

**Performance Standards and Benchmarks
for
Three and Four Year Old Children
The Preschool Network
Center for Development and Disability
University of New Mexico
Revised, Spring 2002**

Contributors

Kathy Hedemann, RPT	Marjorie Litts, OTR
Sharon McCall, LED	Jude Pardee, Ph.D.
Gina Marquez, SLP	Mette Pedersen, M.Ed., M.A
Jeanie McNabb, M.A.	Kathleen Trumbull, M.Ed.

Advisory Group

Jennifer Johns, Parent
Jill Miller, Evaluator
Helayne Abrams, Teacher and Administrator
Loey Cohen-Kirk, Teacher
Mardi Morris, Parent
Connie Ashmun, Administrator
Maria Landazuri, SDE Consultant
Sidney H. Morris, Ed.D., SDE Consultant
Ann Trujillo, SDE Consultant

Philosophy Statement:

We believe in the value and contribution of all members of our society, including children. By adopting a holistic view of development, we can provide opportunities for children to participate in contributing to their community. Development occurs across domains, which are mutually supportive and interactive. For example, children's ability to get along with others in life is affected by their ability to communicate, to move and to think. Children need a variety of individuals, settings and experiences to help them grow. Each of us, parent, educator, specialist, and community member, contributes to a child's healthy development.

*Development of Performance Standards and Benchmarks
was funded by the New Mexico State Department of Education,
Special Education Office*

Performance Standard Benchmarks for Three and Four Year Old Children has been revised and expanded to include Benchmarks, Descriptors and Supportive Practices to promote Literacy among preschool children.

Your input into Performance Standards and Benchmarks for Three and Four Year Old Children is solicited. Please forward comments, suggestions or other ideas to:

Mette Pedersen
Early Childhood Division
Center for Development and Disability
University of New Mexico
2300 Menaul Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Telephone: 505-272-1040
Fax: 505-272-0277
E-mail: mette@unm.edu

Performance Standards and Benchmarks for Three and Four Year Old Children, Revised, Spring 2002 is available on our website: http://cdd.unm.edu/ec/ECPre/ps_and_b.pdf

Thank you for your commitment to young children and families in New Mexico

Table of Contents
Performance Standards and Benchmarks
for
Three and Four Year Old Children
Revised, Spring 2002

	<u>Pages</u>
<u>Overview</u>	4
I. <u>Children Will Demonstrate Effective Personal and Social Skills</u> Benchmarks A – D	5 – 8
II. <u>Children Will Participate as Active and Effective Learners</u> Benchmarks A – C	9 – 11
III. <u>Children Will Communicate Optimally and Effectively in a Variety Of Settings</u> Benchmarks A – D	12 – 15
IV. <u>Children Will Use Their Bodies Optimally to Explore, Negotiate, and Manipulate the Environment</u> Benchmarks A - D	16 – 19
V. <u>Children Will Demonstrate Optimal Independence in Areas of Daily Life</u> Benchmarks A - F	20 – 25
VI. <u>Children Will Engage in a Variety of Meaningful Literacy Experiences</u> Benchmarks A - D	26 – 33

Overview

Performance Standards and Benchmarks for Three and Four Year Old Children Revised, Spring 2002

As a project of the New Mexico State Department of Education (NMSDE), Special Education Office, The Early Childhood Network at the Center for Development and Disability was asked to develop “Performance Standards and Benchmarks” for three and four year old children in our State.

The intent of this document is to:

- provide educational guidance for adults working with young children, with and without disabilities;
- promote developmentally appropriate practice in daily activities and expectations for young children;
- provide guidance for individual educational planning for young children; and
- infuse and capitalize on learning opportunities in everyday activities for all children.

Through consultation with NMSDE staff, review of the literature and current activities in other states, as well as direction from consultants and advisors, definitions of “Performance Standards and Benchmarks” for our purposes were developed.

Performance Standard, in this effort is defined as the vision and framework of expectations for your children’s ongoing development toward successful participation in daily life (example: home, school, community).

Benchmarks are the measurable elements, which suggest progress toward attainment of broad expectations.

Performance Standards are generally better measured using multiple indicators, no one of which gives full information on all aspects of development. The following document includes “indicators” under each Benchmark, defining specific behaviors, which describe performance and acquisition of specific skills.

The New Mexico Department of Education has a long-standing policy regarding inclusive education. This document attempts to reflect that policy and offers descriptions for success of all young children in everyday, typical environments. It is designed to incorporate language that engages the educator, parent, childcare staff, and other community members who have an opportunity to impact the lives and learning of young children.

While state and national expertise was accessed to describe developmental indicators in this document, the importance of all adults in facilitating everyday learning opportunities for young children was of critical concern. “Supportive Practices” are included as guidance for adults who work with children in a variety of settings. Many of these are adapted from the *New Mexico’s Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality* (Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., & Stiles, S, 1999)

Performance Standard

I. Child Will Demonstrate Effective Personal and Social Skills.

Benchmark

A. **Child will interact with peers and adults and show increasing ability to maintain social relationships and demonstrate social participation in play.**

Descriptors:

- Makes eye contact as culturally appropriate.
- Joins other children in mutual play.
- Initiates play with one or more other children.
- Uses words or gestures to indicate desire for closeness, acknowledgment and interaction (e.g., asks for hugs, gestures to sit on an adult's lap, waves hello or good-bye).
- Increasingly uses turn taking.
- Initiates interaction with peers and adults.
- Engages in pretend play with peers expressing closeness, nurturing, or care, (e.g., taking care of a stuffed animal).
- Engages in pretend play with peers and/or adults expressing assertiveness, curiosity and exploration (e.g., monsters chasing, cars racing, examining dolls "bodies").
- Demonstrates increasingly complex play sequences.
- Forms several friendships with peers.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults engage in frequent social interactions with children each day, including talking with, smiling at, and reinforcing (praising) children for positive behaviors.
- Adults avoid making comparisons among children's behavior.
- Adults model pro-social behaviors for children, such as cooperation, altruism, empathy, and nurturing.
- Adults provide time each day and appropriate materials and props for children to engage in self-directed fantasy/dramatic play to enable them to try out a variety of roles and to deal with reality.
- Adults play with children to enhance their pretend play.
- Adults promote friendly interpersonal relationships among children. They make a special effort to help children whose social skills are less well developed than those of other children.
- Adults understand the development of play behaviors during the preschool period, the importance of play for multiple areas of development and encourage children to engage in a variety of types of play.
- Adults recognize children's limited but gradual development of the ability to take the perspective of others (understand others' feelings and behaviors). They gradually help children to develop a sense of community and group cooperation in positive ways.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality, Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

I. Child Will Demonstrate Effective Personal and Social Skills.

Benchmark

B. Child will demonstrate appropriate assertion, affect/emotion and problem-solving skills in interactions with others.

Descriptors:

- Uses words or complex social gestures to express needs or feelings.
- Uses language, rather than inappropriate social behavior, to express feelings.
- Follows rules, responds to limits, and seeks to resolve conflict.
- Exhibits attachment behavior, assertiveness, and exploration such as seeking comfort, support or interaction (e.g., cuddling with a person, blanket, pet or toy; finding a quiet area; requesting comfort; crying).
- Knows how to get what he wants with verbal or gestural communication such as negotiating to play with a particular toy.
- Demonstrates appropriate reactions to strangers (e.g., not accepting rides or gifts, seeking familiar adult for help, understanding limits of touch).

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults protect children from being hurt physically or verbally by others but allow children time and opportunity to resolve their social problems without unnecessary interference.
- Adults understand common feelings experienced by preschool children (e.g., love/affection, happiness, sadness, fear, joy/delight, anger, rivalry) and help them to label and express these feelings in positive ways.
- Adults provide many constructive activities that help children release pent-up energy and to diffuse hostile aggression, such as vigorous activity, molding clay and Play-Doh, painting/finger painting, dramatic play and carpentry.
- Adults offer each child many opportunities to be successful and competent.
- Adults offer problem-solving strategies to children to diminish acts of aggression and intervene in potentially explosive situations.
- Adults foster a positive emotional climate in the classroom.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

I. Child Will Demonstrate Effective Personal and Social Skills.

Benchmark

C. Child will demonstrate self concept, self awareness, and appropriate self-esteem.

Descriptors:

- Identifies self by name, gender, and age (e.g., “I’m a boy,” “I’m not a baby”).
- Identifies self as part of family and social groups (e.g., This is my brother and this is my big sister).
- Shows pleasure in accomplishments (e.g., “Look at what I did!”).
- Begins awareness of healthy life choices (e.g., choosing positive friendships, putting seatbelt on, staying out of the way of swings, identifying healthy snacks).

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults facilitate each child’s construction of a knowledgeable self-identity by being warm and nurturing, by validating his/her sense of worth, by accepting and valuing his/her as an individual, by providing encouragement and praise for his/her efforts, and by maintaining a trusting, nonjudgmental environment.
- Adults facilitate children’s growing independence and initiative by giving them many opportunities to make decisions, choose their own activities, and take charge of their learning.
- Adults do not use guilt as a means of controlling children’s behavior.
- Adults encourage and respond positively to children’s demonstrations of initiative.
- Adults label and display children’s creative work at the child’s eye level
- Adults do not use punitive methods to control children’s behavior, such as squeezing, shaking, pinching, spanking, yelling, embarrassing, shaming, or placing a child in a corner, closet, or bathroom. They do not deprive the child of food, outdoor time or other activities, or force a child to rest on a mat or cot as punishment.
- Adults foster non-bias attitudes toward children of color, children with disabilities, and children with other differences.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico’s Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality, Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

I. Child Will Demonstrate Effective Personal and Social Skills.

Benchmark

D. Child will demonstrate increasingly effective self-regulation of behavior and emotions.

Descriptors:

- Perseveres at a task.
- Maintains calm and focus.
- Works independently.
- Exhibits impulse control and self regulation in relation to others (e.g., waits for turn, shows patience after requesting caretaker's attention, tolerates transition, stays in a group, anticipates and participates in routine activities).
- Comforts self and identifies emotions (e.g., goes to a quiet area when upset, says "I'm mad" or "I'm sad").

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults help children differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors by setting and implementing consistent and appropriate limits.
- Adults adequately prepare children for novel events and situations, such as field trips, unfamiliar visitors, etc., to reduce fear and anxiety. Behavioral expectations of children are made clear prior to the event.
- Adults communicate clear expectations for children's behavior in positive ways, such as "Use your inside voice" instead of "Don't yell".
- Adults respond to children's needs promptly and consistently.
- Adults name and praise children's coping behaviors, perseverance, and cooperation.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

II. Children Will Participate as Active and Effective Learners.

Benchmark

A. Child will demonstrate logical reasoning and problem-solving skills through play and daily activities.

Descriptors:

- Describes how things change (e.g., ice melting, popcorn popping, plants growing from seeds).
- Demonstrates understanding of cause/effect relationships (e.g., explains that plants die without water, uses switch toys, electric wheelchair, jack in the box toy).
- Completes increasingly complex puzzles (e.g., interlocking puzzles, computer-generated puzzles).
- Describes/plans a sequence of events, verbally or otherwise (e.g., making a sandwich, getting dressed).
- Demonstrates increasingly complex play sequences.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults understand commonly accepted theories of cognitive/intellectual development of preschool children.
- Adults facilitate children's cognitive development by planning and implementing a challenging and stimulating environment for children to interact with through exploration and experimentation.
- Adults recognize and appreciate the diverse levels of cognitive development and the range of skills and abilities of children with whom they work.
- Adults are prepared to meet each child's unique needs.
- Adults provide children with developmentally appropriate opportunities for reasoning and problem solving.
- Adults understand that children form basic concepts such as color, shape, size, number, weight, volume, time, and cause and effect gradually through experience in interacting with their physical environment.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality, Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

II. Children Will Participate as Active and Effective Learners.

Benchmark

B. Child will demonstrate interest in learning new things through natural curiosity, exploration, and discovery in home, school, and community.

Descriptors:

- Explores the environment of the home, school and community.
- Asks questions to extend understanding.
- Observes and examines natural phenomenon through the senses.
- Stays with a task (e.g., perseverance, persistence).
- Cuts or snips paper with scissors.
- Manipulates computer controls (e.g., keys, mouse).
- Tries new activities (e.g., climbing a big slide, crawling through a cloth tunnel, moving in a new way for that particular child, as in rolling over for a child unable to roll).
- Uses paintbrushes, crayons, markers to draw/copy simple pictures and shapes.
- Combines activities, materials, and equipment in new ways (e.g., making forts from blankets and chairs).
- Explores a variety of creative materials (e.g., Play-Doh, finger paint, shaving cream).

Supportive Practices

- Adults provide children with many opportunities to learn by doing, (e.g., engaging in relevant, concrete, hands-on experiences). They refrain from using workbooks, flashcards, and dittos.
- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults understand commonly accepted theories of cognitive development of preschool children.
- Adults facilitate children's cognitive development by planning and implementing a challenging, stimulating environment for children to interact with through exploration and experimentation.
- Adults recognize and appreciate the diverse levels of cognitive development and the range of skills and abilities of children with whom they work and are prepared to meet each child's unique needs.
- Adults assume the role of facilitators rather than directors of learning.
- Adults foster preschool children's natural curiosity by answering questions at a level they can understand, structuring an inviting environment that encourages them to discover, introducing activities that stimulate curiosity, and asking questions that stimulate higher-order thinking.
- Adults facilitate children's successful completion of tasks by providing support, focused attention, physical proximity, and verbal encouragement.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

II. Children Will Participate as Active and Effective Learners.

Benchmark

C. **Child will demonstrate conceptual and practical (real life) understanding of early literacy and math skills/concepts during play and daily activities.**

Descriptors:

- Uses pretend writing (e.g., circles, lines, scribbles, letters) in the context of play.
- Recognizes own name and common signs and logos (e.g., road signs, cereal box names).
- Acts out familiar stories and songs.
- Demonstrates book handling skills, pretends to read books.
- Uses measurement implements in sand and water play.
- Orders objects from smallest to largest.
- Shows understanding of early time concepts in daily routines (e.g., what happens next in the day, now/later, yesterday/tomorrow).
- Demonstrates knowledge and use of numbers for rote counting to 10, counting objects using one-to-one correspondence, grouping quantities 1 - 3.
- Demonstrates knowledge and use of descriptive words for size, amount, comparisons (e.g., “more or less,” “big or little.”)
- Demonstrates knowledge and use of concepts related to shape and classification.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults understand commonly accepted theories of cognitive development of preschool children, including how thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities develop.
- Adults facilitate children’s cognitive development by planning and implementing a challenging, stimulating environment for children to interact with through exploration and experimentation.
- Adults recognize and appreciate the diverse levels of cognitive development and the range of skills and abilities of children with whom they work and are prepared to meet each child’s unique needs.
- Adults provide children with many opportunities to learn by doing, (e.g., engaging in relevant, concrete, hands-on experiences) they refrain from using workbooks, flashcards, and dittos.
- Adults record (by audio or paper and pencil) statements and stories of children and read what the child has said back to them as a way of linking language and the printed word and to encourage writing.
- Adults identify child’s strengths and build on these abilities when introducing new concepts and challenging tasks.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico’s Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

III. Children Will Communicate Optimally and Effectively in a Variety of Settings.

Benchmark

- A. **Child will use gestures, sounds, words, or sentences to convey wants and needs or to express meaning to others.**

Descriptors:

- Participates in back and forth conversation.
- Uses words or gestural signals to engage others.
- Expresses feelings or emotions using words or gestures that others can interpret (e.g., expresses feelings of pleasure, sadness).
- Produces speech or signs that the listener understands without further information.
- Engages in conversations that develop a thought or idea (e.g., explains how something works).
- Asks questions that extend own understanding (e.g., “Why?”).
- Conveys wants and needs using sufficient vocabulary.
- Produces speech that is 90% intelligible.
- Begins to recount personal experiences.
- Tells a story about self or environment with minimal prompting.
- Begins to demonstrate increasing competence with the structure of language, although language may contain occasional grammatical errors.
- Begins to take responsibility for how others understand him/her.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults engage in frequent face-to-face verbal interactions with children. For children whose home language is not English, adults communicate in both the child’s home language and English (sign language may be considered a child’s home or primary language).
- Adults encourage the child to share his/her home language with others.
- Adults frequently label objects, pictures, situations, and events for preschool children and introduce new vocabulary.
- Adults model appropriate and grammatically correct language for children, but they do not call attention to normal, developmental language errors that will correct themselves in time.
- Adults listen carefully to the language that children use to gain insight into the children’s feelings.
- Adults record (by audio or paper and pencil) statements and stories of children and read what the child has said back to them as a way of linking language and the printed word and to encourage writing.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the speech and language development of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use and effectiveness.
- Adults use language in a variety of ways throughout the day.
- Adults talk through their own feelings, activities, and plans using simple, clear language.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico’s Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

III. Children Will Communicate Optimally and Effectively in a Variety of Settings.

Benchmark

B. **Child will respond to others' communication with appropriate actions or communicative reply.**

Descriptors:

- Understands names for common actions and expressions.
- Shows understanding through body language when listening to familiar music, videos, or books.
- Follows unrelated two-step requests.
- Recognizes rhyming words and rhythms.
- Begins to infer information based on what he/she hears and sees (e.g., someone got wet because it must be raining outside).
- Responds to hints (e.g., demonstrating understanding of the topic that isn't specifically named).
- Answers a specific question.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- When giving directions to children, adults speak clearly, slowly, and simply.
- Adults use music experiences to facilitate child's language development.
- Adults record (by audio or paper and pencil) statements and stories of children and read what the child has said back to them as a way of linking language and the printed word and to encourage writing.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the speech and language development of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use and effectiveness.
- Adults listen carefully to the language that children use to gain insight into the concepts of their feelings.
- Adults use specific vocabulary to label objects and actions.
- Adults pause before repeating or adding directions, which allows children to think about what they have heard.
- Adults call attention to various environmental sounds throughout the day.
- Adults encourage the child to share his/her home language with others.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

III. Children Will Communicate Optimally and Effectively in a Variety of Settings.

Benchmark

C. **Child will initiate, respond to and, maintain reciprocal social interactions with peers and adults in a variety of settings.**

Descriptors:

- Engages in discussion about book, activity, etc.
- Uses language to maintain theme of pretend or cooperative play, verbally or otherwise.
- Replies to open-ended questions with expansive responses.
- Expresses needs, wishes, and feelings through words, signs, gestures, or the use of an assistive device in a manner that is understood.
- Initiates, responds to, and maintains interaction with peers, teachers, and family members.
- Uses a variety of verbal and nonverbal language functions to:
 - satisfy needs or desires;
 - control the behavior of others;
 - define or participate in social interchange;
 - express personal opinions or feelings;
 - engage in fantasy;
 - obtain information; and
 - provide information.
- Communicates differently depending on listener age, familiarity, position, etc.
- Uses terms of politeness.
- Communicates for social pleasure.
- Demonstrates turn taking in conversation.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults ask children open-ended questions that encourage children to use language, such as “Tell me about your sister’s birthday party” or “Describe what you see in this picture.”
- Adults listen attentively to what children say and encourage them to engage in frequent dialogue with both adults and other children.
- Adults help children use language in social situations, such as “Tell him/her what you want instead of grabbing the truck,” or “Use your words to tell him/her what you need.”
- Adults provide toys and equipment that stimulate language development, such as telephones, puppets, props for dramatic play, a listening center with headsets, etc.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the speech and language development of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico’s Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

III. Children Will Communicate Optimally and Effectively in a Variety of Settings.

Benchmark

D. Child will demonstrate understanding of conversational rules or devices and increasing awareness of social aspects of discourse.

Descriptors:

- Answers in a method appropriate to the child (e.g., sign, speech, eye gaze).
- Volunteers to communicate.
- Attends to and acknowledges the speaker.
- Takes turns.
- Specifies, changes, and maintains a topic.
- Asks conversational questions and gives expanded answers.
- Requests and provides clarification.
- Demonstrates understanding of the cooperative principle.
- Engages in dialogue beyond a few turns.
- Comprehends and uses simple pronouns and prepositions.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults help children learn words, phrases, and songs in the languages of children whose home language is not English.
- Adults encourage dual language learning in all children.
- Adults read to children daily. A variety of books in more than one language are always accessible for children to look at.
- Adults listen carefully to the language that children use to gain insight into their concepts and their feelings.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the speech and language development of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.
- Adults make eye contact and listen to understand and approach children at their level of comfort.
- Adults are competent communicators in the mode or method of the child (e.g., sign, spoken language of the child, use of augmentative communication devices).
- Adults engage in frequent social interactions with children each day, including talking with, smiling at, and reinforcing (praising) children for positive behaviors.
- Adults interact positively with one another and with children, modeling good conversational practices.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality, Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

IV. Children Will Use Their Bodies Optimally to Explore, Negotiate and Manipulate the Environment.

Benchmark

A. **The child negotiates the home, school and community environment safely and with increasing proficiency.**

Descriptors:

- Maneuvers around objects/other people without bumping into them.
- Maneuvers wheelchair or other assistive equipment on level terrain independently, progressing to easy ramps, slightly uneven terrain.
- Climbs familiar stairs and tries new stairs/ladders progressing from placing both feet on each step to alternating feet.
- Keeps up with peers when moving through the environment, (e.g., walking to library, running/moving on playground).
- Pedals a tricycle.
- Maneuvers on playground equipment.
- Maneuvers through obstacle course (e.g., playland, school halls, home environment).
- Recognizes potentially hazardous or dangerous situations when moving through the environment.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults demonstrate understanding of both general and specific physical needs of preschool children.
- Appropriate space, opportunity, and materials/equipment are provided both indoors and outdoors to facilitate preschool children's development of large muscles and skills such as running, climbing, riding, swinging, jumping, hopping, etc.
- Though adults provide opportunities, materials, and encouragement for children to develop motor skills, they do not push them to accomplish skills for which they are not ready; they recognize that children develop skills at different times and different rates.
- Adults facilitate children's independence and motor development by encouraging them to learn self-help skills, such as dressing, putting on shoes and socks, serving themselves food, etc. Adults give children the help they need with these tasks until they are fully capable of performing them without help.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the motor development of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

IV. Children Will Use Their Bodies Optimally to Explore, Negotiate and Manipulate the Environment

Benchmark

B. The child shows increasing confidence in balance/motor control and motor planning ability.

Descriptors:

- Jumps forward keeping feet together, increasingly greater distances.
- Runs and stops quickly or can start and stop a wheelchair quickly.
- Speeds up and slows down when necessary.
- Catches a large ball with two hands, kicks a playground-sized ball with directionality, throws a tennis ball both overhand and underhand.
- Knows how to get to familiar places at home/school and can follow directions to go to another room and return with a requested object independently.
- Climbs on age appropriate playground equipment and uses good coordination.
- Maneuvers through playground equipment/obstacle courses.
- Participates in pool or water activities (e.g., pool, bath, water table).
- Uses wheel toys (e.g., pulling wagon, riding tricycle or scooter).
- Performs movement activities to music or group activities (e.g., animal walks, rhythm instruments).
- Sits in a chair for extended periods of time.
- Shows increasing endurance for prolonged activities (e.g., classroom project, family dinner, outings, and field trips).
- Plans, verbally or otherwise, how to perform a functional activity (e.g., how to make a sandcastle, how to cross the street).

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults demonstrate understanding of both general and specific physical needs of preschool children.
- Adults use positive methods to manage children's behavior. Children are treated with respect and dignity and are disciplined in a calm and reflective manner.
- Appropriate space, opportunity, and materials/equipment are provided both indoors and outdoors to facilitate preschool children's development of large muscles and skills such as running, climbing, riding, swinging, jumping, hopping, etc.
- Appropriate opportunities and a variety of activities and materials are provided both indoors and outdoors for children to develop small muscles of the body and manipulative skills, such as cutting with scissors; using crayons, markers, and paint; putting together and taking apart objects; building with blocks; throwing and catching balls; digging; putting together puzzles; etc.
- Though adults provide opportunities, materials, and encouragement for children to develop motor skills, they do not push them to accomplish skills for which they are not ready; they recognize that children develop skills at different times and different rates.
- Adults facilitate children's independence and motor development by encouraging them to learn self-help skills, such as dressing, putting on shoes and socks, serving themselves food, etc. Adults give children the help they need with these tasks until they are fully capable of performing them without help.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the motor development of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.
- Adults encourage collaboration and discourage rivalry and competition in games and other physical activities.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality, Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

IV. Children Will Use Their Bodies Optimally to Explore, Negotiate and Manipulate the Environment.

Benchmark

C. **Child demonstrates increasing skill with tabletop activities.**

Descriptors:

- Manipulates Play-Doh, clay, and/or water, bean, sandtable.
- Actively participates in a craft or art activity.
- Manipulates writing and/or painting utensils (e.g., sponge, paint brush, pencil).
- Manipulates scissors for cutting paper.
- Actively attends to and follows instructions for a task.
- Manipulates increasingly complex puzzles.
- Activates and manipulates computer devices.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults demonstrate understanding of both general and specific physical needs of preschool children.
- Appropriate opportunities and a variety of activities and materials are provided both indoors and outdoors for children to develop small muscles of the body and manipulative skills such as cutting with scissors; using crayons, markers, and paint; putting together and taking apart objects; building with blocks; throwing and catching balls; digging; putting together puzzles; etc.
- Though adults provide opportunities, materials, and encouragement for children to develop motor skills, they do not push them to accomplish skills for which they are not ready; they recognize that children develop skills at different times and different rates.
- Adults facilitate children's independence and motor development by encouraging them to learn self-help skills, such as dressing, putting on shoes and socks, serving themselves food, etc. Adults give children the help they need with these tasks until they are fully capable of performing them without help.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the motor development of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.
- A variety of materials are provided all in good condition, working order, and appropriate to the developmental level of the child.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

IV. Children Will Use Their Bodies Optimally\ to Explore, Negotiate and Manipulate the Environment.

Benchmark

D. Child demonstrates increasing skill level by manipulating or playing with toys or devices.

Descriptors:

- Activates and manipulates switch toys or communication devices.
- Manipulates increasingly smaller size toys with increasing skill level.
- Explores new ways to manipulate toys and combine them with other toys and/or objects.
- Uses objects as props in pretend play (e.g., hats for different roles, blocks for food).

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults demonstrate understanding of both general and specific physical needs of preschool children.
- Appropriate opportunities and a variety of activities and materials are provided both indoors and outdoors for children to develop small muscles of the body and manipulative skills, such as cutting with scissors; using crayons, markers, and paint; putting together and taking apart objects; building with blocks; throwing and catching balls; digging; putting together puzzles; etc.
- Though adults provide opportunities, materials, and encouragement for children to develop motor skills, they do not push them to accomplish skills for which they are not ready; they recognize that children develop skills at different times and different rates.
- Adults facilitate children's independence and motor development by encouraging them to learn self-help skills, such as dressing, putting on shoes and socks, serving themselves food, etc. Adults give children the help they need with these tasks until they are fully capable of performing them without help.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the motor development of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.
- Toys and devices are in good working order and well maintained.
- Adults ensure the environment is orderly and safe and includes a variety of interesting toys and devices.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

V. Children Will Demonstrate Optimal Independence in Areas of Daily Life.

Benchmark

A. **The child actively participates in mealtime activities with increasing independence.**

Descriptors:

- Drinks liquids through a straw.
- Washes hands at the sink and dries them on a towel.
- Uses cup/sippy cup for drinking.
- Feeds self (e.g., finger food, uses utensils).
- Uses napkins.
- Explores new food textures and tastes.
- Demonstrates table manners appropriate to setting (e.g., asking for more, using “Please” and “Thank you,” passing bowl to neighbor).
- Pours small amount of liquid with little spilling.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults understand that unmet physical needs may affect the behavior of preschool children.
- The daily schedule builds in time for routines such as toileting, hand washing, rest, eating, etc.
- Adults implement essential elements of quality that promote good physical health and wellness.
- Adults facilitate children’s independence and motor development by encouraging them to learn self-help skills, such as serving themselves food, etc. Adults give children the help they need with these tasks until they are fully capable of performing them without help.
- Assistive devices are available to maximize participation and independence of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.
- Adults use positive methods to manage children’s behavior. Children are treated with respect and dignity and are disciplined in a calm and reflective manner.
- Adults model appropriate and respectful table manners by saying “Please,” and “Thank you,” using a napkin, etc.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico’s Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

V. Children Will Demonstrate Optimal Independence in Areas of Daily Life.

Benchmark

B. The child actively participates in dressing.

Descriptors:

- Takes off or pulls down clothes when appropriate (e.g., bathroom, changing clothes, bath time).
- Takes off and begins to put on socks and shoes.
- Puts on and takes off coat or jacket.
- Puts on and takes off play or dress-up clothes.
- Manipulates clothes fasteners (e.g., zippers, buttons, snaps, Velcro).

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults demonstrate understanding of both general and specific physical needs of preschool children.
- Adults understand that unmet physical needs may affect the behavior of preschool children.
- The daily schedule builds in time for dressing routines.
- Adults facilitate children's independence and motor development by encouraging them to learn self-help skills, such as dressing, putting on shoes and socks, etc. Adults give children the help they need with these tasks until they are fully capable of performing them without help.
- Assistive devices are available to maximize the participation and independence of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

V. Children Will Demonstrate Optimal Independence in Areas of Daily Life.

Benchmark

C. Child actively participates in self care.

Descriptors:

- Appropriately coughs, sneezes, and cries.
- Assists with blowing nose or wiping face.
- Washes hands, face and body.
- Brushes teeth with adult supervision.
- Uses toilet or assists with diaper routine.
- Demonstrates bladder control to toilet independently or with assistance during the day and night.
- Demonstrates bowel control to toilet independently or with assistance during the day and night.
- Bathes with adult supervision.

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults understand that unmet physical needs may affect the behavior of preschool children.
- The daily schedule builds in time for routines such as toileting, hand washing, rest, eating, etc.
- Adults implement essential elements of quality that promote good physical health and wellness.
- Adults facilitate children's independence and motor development by encouraging them to learn self-help skills, such as dressing, putting on shoes and socks, serving themselves food, etc. Adults give children the help they need with these tasks until they are fully capable of performing them without help.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the motor development of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.
- Self care activities, including toileting and diapering, washing and bathing, are carried out with calm, adult supervision, free of threats or punishment.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality, Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

V. Children Will Demonstrate Optimal Independence in Areas of Daily Life.

Benchmark

D. Child actively participates in self safety.

Descriptors:

- Recognizes when to get out of danger (e.g., moves out of the way of others, identifies safety hazards in play or real life).
- Observes age appropriate safety routines (e.g., waits at street corner with adult, avoids electrical outlets).
- Communicates safety concerns to others (e.g., “something’s burning,” noting a stranger, concern for others).
- Requests assistance in unsafe situations (e.g., avoiding strangers, fire, strange animals).
- Follows adult supervised safety routines (e.g., fire drills, street crossing).
- Avoids environmental hazards (e.g., extreme hot or cold objects, poison labels, electrical outlets, arroyos and ditches, firearms, sharp objects).

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- The daily schedule builds in time for routines including discussion of safety hazards in the environment.
- Adults facilitate children’s independence and motor development by encouraging them to learn self-safety skills. Adults give children the help they need with these tasks until they are fully capable of performing them without help.
- Assistive devices are available to stimulate the participation of children with disabilities, and adults are knowledgeable about their use.
- Adults supervise pretend play activities in which children gain experience in dealing with safety hazards.
- Adults maintain a safe and orderly environment for children.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico’s Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

V. Children Will Demonstrate Optimal Independence in Areas of Daily Life.

Benchmark

E. Child shows awareness of roles of community helpers.

Descriptors:

- Identifies community roles (e.g., policeman, fireman, nurse, doctor, dentist).
- Knows where to seek appropriate help (e.g., parent, teacher, policeman).

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults use names to describe community helpers.
- A variety of books are available in the environment which include pictures, names and tasks of community helpers.
- Adults extend dramatic play of children to help problem solve where to seek help when needed.
- Prior to outings, adults explain expectations of behavior and help children identify where to go for assistance if needed.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality, Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

V. Children Will Demonstrate Optimal Independence in Areas of Daily Life.

Benchmark

F. **Child will demonstrate adequate sensory processing to carry out skills of daily life.**

Descriptors:

- Sits in groups or stands in line without aggression.
- Attends to group or activity without leaving or losing focus as age appropriate.
- Comfortably maneuvers in activities that challenge balance.
- Works with messy materials (e.g., glue, bubbles, pudding).
- Tolerates various levels of noise and light in the environment.
- Tolerates a variety of textures and tastes in food.
- Tolerates grooming routines.
- Increasingly tolerates a variety of clothing (e.g., wearing paint smock, wearing a jacket or hat when needed).

Supportive Practices

- Adults encourage and accept various forms of child communication (e.g., verbal, sign, gesture).
- Adults understand that unmet physical needs may affect the behavior of preschool children.
- Adults know where to access additional expertise for adapting equipment or the environment, positioning, and integrating therapeutic techniques in daily activities.
- Adults anticipate children's sensory needs and make environmental adjustments as necessary (e.g., redirecting a child, limiting time in line or circle, adapting typical equipment).
- Adults increase expectations for child participation at a rate which ensures child's success (e.g., gradually introducing new food and clothing textures; adjusting light and noise levels).
- Adults demonstrate understanding of both general and specific physical needs of preschool children.

Adapted from: Turner, P., Rivera, O., Dudley, M., Stiles, S. (1999) New Mexico's Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality. Santa Fe, NM: Office of Child Development, Children, Youth and Families Department, State of New Mexico.



Performance Standard

VI. Children Will Engage in a Variety of Meaningful Literacy Experiences.

Benchmark

A. Children will give and receive nonverbal and verbal messages to attach meaning to experiences, events, and interactions.

Descriptors:

- Understands names of familiar people and objects.
- Attends to adults' conversations.
- Labels objects and people.
- Understands and responds to commands and other conversation.
- Interprets, attaches meaning and reacts to nonverbal behavior.
- Listens to stories, rhymes and music.
- Uses gestures, facial expressions, body, and words to make wants and needs known and to express moods and feelings.
- Asks and responds to questions.
- Plays with language sounds.
- Pretends; acts out behaviors and actions of adults and others.
- Imitates motions of others (e.g., finger play actions, motions with music, claps or taps).
- Attempts to talk and question.
- Represents things, ideas and experiences using pictures.

Supportive Practices

- Engage in many verbal interactions with children. Describe what the child is doing, what the adult is doing, what others are doing, what you see, what you hear, etc.
- Observe and listen attentively to children to learn what the child is expressing through his/her body language, gestures, facial expressions and words.
- Engage children in language games: finger plays, chants, rhyming games, tongue twisters.
- Sing, chant and recite nursery rhymes, poems, and songs.
- Expose children to a wide variety of experiences.
- Engage children in back and forth conversation.
- Give clear, simple directions.
- Read to children daily.



Performance Standard

VI. Children Will Engage in a Variety of Meaningful Literacy Experiences.

Benchmark A (continued):

A. Children will give and receive nonverbal and verbal messages to attach meaning to experiences, events, and interactions.

Descriptors

- Pantomimes.
- Understands that writing is a way of communicating.
- Dictates thoughts and ideas to others.
- Recounts or retells experiences and/or stories, sequencing two, three, or four events.
- Tells and re-tells stories using a variety of methods (felt/flannel story boards, round robins, audio taping, dance, puppets, videotaping)
- Describes his/her symbolic representations using blocks, art materials, manipulatives, etc., of the environment to others.

Supportive Practices

- Support children in developing the language needed for a variety of social situations through modeling appropriate language and engaging children in role-playing activities.
- Encourage children to describe experiences that are important to them.
- Listen with responsive facial expressions and body language.
- Provide environmental supports for communication (quiet sharing time, private conversations, interesting objects to explore, etc.).
- Use question prompts that allow children to elaborate on retold experiences.
- Provide response “wait” time allowing children to formulate answers to questions or requests.
- Adapt questions and response time expectations to child’s communication style and ability.
- Adapt lighting, print size, etc., to child’s unique or special needs.
- Use and properly maintain appropriate adaptive equipment.
- Develop and use low-tech options for adaptations for use of equipment and materials (page turners, adaptive pencils, accessible shelves, board books, etc.).
- Adapt communication approaches for children with alternate communication needs (sign language or other language, communication boards, etc.)
- Pair auditory messages with visual messages.
- Practice cultural and linguistic sensitivity in acceptance of varied communication approaches.
- Uses a variety of ways to tell a story (felt/flannel story boards, round robins, audio taping, dance, puppets, video taping).



Performance Standard

VI. Children Will Engage in a Variety of Meaningful Literacy Experiences.

Benchmark

B. Children will experience written language functions.

Descriptors:

- Listens to nursery rhymes, songs and stories
- Recites nursery rhymes and sings songs.
- Looks at/studies pictures/illustrations in books, magazines, newspapers, billboards, cereal boxes, etc.
- Selects books they would like to have an adult read to them.
- “Pretends” to read by holding a book, turning pages and making up a story.
- Relates objects or actions in books to the real world.
- Shows familiarity with text (e.g., says a word or phrase that goes with a page of text as soon as s/he sees the illustration).
- Dramatizes parts of stories.
- Retells parts of repetitive texts of stories.
- Talks about characters and events in storybooks in ways that suggest understanding of what has been read.
- Relates events in stories to his/her own life.
- Asks adults what a particular printed word on a sign, in a book, magazine or on a cereal box says.
- Recognizes environmental signs and symbols (STOP, K-Mart, etc.)
- Uses pictures cues to recall or predict story events.

Supportive Practices

- Demonstrate the foundational literacy concept that what can be said can be written and read through activities such as labeling of common household/classroom items, writing stories about children’s drawings, making books, making lists, labeling children’s belongings with their name.
- Provide a variety of writing tools such as crayons, markers, pens, pencils, chalk and writing surfaces such as paper, chalkboard, sidewalk, snow, and sand and many opportunities for children to use the tools.
- Create a print rich environment.
- Point out words on signs, billboards, and product packaging print to children.
- Allow children to participate in activities that involve writing and reading (cooking, making lists, clipping coupons, leaving messages for others, etc.)
- Visit the library regularly.
- Daily read and reread a wide variety of books and magazines including narrative and informational stories, repetitious stories, nursery rhymes, and poems to children.
- Talk about the stories you read to children with children – the characters, the plot, the pictures, etc.
- Provide props and puppets for children to use when dramatizing stories or parts of stories.
- Draw attention to connections between children’s experiences and those of characters in books.
- Draw children’s attention to authors and illustrators.



Performance Standard

VI. Children Will Engage in a Variety of Meaningful Literacy Experiences.

Benchmark B Continued:

B. Children will experience written language functions.

.1

Supportive Practices

- Show an interest in reading and writing for enjoyment, and talk with children about personal reading and writing interests.
- Based on interest topics generated by the children, model ways to find and obtain information from books.
- Adapt questions and response time expectations to child's communication style and ability.
- Adapt lighting, print size, etc., to child's unique or special needs.
- Use and properly maintain appropriate adaptive equipment.
- Develop and use low-tech options for adaptations for use of equipment and materials (page turners, adaptive pencils, accessible shelves, board books, etc.).
- Adapt communication approaches for children with alternate communication needs (sign language or other language, communication boards, etc.).
- Provide a variety of culturally responsive and sensitive items, objects and print material in the environment.
- Help children identify similarities and differences in symbols, shapes, objects in the environment, and events.
- Present visual displays at children's eye level.

Performance Standard

VI. Children Will Engage in a Variety of Meaningful Literacy Experiences.

Benchmark

C. Children will demonstrate auditory and visual discrimination and knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

Descriptors:

- Makes auditory discriminations of sounds in the environment.
- Shows interest in alphabet and one-letter books.
- Shows interest in magnetic letters, blocks with letters, etc.
- Demonstrates awareness of sound qualities (e.g., loud/soft, high/low pitch, near/far, abrupt/sustained).
- Uses a variety of writing, drawing, and painting tools.
- Recognizes shapes in the environment and in printed materials.
- Completes a variety of fine motor activities successfully (e.g., puzzles, bead string, peg boards).
- Draws simple lines and shapes.
- Recites the alphabet or sings the alphabet song.
- Names some letters.
- Recognizes some letters in own name.
- Points to some letters named by another person or matches some letter symbols to their name.
- Recognizes own name in print.
- Recognizes rhyming words.
- Rhymes words.

Supportive Practices

- Talk about letters by name and sounds.
- Provide puzzles, pegboards, beads and other fine motor equipment for children to play with.
- Adapt puzzle pieces, peg and bead sizes, etc., to match fine motor skill of child.
- Provide a variety of writing tools, such as crayons, markers, pens, pencils, chalk and writing surfaces, such as paper, chalkboard, sidewalk, snow, and sand and daily opportunities for children to draw and write.
- Sing the alphabet song.
- Create a print rich environment.
- Play rhyming games.
- Label child's belongings with his/her name.
- Read signs, recipes, messages, lists, etc. to children.
- Draw children's attention to shapes in the environment and in printed materials and use shapes in art projects.
- Support children in blending and segmenting sounds in high interest words such as their own names.
- Provide many opportunities for children to explore and identify sound-symbol relationships in meaningful contexts.
- Help children build a sight vocabulary starting with high frequency words seen in their environment such as STOP, CHEERIOS, OPEN, EXIT, etc.
- Play language games such as beating out the number of syllables a child may hear in a word with a toy drum.
- Provide manipulative letter and number toys and equipment such as magnetic letters, and blocks with letters for play.



Performance Standard

VI. Children Will Engage in a Variety of Meaningful Literacy Experiences.

Benchmark C (continued):

C. Children will demonstrate auditory and visual discrimination and knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

Descriptors:

- Takes an interest in forming letters.
- Demonstrates awareness of alliterations (words that start with the same sound).
- Demonstrates an understanding that there is a systematic relationship between letters and sounds.
- Matches objects, sounds, etc.
- Identifies similarities and differences among people, objects, symbols, etc.
- Recognizes patterns in language (i.e., predictable books such as Brown Bear).

Supportive Practices

- Play auditory discrimination games with children.
- Model enjoyment of using sounds, words and print to communicate ideas, information, and feelings.
- Provide alternate means of communication for children with sensory impairments.
- Adapt equipment and learning environment to child's unique communication needs.
- Adapt lighting, print size, etc., to child's unique or special needs.
- Use and properly maintain appropriate adaptive equipment.
- Develop and use low-tech options for adaptations for use of equipment and materials (page turners, adaptive pencils, accessible shelves, box books, etc.).
- Adapt communication approaches for children with alternate communication needs (sign language or other language, communication boards, etc.).
- Provide a variety of culturally responsive and sensitive items, object and print material in the environment.
- Adapt lighting to reduce high glare or increase visibility (i.e., window shades, "spot lighting," darken table tops/floors).
- Pair auditory messages with visual messages.
- Add extra sensory input by increasing visual contrast so children can more easily distinguish sections, pieces, likenesses, differences.
- Add extra sensory input by adding new textures to the environment (Velcro dots to blocks, sand to finger paints, cut-out, sand paper letters, a variety of textured fabric in the art area).



Performance Standard

VI. Children Will Engage in a Variety of Meaningful Literacy Experiences.

Benchmark

D. Children will demonstrate independent reading and writing behaviors.

Descriptors:

- Displays enjoyment of and interest in books (e.g., chooses books independently, requests re-reading of favorite books, talks about books they like).
- Uses a variety of writing tools and surfaces to create “pictures,” simple lines and shapes.
- Shows an awareness that the text of a favorite book stays the same for each reading.
- Recognizes parts of stories that are connected to their own experiences.
- Describes own drawings or tells a story about them.
- Dictates stories to accompany their own drawings.
- Imitates reading and writing behaviors.
- Uses literacy materials provided in play centers in meaningful ways.
- Uses a combination of scribbling, letter approximations and letters to write own name and other words/phrases.
- Identifies signs and labels in the environment.
- Sight-reads one or two words such as “STOP,” “YES,” “NO,” “MOM.”

Supportive Practices

- Record stories on audio tape using a signal for page turning so the child can “read” the story independently.
- Provide daily opportunities for children to read and write independently at their own level and support their approximations of reading and writing behaviors.
- Provide literacy materials as a part of the learning centers in the classroom environment (e.g., menus and order pads for the “restaurant,” picture grocery lists for the “grocery store,” envelopes, stickers and paper for the “post office,” etc.).
- Provide time for “journaling” on a daily basis – children draw pictures and label their drawings or dictate stories about the drawings to adults who then write their narrative.
- Create and maintain classroom libraries and well-stocked writing centers, including materials that are culturally relevant and sensitive.
- Provide opportunities for children to participate in silent reading.
- Support children in obtaining a library card and visiting the library on a regular basis.
- Encourage children to predict what might happen next at appropriate points in the story.
- Provide environmental supports (time, space, quiet, etc.) to facilitate reading and writing exploration.
- Provide adaptive approaches (equipment, scheduling, language) to support individual children’s success.



Performance Standard

VI. Children Will Engage in a Variety of Meaningful Literacy Experiences.

Benchmark D (continued):

D. Children will demonstrate independent reading and writing behaviors.

Descriptors:

- Uses his/her knowledge of phonological relations to write words using “invented spelling” (e.g., writes *bk* for the word *bike*).
- Uses adaptive means to express ideas or communicate about reading and writing behaviors.
- Shows book handling knowledge; turning pages from front to back, recognizing where print begins on a page, following print from left to right.

Supportive Practices

- Use and maintain adaptive equipment as appropriate.
- Develop and use low-tech adaptations in facilitating a child’s access to and participation in the learning environment.
- Provide seating options that support children with physical disabilities to hold and look at books independently (i.e., bean bag chairs, corner chairs, bolster chairs with head and back support, footrests, seat straps, etc.).

