conducted at the end of the school year. State-administered Pre-K programs are required to use a valid and reliable assessment tool to measure student progress, which is generally the same tool that was used at the beginning of the year, so results can be compared to the developmental baseline assessment.

The following chart lists screening tools and progress monitoring tools which were reported as being used in the 2017-2018 Final Program Report. This table is not an exhaustive list of all the different tools that are being used, but a sample. NYSED does not approve or recommend particular assessment tools. However, it is required that the instrument(s) used for assessment be valid and reliable and that assessment information be used to inform classroom instruction and professional development. A program should consider its curricula, alignment with the applicable standards, and students' needs when selecting a tool.

Screening Tools	Language and Literacy Skills	Cognitive Skills	Social-Emotional Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages and Stages (ASQ) • Ages and Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire (ASQ-SE) • Pearson Early Screening Profiles • Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI) • Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development • Brigance Developmental Screens • Developmental Indicators for Assessment of Learning (DIAL) • Early Screening Inventory- Third Edition (ESI-3) • Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) • Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigance Inventory of Early Development III • Creative Curriculum/Teaching Strategies GOLD • High Scope Child Observation Record (COR) • Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) • Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) • Work Sampling System (WSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI) • Brigance Inventory of Early Development III Curriculum/Teaching Strategies GOLD • High Scope Child Observation Record (COR) • Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) • Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) • Work Sampling System (WSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI) • The Inventory of Early Development III-Brigance • Creative Curriculum/Teaching Strategies GOLD • The Inventory of Early Development III-Brigance • Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) • Work Sampling System (WSS)

⁸ <http://www.hatchearlylearning.com/what-is-progress-monitoring/>

⁹ National Research Council. (2008). *Early childhood assessment: Why, what and how*. Snow, C.E., & Van Hemel, S.B. (Eds.). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

SECTION VII

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The quality of any program for young children is largely determined by the experience and training of staff. All staff should have knowledge of child development and early education, as well as supervised experience working with young children. Teachers need to have opportunities to extend their own learning in order to continue to develop teaching practices that support children's growth and learning. These may include opportunities for reflection, inquiry, and individual study; work within the program, or building on specific, agreed-upon topics, such as how to provide continuity for students as they transition from one level to the next; and large group sessions designed to provide information and inspiration. Professional learning also may include opportunities for staff to work together. Scheduling should accommodate shared planning times for classroom staff, between regular and support teachers, and joint staff development sessions for collaboratively funded programs.

Professional learning for prekindergarten staff is ongoing and designed to help staff extend knowledge while providing opportunities for fine-tuning practice and reflection. Strategies are consistent with overall program, building, and district goals, and are supported by administrators at all levels.

Professional learning should:

- Be connected to the goals and needs of the prekindergarten and kindergarten programs
- Include approaches that are grounded in research (based on what we know about adult learners)
- Provide for the application of practice in real-life situations
- Emphasize a strength-based approach (starting with what teachers already know)
- Provide information on how to integrate the five domains of early learning
- Be linguistically and culturally responsive
- Be provided by trainers with the qualifications, experience, and knowledge to provide informative, practical research-based training on the topic areas

For professional learning resources and information, please visit the NYSED OEL website; <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/>



APPENDIX 1

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING HEALTH & SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Name of District: _____ Date: _____

Name of Community-Based Organization: _____

Address: _____

Name of Person Completing Form

Title

Records and Permits: The following records and permits should be on file in the community-based organization.

Item	Comments
A. Sketch of indoor instructional space with dimensions, showing interest/activity areas	
B. Sketch of outdoor space with dimensions showing placement of equipment, types of ground cover, fencing, etc.	
C. Outside New York City – NYS Office of Children and Family Services permit or letter of exemption (required if children are in attendance 3 hours or more a day) (If licensed, omit E, F, and G) Permit #: _____ Expiration Date: _____	
D. New York City Schools, only – New York City Day Care Permit required (omit E, F, and G) Permit #: _____ Expiration Date: _____	
E. Fire Inspection Report within the last 12 months Date: _____	
F. Certificate of Occupancy Date: _____	
G. Health Inspection Report Date: _____ (required if meals are prepared on site)	
H. Staff Development Plan (postsecondary and in-service training including health and safety training)	
I. Current (annual) physical and dental examination record for each child.	
J. Proof of immunization status of each child as required by Public Health Law.	
K. Child Nutrition Funding Source: CACFP ____ Vended through School ____ Other ____	

Indoor Facility Checklist:

Item	Yes	No	Comments
Classrooms and facilities used by children are well-maintained and clean.			

The classroom space allows for safe movement and activity for the number of children enrolled.			
The bathroom is immediately accessible and barrier free.			
Adequate supplies are available in the bathroom for handwashing to include individual paper towels, a pump dispenser for soap, and warm running water.			
There are no hazards apparent in the classroom, such as dangling electrical/phone cords, space heaters, tripping hazards, worn equipment, or peeling paint.			
All classroom learning areas can be adequately supervised by staff.			
Hazardous materials, such as cleaning supplies, are stored in a locked cabinet or out of the reach of children.			
There is appropriate staffing in each classroom; minimally 1 teacher and 1 paraprofessional for classes up to 18 students or 1 teacher and 2 paraprofessionals for classes of 19 or 20 students.			

Outdoor Facility Checklist:

Item	Yes	No	Comments
Outdoor play area provides adequate space for children to play safely.			
Outdoor play area provides age- appropriate equipment for different abilities.			
Materials and play equipment used by the children must be sturdy, free from rough edges and sharp corners.			
There must be a cushioned surface under all outside play equipment that present a fall hazard. Surfacing may not include concrete, asphalt, grass, or other hard compacted dirt.			
Equipment must be in good repair and be placed in a safe location.			

Item in Need of Action	Action Plan for Compliance	Target Date	Date Completed

APPENDIX 2

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM EQUIPMENT & MATERIALS

(Not an exhaustive list)

Ensure that classroom materials reflect the variety of students' languages and cultures. Please remember that, when purchasing materials for classroom learning centers, materials should be age appropriate and safe for use with young children.

ART CENTER

- tempera and finger-paints
- crayons and markers
- table
- vinyl smocks
- chalkboard easel and chalk
- non-spill plastic paint pots
- easel
- paintbrushes
- child-sized safety scissors
- rolling pin
- clay and hammers
- glue and paste
- collage materials
- tissue paper
- newsprint
- yarn and string
- feathers
- craft sticks
- recycled art materials
- various writing instruments
- various sizes of paper
- wood glue and wood scraps

BLOCK CENTER

- block shelf
- variety of unit blocks
- accessories, such as diverse and multicultural people, animals, cars, trucks, boats, and street signs
- props, such as trees and benches
- cellophane, material, or other fabric, to make rivers and lakes
- block patterns for labeling
- architectural block set
- tunnel and arch set
- hollow blocks
- work vehicles
- railway and traffic sign set
- bucket of vehicles
- tool set
- graph paper
- plain paper and clip board
- pencils
- colored pencils or crayons

SCIENCE CENTER

- storage area
- table scale or balance
- prism
- color wheels
- easy-view magnifier
- giant magnet
- plastic magnet wands
- theme study items
- weather props
- plants
- naturally found items or collections
- items to be weighed or sorted
- paper
- writing instruments
- displays of natural objects or science-related topics
- variety of tools and materials for using senses observing or experimenting
- games and puzzles related to science area
- science books

SENSORY CENTER

- sand and water table with cover
- props for experiments
- boat set
- sand molds in geometric shapes
- water play set
- double sand and water wheel
- sand builder set
- plastic scoops and funnels
- sand sieve and containers
- vinyl smocks
- water droppers or basters
- other materials to change table theme

LANGUAGE/LISTENING CENTER

- forward-facing library shelf
- sequencing shapes and pattern cards
- flannel board with easel stand
- felt primary shapes
- flannel board story kits
- chalkboards
- chart paper
- pencils, rulers, and tape
- tactile letters
- letter and number stamp set
- big books
- self-concept books
- listening center with books on CD

MANIPULATIVE/MATH CENTER

- sorting mats or trays
- table
- connecting blocks
- magnetic activity center
- strings and pattern cards
- lacing sets
- puzzle rack
- knobbed puzzles
- early concept puzzles
- occupations, community, family, and children of the world puzzles – diverse and multicultural
- colors and shapes bingo
- primary shape sorter
- geo boards and peg boards
- assorted counters
- sorting kit and tray
- attribute blocks
- pattern stacker
- interlocking cubes with storage tray
- posted developmentally appropriate math visual aids, such as number lines, calendars, simple graphs, shape and counting posters
- games or activities that rely on counting, dice, or spinners
- books or texts that feature counting, shapes, or patterns

DRAMATIC-PLAY CENTER

- dolls, doll clothes, and furniture
- realistic dress-up clothes and props, not costumes
- puppets and puppet stand
- table and chairs set
- kitchen set
- kitchen utensils, pots, and pans
- food sets (representing different cultures)
- fruits and vegetables with basket
- plexi-mirror
- housecleaning set and stand
- variety of phones
- career hats (plastic, only), clothing, and props

COMPUTER/TECHNOLOGY CENTER

- computer
- tablets
- simple software with concept games for: matching, sorting, sequencing, counting, color and number recognition, and drawing
- bookshelves, room dividers, carpet squares, small rugs, or a table and chair to define the space
- audio books
- Smartboard

MUSIC, MOVEMENT, AND DANCE PROPS

- box of dance props, such as scarves, ribbon wands
- assorted diverse music
- colored exercise bands
- musical instrument sets
- hula hoops
- parachutes
- CD player/Audio Station
- small bean bags

APPENDIX 3

EMERGENT MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS: IN PREKINDERGARTEN

State Resources

- Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile and Process
 - » can be accessed in English and the most commonly requested languages at <http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/emergent-multilingual-learners-prekindergarten-programs>.
- Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL)
 - » Contact OBEWL in Albany and Brooklyn: <http://www.nysed.gov/program-offices/office-bilingual-education-and-world-languages-obewl>
- OBEWL's Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN)
 - » RBERNs are located throughout NYC and NYS: <http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/schools/regional-supportrberns>
- OBEWL's Bilingual Parent Hotline
 - » Families of Pre-K Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten and K-12 ELLs/MLLs can be assisted, in various languages, about services for their children by contacting 1-800-469-8224 or <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/ellparenthotline>

Federal Resources:

- » *Non-Regulatory Guidance: English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* released on September 23, 2016 by ED. Section F is explicit in Title III compliance requiring the inclusion of Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten as young as three years old in districts' prekindergarten program planning, funding for instruction and professional development for their teachers: Programs are encouraged to use Title III funds to develop and implement effective programs, beginning with prekindergarten.
 - <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiienglishlearners92016.pdf>
- » *Dear Colleague Letter* and guidance document jointly released on January 7, 2015 from the Civil Rights Division of the DOJ and the ED's Office for Civil Rights
 - <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>
- » *English Learner Tool Kit* released by ED's Office of English Language Acquisition was originally published in 2015 as a companion to support the *Dear Colleague Letter*, and has been continually updated to reflect ESSA requirements. Each chapter of the tool kit covers topics related to educating English Learner students, including, but not limited to, identification, placement, staffing, curriculum, learning environment, English Learners with Disabilities, and family engagement.
 - <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>
- » *Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs* jointly released by HHS and ED. Under the premise that supporting the learning and development of young Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten requires program-wide considerations, this policy statement and set of recommendations assist early childhood programs in systematically incorporating supports that promote the development and learning of children who are Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten.
 - https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/eecd/dll_policy_statement_final.pdf

- » *Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness* – Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center – Head Start – An Office of the Administration for Children and Families
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>

Resources and More Information

- Culturally Linguistically Appropriate Early Intervention Evaluations
 - » For language-diverse children, it is of the utmost importance to ensure that early intervention evaluations follow current laws and regulations and are culturally and linguistically appropriate. For more information, see *Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Early Intervention Evaluations* by Dr. Catherine Crowley, Coordinator of Bilingual/Multicultural Program Focus and Director of the Bilingual Extension Institute at Columbia University's Teachers College at <http://www.leadersproject.org/ceu-courses/culturally-and-linguistically-appropriate-early-intervention-evaluations/>.
- Young Dual Language Learners: A Guide for PreK-3 Leaders
 - » Karen M. Nemeth, an expert in Early Childhood Education and Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten, provides clear and concise responses to questions that help teachers and administrators navigate the landscape of educating language-diverse children in linguistically and culturally responsive ways. <https://www.caslonpublishing.com/titles/14/young-dual-language-learners/>
- Early Education for Dual Language Learners: Promoting School Readiness and Early School Success
 - » Linda M. Espinosa, an expert in Early Childhood Education and Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten, evaluates the research and presents features of early childhood education programs that most effectively support Emergent Bilingual children. <https://www.fcd-us.org/early-education-for-dual-language-learners-promoting-school-readiness-and-early-school-success/>
- Right from the Start: A Protocol for Identifying and Planning Instruction for Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten in Universal Prekindergarten
 - » Zoila (Tazi) Morell, Ph.D., an expert in Early Childhood Education and Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten, presents a schoolwide protocol to identify and provide a linguistic history and profile of language-diverse children at the prekindergarten level. http://www.nysut.org/~media/files/nysut/resources/2016/educators-voice/edvoice_ix_06_tazimorell.pdf?la=en





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