



Maryland Accreditation

Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Programs

**Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood Development
200 West Baltimore Street 10th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

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**** This document references the following publication as “The Guide”:**

Supporting Every Young Learner: Maryland’s Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy, Birth to Age 8. (2015). Baltimore, MD, Maryland State Department of Education

I. Program Administration

Standard

Program Philosophy

1.1 The early childhood program's philosophy statement and policies are consistent with early childhood practices that are age and developmentally appropriate and reflect the role of families. The written philosophy statement for the early childhood program is used by the staff as the foundation for planning, for staff development, and for implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the program.

Indicator

1.1.1 Philosophy

The program has a written philosophy and mission statement, which reflect effective early childhood practices; best practices for staff; and an appreciation for diversity and welcoming individuals of all abilities.

Best Practices Rationale

The philosophy and mission statement are integral components of the program. Both reflect the principles of developmentally appropriate research and literature-based practices; best practices for staff; and the role of families in the education of their children. The philosophy and mission statement exhibit a respect and appreciation for diversity of the global community and is welcoming of adults and children of all abilities.

Required Evidence

☐ Written philosophy and mission statement

The philosophy and mission statement describe the beliefs and practices of the program related to children, families, and staff. The philosophy and mission statement are shared with staff and families. Staff members are knowledgeable of the philosophy and mission of the program.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 10/15/25

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard**Program Philosophy**

1.1 The early childhood program's philosophy statement and policies are consistent with early childhood practices that are age and developmentally appropriate and reflect the role of families. The written philosophy statement for the early childhood program is used by the staff as the foundation for planning, for staff development, and for implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the program.

Indicator**1.1.2 Program Evaluation**

The program establishes and implements a process for ongoing program evaluation. Annually, the program conducts a self-evaluation of the program policies, procedures, and practices. The results of the program evaluation are shared with staff, families, and other stakeholders.

Best Practices Rationale

Annual program evaluation is a process to help check the effectiveness of the program; identify systemic issues, and consider improvements/adjustments. It is also an important way to examine quality, and work to continually improve your program. Program evaluation is a key part of program planning and continuous improvement.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Process for program evaluation and timeline
- ☐ Copies of completed annual program evaluation
- ☐ Program goals for on-going improvement

The evaluation process is conducted by program administration, staff, families, and other community partners. Quality requires identification of program goals; assessment of policies and procedures; and the implementation of best practices.

The results of the program evaluation are used throughout the year to ensure program accountability.

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**Date: 6.1.18

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard**Program Personnel**

1.2 The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel.

Indicator**1.2.1 Communication**

The administrator/supervisor communicates with program staff regarding developmentally appropriate strategies for implementation, assessment, and accountability.

Best Practices Rationale

Regular communication among program staff facilitates the exchange of information and full participation in program activities to promote quality program practices. The administrator/supervisor implements various mechanisms for regular communication among staff. Staff are informed about developmentally appropriate programming and practices; state standards; family engagement practices; the program planning and evaluation process; and resources to improve performance.

An effective communication system is an integral component of a quality program. Formal and informal opportunities allow staff input regarding the quality of services to children and families; and opportunities to express concerns and provide feedback related to program practices.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Staff Meeting Schedule
- ☐ Staff Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- ☐ Documentation of ongoing communication and information shared with staff regarding developmentally appropriate practices and program planning and evaluation

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**Date: 6/15/25☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met**Final Self-Appraisal Rating**

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard**Program Personnel**

1.2 The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel.

Indicator**1.2.2 Staff Evaluation and Ongoing Supervision**

The administrator/supervisor conducts staff evaluations annually and ongoing as needed. Results are used to develop Individual Staff Development Plans.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Staff Evaluation Policy and timeline
- ☐ Completed annual staff evaluation tool
- ☐ Individual staff development plan
- ☐ Copies of staff observations

Best Practices Rationale

Staff evaluation is the foundation to identifying staff strengths, improving staff performance and program planning. Effective formal and informal evaluation processes are used to provide effective feedback related to professional development and growth.

Staff evaluations conducted annually identify strengths, interests, and areas of improvement. Information is used to create individual staff development plans and ongoing program plans.

Annual staff evaluations support professional development and growth as well as program planning and quality. The staff evaluation process is another component of the program's communication system.

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**

Date: 10/15/24
☐ Not Met ☒ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____
☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard

Program Personnel

1.2 The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel.

Indicator

1.2.3 Qualification: Early Childhood Educator Licensed Child Care/Head Start – Early Childhood Educator, responsible for the care and education of a group of children from birth through age five, must have at least an Associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development or related field **and** must hold a Maryland Child Care Credential of level five.

Public School – Classroom Educator must have at least a Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development or related field **and** meet Maryland State Certification requirements for early childhood education.

Best Practices Rationale

Early Childhood Educators who are appropriately educated are better prepared to plan and implement quality, developmentally appropriate programs for young children. Knowledge of child development and best practice is gained through education, experience working with young children, and ongoing professional development.

Programs understand the importance of employing qualified educators and providing ongoing professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills. When the early childhood educator is absent, a qualified substitute is provided to ensure continued program quality.

Required Evidence

- ☐ College Degree
- ☐ Current Maryland Child Care Credential (Licensed Child Care and Head Start)
- ☐ Current Maryland Certification certificate (Public School)
- ☐ Job Description

Educators are provided job descriptions that reflect expectations in: building relationships with children and families; implementing curriculum; instructional and assessment strategies; and professionalism.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 11/15/25
☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____
☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

| | |
|--|--|
| Standard | |
| Program Personnel | |
| 1.2 The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel. | |
| Indicator | Best Practices Rationale |
| <p>1.2.4 Qualification: Assistant Teacher Licensed Child Care/Head Start – Assistant Teacher working with Early Childhood Teacher must have a high school diploma and Maryland Child Care Credential of level two or higher.</p> <p>Public School – Assistant Teacher and/or Paraprofessional working with the Classroom Teacher must have a high school diploma and meet Maryland ParaPro requirements.</p> | <p>Assistant Teachers who are appropriately trained are better prepared to assist with planning and implementing quality, developmentally appropriate programs for young children. Knowledge of child development and best practice is gained through education, experience working with young children, and ongoing professional development.</p> <p>Programs understand the importance of employing qualified assistant teachers and providing ongoing professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills. When the early childhood teacher is absent, a qualified assistant teacher will ensure continued program quality.</p> <p>Assistant Teachers are provided job descriptions that reflect expectations in: building relationships with children and families; facilitating learning; and professionalism.</p> |
| <p>Required Evidence</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Current Maryland Child Care Credential (Licensed Child Care and Head Start)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Maryland ParaPro test results (Public School)</p> | |
| Program Notes | |
| <p>Initial Self-Appraisal Rating</p> <p>Date: <u>6/15/25</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met</p> | <p>Final Self-Appraisal Rating</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met</p> |

Standard**Program Personnel**

1.2 The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel.

Indicator**1.2.5 Professional Support**

The program implements policies that provide support to staff in order to meet professional and personal needs.

Best Practices Rationale

The cornerstone of a program's success is the staff. Teaching staff are responsible for guiding children's learning experiences in the classroom. The support provided to the teaching staff is essential to children's learning and program quality.

Professional support strategies are effective at: increasing staff retention; promoting personal and professional well-being; and improving performance. Adult restroom and lounge separate from children's activity area; adequate individual storage area for personal belongings; designated meeting or conference area; and time for staff members to meet their personal needs and handle administrative/planning tasks are all strategies for professional support.

Planning time is an essential professional support. Educators need a designated time to think about and plan activities that are engaging, challenging, and developmentally appropriate.

Required Evidence

- ☒ Lesson Planning Policy
- ☒ Evidence of Planning Time
- ☒ Professional Development Opportunities

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**

Date: 6/15/25

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

| | |
|---|--|
| Standard <h2 style="text-align: center;">Program Continuity</h2> | |
| 1.3 The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children. | |
| Indicator 1.3.1 Transition and Continuity of Services <i>within</i> the program Program staff develops transition plans for children moving to a new group/classroom within the program that communicate children's individual strengths and needs. | Best Practices Rationale Consistency and continuity play an important role in helping children successfully manage transitions. Young children develop relationships with educators and learn to trust or distrust the world around them through predictable routines and experiences. Children grouped by age will likely change educators and classrooms several times over the course of their enrollment. It is important to recognize that a child who is moving from one classroom to another will experience multiple losses: a place he or she has come to know and trust; an educator he or she depends on and adores; children he or she has befriended; and routines that help him or her feel secure and competent. These transitions are handled with great care. The goal is a smooth transition that minimizes any emotional concerns for the child and family, and maximizes all that is known about the child's prior progress so that there are no interruptions in learning. (p.124, The Guide) |
| Required Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Agendas and minutes of transition/articulation meetings between classrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of communication with families regarding transition within the program | |
| Program Notes | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>6/12/20</u> ___ Not Met ___ Partially Met ___ Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ ___ Not Met ___ Partially Met ___ Fully Met |

Standard**Program Continuity**

1.3 The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children.

Indicator**1.3.3 Schedules and Routines**

The program documents daily routines and schedules to support continuity of learning.

Best Practices Rationale

The daily schedule provides a consistent structure that children can come to expect. A routine that children can count on contributes to a sense of comfort and security.

The daily schedule needs to be developmentally appropriate and reflect instruction in the various domains of development. There is a balance of quiet and active learning, time to explore at one's own pace to promote independence, and time to explore with others to build cooperative learning skills. There is a balance between child-directed activities and educator-directed activities. There need to be ample opportunities to scaffold instruction during the day. Educators build in flexibility to be able to follow the interests of the children.

For children aged two and younger, the schedule is primarily individual. Group instruction for children two or younger is optional. (pg. 121-123, The Guide)

Required Evidence

- ☒ Daily schedule includes core components of the day appropriate to the age of the children
- ☒ Schedules and lesson plans reflect intentional planning for daily transitions
- ☒ Daily schedules reflect integrated learning in all seven domains of learning

Program Note**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**

Date: 6/15/25
___ Not Met ___ Partially Met Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____
___ Not Met ___ Partially Met ___ Fully Met

| | |
|--|---|
| Standard | |
| Program Continuity | |
| 1.3 The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children. | |
| Indicator 1.3.4 Intentional Planning The program documents lesson plans to support continuity of learning and an organized approach so that interactions are intentional and goal directed. | Best Practices Rationale Educators strategically plan for and prepare the learning environment so that children can naturally engage in developmentally appropriate learning activities that accommodate their age, experience, and abilities - and that provide exposure and practice for children to reach increasingly challenging goals. As educators plan for children's learning, it is critically important that they set high, achievable expectations for all children, including those with unique challenges due to physical, cognitive, emotional, or linguistic differences. By targeting the particular strengths and interests of each child, educators are able to plan for instruction that supports the achievement of their goals. Curriculum that is aligned to the Maryland Early Learning Standards reflects intentional and systematic instruction that will advance growth and learning. Lesson plans reflect the curriculum and allow for strategies to provide opportunities for children to be actively engaged in discovery and learning. These should include a mix of child-directed and educator-directed explorations that value teachable moments. (pg. 115-120, The Guide) |
| Required Evidence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation of State recommended curriculum, Public School developed curriculum or a curriculum individually developed by the program and accepted by MSDE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans reflect implementation of curriculum and are relevant to children's culture and personal interest <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans meet the needs of each and every child, are informed by information gained from families, include information from IEP/IFSP and other resource personnel who may work with a child <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans include opportunities for questioning and problem solving; learning through play and child initiated discovery; and children to make choices for how they work on a project | |
| Program Notes | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>6/15/24</u> ___ Not Met ___ Partially Met <u> Fully Met</u> | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ ___ Not Met ___ Partially Met ___ Fully Met |

Standard

Program Continuity

1.3 The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children.

Indicator

1.3.6 Assessment Strategies

Developmentally appropriate assessment informs instruction and is an integral part of daily planning.

Best Practices Rationale

Assessing children's development and learning helps educators better understand individual children and tailor learning experiences accordingly, so that all children reach their full potential. Assessment of children is used as part of the curriculum planning and implementation cycle.

Understanding the whole child helps educators apply the results of assessment in context, allowing educators to focus on the strengths of the child and how those can be used to bolster all areas of learning and development.

The purpose of assessment is to gain a better understanding of a child's areas of strengths and needs, and to adjust instruction to promote learning. It is essential that assessments are intentionally linked to child growth, development, curriculum, and instruction. Educators continuously review progress and use that information to modify their teaching to match the children's pace of learning, abilities, and interests. (Chapter 8, The Guide)

Required Evidence

- ☐ Evidence of completed assessment tools
- ☐ Samples of data collected
- ☐ Evidence of differentiation, e.g. grouping based on assessment data
- ☐ Strengths and interests of children are reflected in instructional strategies, e.g. think-pair share, cooperative learning, problem solving, etc.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 6/15/18

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

| Standard | | Program Accountability | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1.4 The early childhood program uses the results of the program evaluation of the early learning program in planning for overall program improvement. | | | |
| Indicator | | Best Practices Rationale | |
| 1.4.1 Reporting The results of the Annual Program Evaluation and Accreditation Self-Appraisal are reported to the governing body of the early childhood program, i.e. Board of Directors, Parent Advisory Board, Board of Education or School Improvement Team. | | After conducting the annual program evaluation and accreditation self-appraisal, the results and strategies for program improvement are shared with parents, staff, governing bodies, and others as appropriate. The program use the results of the program evaluation and self-appraisal to develop a program improvement plan, which includes improvement strategies, resources, persons responsible, and a timeline for implementation and completion. | |
| Required Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Program Improvement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> A copy of Annual Program Evaluation Report <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence that program evaluation and accreditation self-appraisal results were shared with staff, parents, and governing body <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation from School Improvement Team Meetings | | | |
| Program Notes | | | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: 8/15/20 | | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: | |
| ___ Not Met ✓ Partially Met ___ Fully Met | | ___ Not Met ___ Partially Met ___ Fully Met | |

II. Program Operation

2.1 Environment

(Birth to 6 years)

Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator

2.1.1(a) Outdoor Environment: Safety

The learning environment meets standards for safety, toxicity, construction, and cleanliness. The program must comply with zoning requirements, fire, health, and safety regulations.

Best Practices Rationale

Outside play areas are free of sharp or dangerous objects, trash, animals and poisonous plants, garden sprays, alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs and other hazards. The area is well drained and accessible by safe walkways or paths. If play area is near a road or unsafe area, a fence provides security. The outdoor space has at least one area that provides some protection from the elements.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Clean
- ☐ Well drained
- ☐ Free of clutter
- ☐ Appropriate storage of outside equipment
- ☐ Appropriate and well maintained playground equipment
- ☐ Appropriate surfaces
- ☐ Shaded/covered area

Equipment is appropriate for the ages and abilities of the children and is well maintained. There is enough portable and stationary equipment so that children have access without long waits. Portable equipment is stored in a locked facility.

Program Notes

- Wood chips need to be replenished/refrashed
- May need a gate to keep students from running away. (safety purposes)

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 6/15/25

☐ Not Met ☒ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator

2.1.1(b) Outdoor Environment: Organization of Space

The outdoor space has designated areas and equipment to support various types of play and learning.

Best Practices Rationale

The outdoor environment provides time for children to learn to play together – how to coordinate their actions for physical activities, how to take turns and collaborate, and how to follow directions in a game. The outdoor space allows for a variety of opportunities for children to interact with large groups, small groups, and individually.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Structures for promoting sensory integration
- ☐ Space for digging, gathering, and investigating
- ☐ Space to play games
- ☐ Variety of surfaces to support different types of play i.e. sand, mulch, dirt, grass, blacktop
- ☐ Space for large group play
- ☐ Space for small group play
- ☐ Space for quiet play

Equipment stimulates a variety of skills (balancing, climbing, ball play, steering, pedaling, etc.) on different levels (tricycles with and without pedals, different size balls, ramp and ladder access to climbing structures). Structures provide opportunities for children to crawl, roll, jump, climb, and swing to promote sensory integration.

Adaptations are made or special equipment is provided for children with disabilities. Outdoor space has a variety of surfaces permitting different types of play. (pgs. 139-141, The Guide)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 6/15/25

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator

2.1.2(a) Indoor Environment: Safety

The learning environment meets standards for safety, toxicity, construction, and cleanliness. The program must comply with zoning requirements, fire, health, and safety regulations.

Furniture and equipment meet standards for safety, size, durability, toxicity, construction, and cleanliness.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Clean
- ☐ Well lighted and ventilated
- ☐ Free of clutter
- ☐ Separate diapering area, if applicable
- ☐ Furnishings are durable and designed to support children's needs
- ☐ Furnishings are appropriate height and size
- ☐ Developmentally appropriate soft areas

Best Practices Rationale

Instruction is located in clean, safe, and clutter free areas. Natural light and ventilation are controlled. The environment is planned to avoid safety problems. Bathroom supplies (toilet paper, paper towels, soap) are easily accessible to children. Drinking water is accessible to children.

Furnishings and materials follow the most recent safety standards (available through organizations such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission). Furniture in the classroom is sturdy, in good repair, appropriate in size, and addresses the routine care, play, and learning needs of the children. Furniture is arranged for convenient use.

Furnishings, such as open shelves for safe materials and sturdy storage containers, encourage appropriate independence. Cozy and soft areas (e.g. rug, bean bag chair) are available. Adaptive furniture permits the inclusion of children with special needs.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 10/15/18

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

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|---|---|
| Standard <p style="text-align: center;">Environment (Birth – 6 years)</p> | |
| 2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child. | |
| Indicator 2.1.2(b) Indoor Environment: Organization of Space The learning environment reflects effective and flexible utilization of available space. | Best Practices Rationale The indoor environment is welcoming, organized, and adaptable for all children. It provides clear, wide paths for children to move safely. There are areas for large group discussion and activity as well as areas for small group exploration, with a logical flow between such areas. Children of all ages have a space for their personal belongings, labeled with their name and picture. Meeting areas have a soft yet safe floor covering that is inviting to children. Small group meeting areas may have a table to facilitate activities between educators and children. Children are supported in developing a love of books both in groups and as an individual activity. A variety of books and text materials are a part of all centers, and are rotated to support subjects being explored and the variety of reading levels within a class. (pgs. 125-127, The Guide) All programs have a calming area where children can relax. The calming area includes pillows, a comfortable floor covering and other cozy furnishings. This is a space where children can take their own time to relax and compose so they are ready to move on to a new activity. (p. 134, The Guide) |
| Required Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Space for personal belongings labeled for each child <input type="radio"/> Large meeting area <input type="radio"/> Small meeting area <input type="radio"/> Library <input type="radio"/> A variety of books and text materials in multiple places in the room <input type="radio"/> Calming area <input type="radio"/> Space is organized to be child centered, flexible and accessible to all children | |
| Program Notes | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>6/15/24</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met |

Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

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| <p>Indicator</p> <p>2.1.2(c) Indoor Environment: Intentional Learning Opportunities</p> <p>The learning environment reflects the goals of the early childhood program, creating an environment where learning is integrated across domains and the layout of the room is organized to support intentional, integrated learning.</p> | <p>Best Practices Rationale</p> <p>The environment provides children with choices, offering some control over what they are choosing and instilling a sense of independence, ownership, and pride in the process.</p> <p>Items displayed on the walls, bulletin boards, and windows reflect learning goals of the program. Educators are mindful of clutter and over-stimulation. Intentionally placed displays also allow space for the eyes to rest, promoting a calm aesthetic environment. Items displayed provide an opportunity to highlight the children's imagination, creativity, and experiences. Displays are at children's eye level and reflect a multicultural environment. A skillful educator builds the environment with the children so that they develop a sense of ownership for the environment and see a representation of their work.</p> |
| <p>Required Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Displays are at children's eye level, are hung neatly, and reflect current learning goals ○ Walls, windows and bulletin boards have intentional displays and are not cluttered ○ Tubs, trays, bins, baskets, shelves, boxes, and other items labeled and accessible | <p>Easily moveable furniture and shelves enable educators to place materials close to their related learning spaces. Labels on materials help children easily find materials for use and for clean-up. (pp. 134-135, The Guide)</p> |
| <p>Program Notes</p> | |
| <p>Initial Self-Appraisal Rating</p> <p>Date: <u>10/15/25</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met</p> | <p>Final Self-Appraisal Rating</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met</p> |

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|---|---|
| Standard <p style="text-align: center;">Environment (Birth – 6 years)</p> | |
| 2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child. | |
| Indicator 2.1.3(a) Fostering Appreciation and Support for Diversity: Learning Environment <p>The learning environment promotes an awareness and appreciation of diversity in all its forms such that children see themselves as full participating members in the global community.</p> | Best Practices Rationale <p>The learning environment demonstrates respect for all, promotes authenticity in materials, and accommodates the areas of diversity identified in state law (ability, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, race, region, religion, socioeconomic status). In addition, early childhood educators recognize physical, cognitive, social and emotional differences as diversity. (pp. 56, The Guide)</p> |
| Required Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instructional materials are authentic, accurate, and reflect positive images and information about diverse groups ○ The environment reflects customs, traditions, structure and songs relevant to the culture of children, families, and staff | <p>Multiculturalism is relevant and supportive of a diverse staff and family traditions that expand farther than the country from where a child's ancestors originated. It is reflective of what is in our neighborhood and community, honest and true, not just dressed up in traditional clothing, respectful and kind, comprehensive and cross-curricular. The materials, books, pictures, posters, artifacts/realia, music, art, and puppets are authentic in reflecting diversity. The ultimate goal is to ensure that children are able to "see" themselves using these objects and to use them to learn about others.</p> <p>Early childhood educators are sensitive to read the cues of the family, respect their values and priorities for their children and not insert their own expectations or views. Further, understanding the role the community plays for the family is also key. (pp. 67-68, The Guide)</p> |
| Program Notes | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>6/15/21</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met |

Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

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| <p>Indicator</p> <p>2.1.4 Technology Appropriate use of technology and interactive media follow a developmental progression in the way children use technology.</p> | <p>Best Practices Rationale</p> <p>Effective uses of technology and media are active, hands-on, engaging, and empowering. They give the child control; provide adaptive scaffolds to help children progress in skill development at their individual rates; and are used as one of the many options to support children's learning.</p> |
| <p>Required Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Appropriate and equitable shared use of technology <input type="radio"/> Interactive use of technology <input type="radio"/> Adults support and scaffold children's use of technology | <p>Screen time recommendations from public health organizations are considered when determining technology use for children birth – 5 years of age. Use of technology with children ages 2 – 6 is interactive. Any uses of technology and interactive media in programs for children younger than 2 years of age is limited to those that appropriately support responsive interactions between educators and children and strengthen adult-child relationships.</p> <p>When used appropriately, and keeping screen time recommendations in mind, technology and interactive media have the potential to enhance, without replacing, creative play, exploration, physical activity, outdoor experiences, conversation and social interactions.</p> <p>(p. 121, 136, The Guide and NAEYC/Fred Rogers Center position statement)</p> |
| <p>Program Notes</p> | |
| <p>Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>12/15/25</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met</p> | <p>Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met</p> |

II. Program Operation

2.3 Curriculum (3 to 6 years)

| | |
|---|---|
| Standard <p style="text-align: center;">Curriculum (3 to 6 years)</p> | |
| 2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards. | |
| Indicator 2.3.1 Curriculum Content The curriculum content is integrated and includes concepts for all areas, while being appropriate for the age and level of development of each child. | Best Practices Rationale The Maryland Early Learning Standards define key aspects of development and learning that are the foundation for a child's success in learning. Seven domains are identified as key areas of development for preschool-aged children. Understanding the developmental characteristics of young learners provides a frame of reference so that early childhood educators can anticipate and plan for a continuum of children's learning. |
| Required Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learning experiences are interesting and appropriately challenging ○ A variety of materials are used for children to engage in learning that fits within the curriculum ○ Opportunities for practicing skills are integrated across the curriculum ○ The needs of the individual child are balanced with the needs of the group ○ Evidence of learning experiences occurring in all domains | Taking all of the domains of development into consideration and adding temperament, personality, interests, family culture, and wellness into the unique profiles of a child's knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward life and learning is taking a whole child view. This is important when considering the development of a child because looking at a specific domain informs what to teach and how to build-up individual skills in a child. Looking at the whole child informs how to teach including approaches differentiation individualization, and pace. Providing ways for children to demonstrate understanding gives each child the opportunity to express their abilities and interest as individuals. (pp. 21, 26, 29, The Guide) |
| Program Notes <div style="height: 150px;"></div> | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>11/15/25</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met |

Standard**Curriculum
(3 to 6 years)**

2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.

Indicator**2.3.2 Social Foundations**

Children are provided opportunities to engage in playful learning to support social foundations skills.

Best Practices Rationale

Young children's attention, self-regulation and social behaviors are as important as cognitive abilities as predictors of later academic success. Social foundations include the skills necessary to regulate one's own behavior and emotions, develop healthy relationships with adults and other children, and create a sense of positive identity. It focuses on children's approaches to learning including: their willingness to initiate, engage, and sustain participation in different learning activities; their ability to demonstrate control through executive function skills; and self-regulation to remain on task in the face of distractions and comply with rules, routines and expectations.

Skilled early childhood educators intentionally plan for and help young children learn how to develop healthy relationships with adults and other children.

Educators and children generate classroom rules together and decide on appropriate consequences throughout the year. Social conflicts between children are used as a learning experience with educators providing guidance and support to help children resolve conflicts. (pp. 22, 81, The Guide)

Required Evidence

- ☐ Age appropriate classroom rules written in positive terms are posted
- ☐ Intentional activities that promote appropriate behavior such as:
 - Class meetings/circle time discussions
 - Small group interactions
 - Paired activities
 - Role playing
 - Small group problem solving
- ☐ Educators use visual cues and social stories to support conflict resolution and self-regulation strategies
- ☐ Educators model positive social interactions with all children and adults
- ☐ Educators have respectful interactions with children

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**

Date: 6/15/25
☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____
☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

| | |
|---|---|
| Standard <p style="text-align: center;">Curriculum (3 to 6 years)</p> | |
| 2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards. | |
| Indicator 2.3.3 Executive Function The development of approaches to learning and executive function skills facilitate and support the process of learning. | Best Practices Rationale Executive function is part of social foundations and includes working memory (i.e. short term memory), so that children are able to hold information in their mind and recall it when needed, and cognitive flexibility, so that children are able to engage in problem solving and symbolic representation. Inhibitory control, the ability to control one's impulses, is also an executive function skill. |
| Required Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visual cues to guide children's choices and decisions in social situations ○ Visual cues to help children plan their play and work ○ Opportunities to engage in play such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role playing ▪ Turn taking ▪ Rule making ▪ Making choices | Working memory and mental flexibility strengthen as children gain, through practice, the ability to wait for their turn, return to interrupted work, or wait for the educator's attention (and remember why they wanted to talk to their educator). Early childhood educators continuously support children in building executive function because it influences learning at all stages. Throughout the day, skilled educators look for ways to introduce and extend exposure to the types of executive function skills that will serve children long into the future. This includes those skills that facilitate and support the process of learning, such as a child's willingness to initiate, engage, sustain participation in different learning activities, and the ability to demonstrate control, so that they can remain on task in the face of distractions. (pp. 22, 83, The Guide) |
| Program Notes | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>12/15/25</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met |

Standard**Curriculum
(3 to 6 years)**

2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.

Indicator**2.3.4(b) Language Arts: Reading**

Learning experiences in the reading foundational skills are provided for children, including print awareness, phonological awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary development.

Best Practices Rationale

To promote print awareness and concepts, children have regular exposure to books to see how spoken words are represented in print. Educators help young children make connections to print in books as well as in the environment.

Phonemic awareness and phonics are elements of phonological awareness and precursors to emerging reading skills. Educators use systematic instruction where there is a deliberate and sequential focus on building relationships between sounds and letter symbols so that children can begin to decode new words. Educators also help children develop recognition of sight words.

Educators model fluency through read-aloud stories and provide opportunities to read and re-read familiar texts. Literature and informational texts are used to expose children to a variety of genres.

Educators provide strategies and activities to build children's vocabulary and comprehension. By asking questions or having children make choices, educators are supporting comprehension skills and vocabulary growth. (pp. 88-91, The Guide)

Required Evidence

- Educators model and implement age appropriate reading strategies, e.g. fingerplays, rhyming, picture matching, phonics and phonemic awareness activities, and comprehension strategies
- Classroom library contains 2-3 books, of various genres, per child.
- Educators intentionally use functional and environment print
- Children are provided opportunities for choral reading
- Children are given feedback to promote the development of reading foundational skills
- Children are provided opportunities to read for enjoyment

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**Date: 6/15/25

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

| | |
|--|---|
| Standard <p style="text-align: center;">Curriculum (3 to 6 years)</p> | |
| 2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards. | |
| Indicator 2.3.4(c) Language Arts: Writing Daily writing instruction includes opportunities to write for a variety of intentional purposes. | Best Practices Rationale Skilled early childhood educators make writing a part of every center in the classroom, so that children have many opportunities throughout the day to practice. Writing is an effective means for expressing ideas that can be shared with others, rather than a laborious task of practicing penmanship. |
| Required Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children are provided opportunities for intentional writing to express ideas ○ Educators model writing during shared writing, class book creation, language experience charts, and dictation ○ Writing center with varied materials are available daily ○ Variety of writing materials available in all learning centers ○ Child generated books are displayed and available to children | Educators help children understand that thoughts and ideas can be represented in drawing and writing and that those convey meaning. Children are encouraged to express ideas using shapes, symbols, drawings, or dictating words and phrases. Children may use inventive spelling, while adults model "adult writing" when a child is dictating a story. (p. 92, The Guide) |
| Program Notes | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>6/15/15</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met |

Standard**Curriculum
(3 to 6 years)**

2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.

Indicator**2.3.5 Mathematics**

The curriculum includes mathematics content and process outcomes that support children's ability to solve problems, reason, and make and communicate connections.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Children are provided opportunities for hands-on activities that support mathematical concepts e.g.: counting, graphing, sorting, weighing, measuring, subitizing, comparing, etc.
- ☐ Materials/manipulatives are available for children to explore and practice math concepts daily
- ☐ Educators use and encourage mathematical vocabulary throughout the day
- ☐ Educators integrate mathematical concepts into all content areas and learning centers
- ☐ Educators promote exploration and inquiry through the use of questioning

Best Practices Rationale

Early childhood educators create opportunities for children to learn and manipulate mathematical ideas and concepts through play, exploration, and analysis. They are aware of how to build on children's experiences and intentionally incorporate math into everyday learning across the curriculum. The five strands of math are counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, geometry, and number and operations in base ten.

Educators use children's natural interest in math to enhance their experiences in preschool and school, using the following practices:

- Establish number and operations as a foundational content area
- Incorporate math in other content areas
- Use progress monitoring to guide instruction
- Focus on teaching children to view the world mathematically
- Intentional daily math instruction

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**Date: 10/15/21☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met**Final Self-Appraisal Rating**

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard**Curriculum
(3 to 6 years)**

2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.

Indicator**2.3.6 Science**

The curriculum emphasizes skills and processes and engages children in activities that include real-life connections and problem-solving opportunities.

Best Practices Rationale

Educators help children develop scientific thinking skills while exploring the natural and physical world around them. As children explore with sand and water, cook, garden, or care for a pet they are recognizing patterns, making predictions, and formulating answers to questions. The educator's role is to bring the scientific vocabulary to these activities and ask children questions that expand their thinking.

Required Evidence

- ☐ STEM is integrated in all learning centers and content areas
- ☐ Authentic use of science vocabulary in functional print and literature
- ☐ Children are provided opportunities to ask questions, explore, and observe materials and phenomena
- ☐ Children are provided opportunities to make comparisons between objects and materials
- ☐ Variety of tools and multisensory materials that support curriculum implementation
- ☐ Educators use questions that promote exploration and inquiry

Using inquiry-based and problem-based learning, educators guide children toward the scientific processes of observation, prediction, and investigation. Young children use information from science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) while engaged in activities that include real-life connections and problem-solving opportunities. (pp. 97-99, The Guide)

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**Date: 10/15/15

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard**Curriculum
(3 to 6 years)**

2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.

Indicator**2.3.7 Social Studies**

The curriculum focuses on key knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes in the areas of history, government, economics, geography, and peoples of the nations and world.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Age appropriate classroom rules written in positive terms are posted
- ☐ Authentic materials representing social studies concepts (e.g. books, music, dolls, globes, and/or maps of classroom, school, U.S., world, etc.)
- ☐ Authentic opportunities to learn about people and their roles
- ☐ Authentic use of social studies vocabulary
- ☐ Variety of print materials (newspapers, magazines, books, original photographs, etc.)
- ☐ Children are provided opportunities to work collaboratively with peers
- ☐ Social studies activities are integrated in all learning centers and content areas

Best Practices Rationale

Early childhood educators help children understand their sense of self-identity and the part they play in their family, the early childhood program, and the community. Educators help children value diversity and recognize the important role that each person plays in building a strong and vibrant society. The social studies program enables children to participate effectively in the groups to which they belong. Democratic and participatory school and classroom environments are essential to this type of real world learning. (pp. 99-100, The Guide)

The social studies program focuses on opportunities for children to learn about themselves, their community and the world. Learning takes place in the context of openness and appreciation for diversity of culture, and respect for similarities and differences among people. Activities that foster citizenship skills and an understanding of the unique qualities and characteristics of others promote cooperative learning and achievement of common goals.

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**Date: 10/15/25☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met**Final Self-Appraisal Rating**

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

II. Program Operation

2.4 Instruction

(3 to 6 years)

| | |
|---|---|
| Standard | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Instruction (3 to 6 years)</p> | |
| 2.4 Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards. | |
| Indicator | Best Practices Rationale |
| <p>2.4.1 Learning Through Play Daily activities include time for free and guided play to provide learning opportunities that are integrated across domains.</p> | <p>Research continues to provide evidence that playful learning supports social foundations, promotes the development of executive function skills, and impacts cognitive development. Free play, such as recess is the time that children spend in a less structured setting and are able to independently initiate and practice activities or games. There is a higher degree of independence and choice. Guided play is initiated by the educator and is more structured. Learning centers (traditional interest areas or literacy based) are examples of guided play.</p> |
| Required Evidence | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Learning centers/Interest areas reflect domains of learning <input type="radio"/> Children are provided daily opportunities for children to choose where to play <input type="radio"/> Children are provided daily opportunities for children to choose materials for play <input type="radio"/> Materials are easily accessible to children | <p>The skilled educator ensures that play is purposeful and serves as a vehicle for learning concepts taught in a more structured setting. Thus, guided play promotes the development of social foundation skills as well as academic skills.</p> <p>Through intentional engagement with learning materials, play, child-directed learning, and educator-directed instruction, opportunities are provided for children to practice skills and concepts of the domains of learning. (pp. 81-82, The Guide)</p> |
| Program Notes | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>10/15/24</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met |

| | |
|--|---|
| Standard <p style="text-align: center;">Instruction (3 to 6 years)</p> | |
| 2.4 Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards. | |
| Indicator 2.4.2 Independent Learning Exploration Independent learning provides opportunities for children to explore, experiment, question, investigate, and problem-solve. Children take responsibility for their learning. | Best Practices Rationale Materials that encourage open-ended thinking and active participation are an integral part of daily application and follow-up learning. Educators facilitate learning based on the understanding of each child's developmental strengths and needs and use independent learning opportunities to observe and record children's performance. This is a dynamic process between the educator and child with the educator being the facilitator and the child becoming the investigator. Independent learning is an integral part of each day. Educators provide time for children to immerse themselves in learning without the pressure of a quick rotation from one center/task to the next. A tremendous amount of development happens as children work within learning centers. Learning center goals are linked to the goals of the curriculum. Educators are mindful of connecting the opportunities in learning centers to the domains of development, providing multiple modalities, and offering multiple levels of tasks so that all learners can work together but on different activities within a learning center. (pg. 128, The Guide) |
| Required Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Learning centers/Interest areas are accessible to all children <input type="radio"/> Daily schedule provides adequate time for children to immerse themselves in independent learning exploration <input type="radio"/> Appropriate equipment, manipulatives and materials are accessible <input type="radio"/> Children are engaged in independent learning activities <input type="radio"/> Authentic objects and props are utilized by children daily | |
| Program Notes | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>6/15/25</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met |

| | |
|---|--|
| Standard <p style="text-align: center;">Instruction (3 to 6 years)</p> | |
| 2.4 Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards. | |
| Indicator 2.4.4 Instructional Strategies Instruction is based upon children's individual needs, interests, strengths, and learning styles. | Best Practices Rationale Educators align instructional practices, curriculum, and assessment methods for the purpose of facilitating each child's learning. To help children to acquire new skills and concepts, educators select from a range of strategies, including: asking open-ended questions; offering cues and prompts; listening attentively to children's responses and giving them enough time to express themselves; demonstrating skills; adding more complex materials or concepts to a learning situation; and providing opportunities for cooperative learning. |
| Required Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educators provide opportunities and activities that meet children's needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperative learning experiences ▪ Exploratory learning centers ▪ Differentiated tasks ▪ Scaffolding ○ Educators implement strategies that encourage higher level thinking skills such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open-ended, higher level questions, and investigation ▪ Cooperative learning strategies ▪ Problem solving strategies ○ Balance of educator-directed and child-initiated experiences ○ Multiple and flexible means for children to express and engage in learning | Because there is no such thing as a "typical learner" and any kind of one-size-fits-all educational approach does not reach all learners, children of all abilities need a variety of opportunities to access curriculum and assessments. Educators provide multiple and flexible ways for children to demonstrate what they have learned. Educators also have multiple and flexible means of engaging the learner so that all children are motivated to learn. (p. 63, The Guide) |
| Program Notes | |
| Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: <u>10/15/18</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Met |

Standard

**Instruction
(3 to 6 years)**

2.4 Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards.

Indicator

2.4.5(a) Management Strategies: Transitions

Instruction incorporates management strategies which facilitate logical and organized transitions and routines.

Best Practices Rationale

Children are learning important life skills as they transition from one activity to another. Transition times are opportunities for developing social foundation skills. In this, educators help children learn how to manage choices and change, how to plan their time, how to follow directions, how to work collaboratively, and how to learn responsibility. The main idea is that transitions are a time for learning, too.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Wait time is limited for children during transitions
- ☐ Educators use a variety of strategies to signal a transition is approaching
- ☐ Educators use a variety of behavior management strategies that result in positive learning behaviors (e.g., acknowledging positive behavior of children, avoidance, ignoring, etc.)
- ☐ Children know routines
- ☐ Visual schedule is posted to assist children with daily routines

The classroom community is organized and structured. The children are aware of expectations and daily routines. Children and educators share responsibility for the classroom. Minimal amounts of time are spent getting ready, sitting, and listening. Sufficient time is allocated for transitions to allow children to clean up and prepare for the next activity. Educators use a variety of strategies to signal a transition, e.g. rhythmic clapping, finger play, song, dimming the lights, ringing a bell, music, or verbal announcement. (p. 123, The Guide)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 10/15/25

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

III. Home and Community Partnerships

3.1 Partnerships (Birth – 6 years)

Standard**Partnerships
(Birth – 6 years)****3.1 Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.****Indicator****3.1.1 Communication with Families**

Expectations and information about early learning programs are disseminated on an ongoing basis and allow for family input.

Best Practices Rationale

Designing effective forms of communication about programs and program activities helps bridge the gap between families and programs. Effective communication provides opportunities for parents to communicate information regarding their children's strengths and needs, and their expectations for their child.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Registration/Enrollment materials
- ☐ Parent/Family Handbook
- ☐ Evidence of ongoing family communication

Expectations for early learning programs and plans for implementing them are disseminated to parents on an ongoing basis.

Scheduling activities at times convenient and flexible for parents encourages family participation.

Programs encourage family engagement by co-creating a monthly calendar of events that highlight adult and family-child opportunities in the program, as well as in the community. (pp. 37-41, The Guide)

Program Notes

% Mrs. Echols

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 10/15/25
☐ Not Met ☒ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____
☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard**Partnerships
(Birth – 6 years)****3.1 Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.****Indicator****3.1.2 Supporting Child Development**

Families, community members, and staff collaborate to promote child development and learning at home.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Evidence of family education and outreach containing information about child development and learning
- ☐ School readiness materials shared with families

Best Practices Rationale

Effective family engagement strategies create a culture of high expectations in programs where family members support learning at home and monitor their children's performance. They advocate for their children and are active in guiding their education.

Families are respected as the experts on their children. Educators engage families about their hopes and dreams for their children. Families are asked about any ideas or concerns they may have regarding collaboration and involvement. Educators take the time to listen to family ideas and concerns, as well as invite them to continuously share input. Educators and families work together to set goals and identify ways in which they can work together to achieve those goals.

Educators share information about evidence-based family programs to support specific family engagement goals. These goals may focus on literacy, comprehensive family support, home visiting, or school readiness goals. Strategies that encourage engagement also include sending materials home with tips for families to support learning at home. (pp. 41-46, The Guide)

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**Date: 6/15/20☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met**Final Self-Appraisal Rating**

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard

**Partnerships
(Birth – 6 years)**

3.1 Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.

Indicator

3.1.3 Communication of Assessment Information

Assessment information is communicated with children and parents/guardians on a regular, ongoing basis or at least twice per year.

Best Practices Rationale

As early childhood educators talk with families about the purpose of assessment, they acknowledge the important role that families play as their child's first educator. Early childhood educators need families to be active participants in supporting children's learning in and out of the home.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Completed Progress Reports/Report Cards
- ☐ Conference Schedules (twice per year)
- ☐ Completed Parent-Teacher Conference form
- ☒ Documentation of strategies shared with families to support development

From the beginning, early childhood educators talk with families about the importance of regular, ongoing assessment and how different assessments are used to monitor children's progress. Assessments help educators and families better understand the strengths and potential challenges of individual children, so that strategies can be tailored to best meet each child's interests and needs.

A parent-teacher conference is the typical approach used to share information about children's learning and the growth they have made. Most critical in those conversations is the professional guidance by educators on what families can do at home to support their child's learning. Providing suggestions for action is also important so that the family knows precisely what they can do to help their child make gains in a given area of development. (pp. 188-189, The Guide)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 6/15/15

☐ Not Met ☒ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard

**Partnerships
(Birth – 6 years)**

3.1 Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.

Indicator

3.1.4 Family Engagement and Involvement

Families, staff, and administrators are actively involved in program-based activities, curriculum, shared decision making, and advocacy for children.

Best Practices Rationale

The opportunities for engaging families are endless. While early childhood educators come up with a host of strategies, they keep in mind that engagement is a reciprocal partnership and involve families in the development of ideas and strategies as well. Effective family engagement strategies create a culture of high expectations in programs where family members support learning at home and monitor their children's performance. They advocate for their children and are active in guiding their education.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Evidence of implementation of family engagement strategies
- Policy handbook which outlines the decision making, grievance, problem solving process
 - Agendas for trainings/workshops provided for families
 - List of: Parent Advisory Board; PTA/PTO; Parent Officers or Committee Chairs; School Improvement Team Parent Members

Some strategies that encourage engagement include: sending materials home in language that is family friendly; inviting families into the program to help with learning projects; giving families specific tasks so they can be part of the learning/teaching experience; and working with groups of families to co-create events of special interests. (pp.38-43, The Guide)

Additional information on family engagement strategies can be found in *The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework: Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children*.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 10/15/20
 ___ Not Met ☒ Partially Met ___ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____
 ___ Not Met ___ Partially Met ___ Fully Met

Standard

**Partnerships
(Birth – 6 years)**

3.1 Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.

Indicator

3.1.5 Community Engagement and Involvement

Community resources are used to strengthen early learning programs, families, and children's learning.

Best Practices Rationale

Community engagement is a partnership. The early childhood program and the larger community work together supporting one another and sharing responsibility for meeting the comprehensive needs of young children and their families.

Programs look for ways to rally the support and resources needed to meet the needs of the whole child and go beyond what the program can provide. They can seek out ways to be a valued resource to the community as well, offering a place for meetings, extending training opportunities to providers through the community, participating in local celebrations, and joining forces with the community to speak out on behalf of children and their families

There are many strategies that programs can use to engage the community. Some of these strategies include, but are not limited to: inviting community and business leaders to your program; partnering with the local library; reaching out to local museums; partnering with local service organizations; and/or connecting with a local nursing home or hospital. (pp.46-49, The Guide)

Required Evidence

- ☐ Newsletters regarding community resources
- ☐ Community Resource Directory available to parents
- ☐ Evidence of partnerships with community programs and businesses

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: 11/12/24

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☒ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

☐ Not Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Fully Met

Standard**Partnerships
(Birth – 6 years)****3.1 Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.****Indicator****3.1.6 Evaluation**

Family and community partners are encouraged to provide input to strengthen early learning programs, family practices, and children's learning and development.

Required Evidence

- ☒ Completed parent survey
- ☐ Evidence parent survey results shared with parent advisory committee; Program/School Improvement Team; and/or governing body

Best Practices Rationale

Evaluation and feedback from families are important elements of successful programs. There are three steps programs can use to evaluate their effectiveness:

- Measuring participation and attendance at events to help identify how to best recruit and retain participants
- Gathering baseline family data at the beginning of the year, which allows staff to identify roadblocks or strengths for families
- Surveying the needs and satisfaction of families to tailor the types of activities to support families

Knowing the research on the characteristics and evaluation practices of successful family engagement programs can be helpful as educators seek to develop or choose initiatives to engage their families. A systemic approach where family engagement values and principles are woven into every aspect of the program has a greater likelihood of being effective and successful.

Program Notes**Initial Self-Appraisal Rating**

Date: 6/15/25
__ Not Met ☒ Partially Met __ Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____
__ Not Met __ Partially Met __ Fully Met