

# Nevada's Pre-Kindergarten Standards

## GUIDEBOOK FOR TEACHERS



Part 3:

**Social Studies**

December 2007

# ***GUIDEBOOK FOR TEACHERS***

## ***SOCIAL STUDIES***

### Nevada's Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards

December 2007

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## **Introduction to Social Studies**

Nevada's Pre-Kindergarten Standards are a joint effort supported by the Nevada Department of Education's Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs, as well as the State of Nevada, Department of Human Resources, Welfare Division, Child Care Assistance Department and the Child Care and Development Fund. These agencies have been challenged by the *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative to work together to develop standards to be used by all early childhood education programs in Nevada as a guide for child outcomes for preschool.

These standards should be understood as what children may know by the end of preschool before entering kindergarten. It is important to understand that if a child does not meet the standards this does not mean they will be ineligible or unsuccessful in kindergarten or beyond. These standards are guides that can be used with all children in any early education setting such as childcare centers, family childcare homes, Head Start, preschools and school district Pre-K programs.

Social-emotional growth and learning develop through interactions with others and are interconnected to other domains, such as cognitive and physical development. Social relationships between adults and children have a powerful positive impact on children's development. Children first learn about themselves and about how to behave in society from their families, but they are also influenced by peers and other adults. As a teacher, you have a very important role in children's social and emotional development. In this role, you are able to provide emotionally warm and positive environments in developmentally appropriate pre-k environments. The most beneficial environments are those that nurture positive self-concept, independence, and self control which, in turn, contribute to a more successful learning environment for children.

One important point to remember is that all children develop differently. All children, no matter what their level, should be valued and respected. Teachers who value the individual differences of their children will have the necessary beginning skills to be very successful first teachers. The following is a guidebook teachers can use to learn more about Nevada's Pre-K Standards and to help with guiding children as they progress in social-emotional development.

As a teacher, you can use this handbook as one among many tools for getting children ready for kindergarten and beyond. The following is a list of the goals associated with Nevada's Pre-K Social Studies Standards:

- To support and promote children's self-confidence and self-direction;
- To encourage children to express and identify their feelings;
- To give children the skills to persevere and maintain their focus; and
- To develop positive relationships with individuals and the community;

Each of the following pages contains a Pre-K Social Emotional Standard. The numbers for each standard match the original Pre-K Content Standards document, but may be reworded for simplicity purposes. Many of the activities suggested in this guidebook can be found on the Virtual Pre-K website and can be accessed through: <https://www.virtualpre-k.org/>

# Acknowledgements

The attached standards are a joint effort supported by the State Department of Education and the State Department of Human Resources, Welfare Division; Child Care Assistance Department and the Child Care and Development Fund. These state agencies have been challenged by the *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative to work together on developing standards to be used by all early childhood education programs in Nevada as a guide for child outcomes for preschoolers. Future federal funding will be contingent on the completion and implementation of the Pre-Kindergarten (hereafter, shortened to Pre-K) Content Standards.

The Nevada Pre-K Standards describe appropriate outcomes for children at the end of their preschool experience before entering kindergarten. Therefore, when reading the standards one should think in terms of the child's final learning outcomes before entering kindergarten. The standards are guidelines to be used with all children in any early education setting such as childcare centers, family childcare homes, Head Start, preschools and school district Pre-K programs.

A complete version of Nevada's Pre-K Standards can be downloaded from the Nevada Department of Education website at: <http://www.doe.nv.gov/equity/prekstandards.htm> or a copy can be obtained by contacting Tina Springmeyer at [Tspringmeyer@washoe.k12.nv.us](mailto:Tspringmeyer@washoe.k12.nv.us)

# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children begin to engage in activities that help develop independence, self-expression, and persistence.  
(Pre-K Standard 1.0)



## *Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Be more independent when choosing activities.
- Use materials that help express individuality.
- Express ideas about activities.
- Talk about and express actions and accomplishments.
- Start on a task again or activity after experiencing disappointment or failure.

## *Self-Confidence*

### *Tips to help children begin to gain self-confidence:*

- Encourage children to express likes or dislikes.
- Communicate with children at eye level.
- Ask children about their opinions and ideas.
- Give children opportunities to interact with others.
- Give children the chance to take responsibility for daily tasks.
- Encourage the children to try new activities.
- Comment on what you observe him/her doing.
- Offer safe choices but allow children to experience natural consequences within safe limits.

**Activity:** "Self Help Skills" (*Virtual Pre-K, All About Me, Lesson 5*)

**Materials:** Self-help manipulatives can be bought from early childhood catalogs or made using pieces of old clothing with different fasteners; zipper, snaps, buttons, buckle, laces, Velcro. Staple or glue the part of the clothing that includes the fastener to a heavy piece of cardboard, so that students can easily manipulate it.

Have students seated at the table with you encouraging and facilitating the fastening and unfastening of self-help manipulatives, solicit comments on the mastery of each skill. Encourage the students to use descriptive, action words to describe what they are doing while they are doing it. (Zipping up, pushing a button through, pulling the Velcro back to make the ripping sound, poking a lace through a hole, pinching snaps together, tying a knot or making a bow.) Give praise for their efforts. Reinforce these skills throughout the day, as students put on and take off coats to get ready to go outdoors, or take off and put on shoes at naptime.

#### **Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:**

Be sensitive to the fact that some children are not afforded the opportunity to build these common self-help skills. When teachers are in hurry, impatient, or lacking in awareness of the part maturity plays in the ability to perform these tasks it can inhibit the development of these skills. Make sure to talk with your parents about the importance of encouraging self-help in their children.



# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children begin to develop skills in self-management, self-help, and routines.

*(Pre-K Standard 2.0)*



## ***Teachers may see children begin to:***

- Separate easier from parents or significant adults.
- Engage in routines and activities with less adult direction.
- Use self-help skills more effectively.
- Use toys and materials with care.
- Clean up and/or put away toys when finished.

## ***Self-Direction***

### ***Tips to help children begin to develop skills in self-management, self-help, and routines:***

- Model appropriate methods for handling objects, cleaning up, etc.
- Provide opportunities for child to do things for him/herself.
- Discuss issues of carelessness, destruction of property, etc. when they occur and discuss suggestions for resolving the problems.
- Encourage families to use a specific good-bye routine that is supportive and eases a child's separation.
- Allow children to participate in the rulemaking process.

#### **Activity:** "Lending Library" (*Virtual Pre-K, All About Me, Lesson 10*)

**Materials:** High quality, age appropriate multi-cultural children's books (ask for suggestions at your local public library), book pockets, library cards, sign-in sheets, writing instruments (pencil, markers, crayons) At registration time, when new families are meeting you, invite parents to help their child select a book from the lending library. Next, have the children sign-out the book using the library card you create on the inside of the front cover. If the child is unable to write their name, have the parent write it for them. Have the child put the library card in a pocket already posted at the child's level with their name on it. When the children return the books on the first day of school, have them retrieve the library card, place it back inside the book, and return the book to the lending library. This can be a regular routine for the parent and child. Inform the parents that children may frequently check out the same book over and over.

#### **Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:**

At the beginning of the year, supply your lending library with books that address issues such as separation and autonomy to help ease the transition for new students. Encourage parents to get a public library card to use with their children.

When you begin your library, have at least 10 books over your classroom enrollment. Frequently add new books to your library.

# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children begin to develop skills in identifying and expressing feelings.

*(Pre-K Standard 3.0)*



## *Identification and Expression of Feelings*

### *Tips to help children begin to develop skills in identifying and expressing feelings:*

- Create an environment where children feel safe and secure and where their feelings are accepted.
- Encourage children to evaluate themselves (e.g, “Was that easy or hard for you?”).
- Celebrate the children’s accomplishments.
- Respect and accept children and help him/her feel unique and special.
- Engage in frequent conversation with children about their interests, activities, feelings, and perspectives.

### *Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Identify a variety of feelings (anger, sadness, fear, happiness).
- Express feelings, needs, or wants in appropriate ways.
- Show an awareness of feelings in others, and may comfort friends or others when needed.

**Activity:** “Feelings Hand Puppets” (*Virtual Pre-K, All About Me, Lesson 4*)

**Materials:** Collage puppets (or paper lunch bags), glue, collage materials (yarn, buttons, wiggle eyes, pipe cleaners, flexible shapes)

Spend some time talking with your children about different feelings we all have before starting this activity.

Introduce this activity by telling the children that they are going to have a chance to create their own feelings hand puppet. Ask children about some feelings that they have. You may need to give examples to your students to elicit a response. You can start by saying, “I remember feeling happy when...” “When do you remember feeling happy?” Give each student a puppet. Offer an assortment of collage materials for them to decorate with. When they are done, ask each child how their puppet is feeling, and why. Give praise for their efforts. Write down the feeling they describe on their puppet. Allow time for the children to interact with each other and each other’s puppets.

#### **Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:**

Some children may just be interested in the process of making their puppet and may not respond to how their puppet is feeling. Remember the most important part is the process of the activity, not the product .

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children begin to develop positive interaction skills with other children and adults.

*(Pre-K Standard 4.0)*



**Teachers may see children begin to:**

- Show affection towards adults and friends.
- Express common courtesy to others (e.g., “please,” “thank you,” “excuse me”).
- Respect the rights and belongings of others (e.g., taking turns).
- Show problem-solving skills (e.g., ask for help, talk about feelings, talk about problems, negotiate solutions with others).
- Begin to share and invite other children to join in their play.
- Have a preferred playmate or prefer to play alone.

## *Interactions with other Children and Adults*

***Tips to help your children to develop positive interaction skills with other children and adults.***

- Model trust, honesty, and respect in dealings with children and adults.
- Use books to help children take the perspective of others and/or help with problem solving.
- Model the words and behaviors of politeness and common courtesy.
- Provide many opportunities for sharing.
- Support and model empathy.
- Point out and celebrate similarities and differences between children and families.

### **Activity:** “Dramatic Play”

Provide children with several opportunities to participate in dramatic play activities. Dramatic play is an imitation of reality and children learn best when they construct knowledge for themselves. They need to have the opportunity to engage in dramatic play activities on a daily basis.

**MATERIALS:** Provide assorted clothes and accessories, pretend food items, dolls, shoes, home items, pots, pans, dishes, babies, blankets, anything that can act as a prop to help them re-enact their pretend roles. Children will use the props to create the environment and establish the “make –believe” event that they want to play out.

### **Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:**

Change dramatic play props every few weeks to add variety to the children’s experience. It is important to always leave home materials in the center because children are concrete thinkers, they will revert any play situation to what is concrete and what they know best and what they are comfortable with.

# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children begin to develop positive social behaviors in play and group settings.

(Pre-K Standard 5.0)



*Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Play independently.
- Play in pairs and in small groups.
- Engage in dramatic or pretend play.
- Initiate play with others or enter into play with a group of other children.
- Engage in cooperative groups to work on a task.
- Take turns with teacher support.
- Show that they have sharing ability with other children.

## *Pro-social Behaviors*

*Tips to help children begin to develop positive social behaviors in play and group settings:*

- Provide opportunities for children to play in groups or with a partner.
- Support and model empathy.
- Point out cooperative/sharing behaviors.
- Model taking turns.
- Read books that demonstrate respect for the feelings of others.

**Activity:** "Class Collage"

**Materials:** Paper, collage materials, glue, markers, crayons, wet chalk any other material that can be added to a collage.

Place the materials and a large piece of butcher paper out on a large table. Encourage children to come to the table to contribute to the class collage. Remind the children to be respectful of the work that other children have created but also encourage them to create their own picture to include on the collage. When the class collage is finished, share it at the circle time and ask all of the children what they contributed to the collage. Hang up the collage and let the children enjoy their collaborative work of art.

**Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:** Give children lots of opportunity to create together. Encourage children to participate so that they can be part of the whole group's work. You can use a sheet or some other fabric if you want to collage piece to be more durable.

# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children begin to develop attending and focusing skills.

*(Pre-K Standard 6.0)*



## Attending and Focusing Skills

### *Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Focus on a task for more than 10 minutes.
- Move on to a new activity without showing signs of stress.
- Use words and non-verbal skills in conversations (e.g., listening, letting a person finish speaking before taking a turn, staying with one topic, making eye contact).
- Show the ability to delay gratification to complete a larger task.

### *Tips to help children begin to develop attending and focusing:*

- Encourage children to pursue his/her own interests.
- Allow an extended period of time to work on specific tasks and/or projects.
- Provide a variety of materials/supplies for children to complete tasks/projects in a variety of centers.

### **Activity:** "Self Regulation"

Children learn to understand the perspective of other people by developing self regulation skills. Children learn these skills by taking turns, helping other children and learning how to control their own actions. They develop empathy for other children when they begin to listen and respect each other. Taking turns, working together on a class project or simply waiting for another activity to start are times when self regulation is important for young children.

**MATERIALS:** Provide children with opportunities to play group games that encourage turn taking such as Duck, Duck Goose or Red-light, Green-light. Children will begin to develop self control as they learn how to take turns and work with other children in a positive experience. Make sure that you give children enough time so that everyone can have the experience of being it or out in the game. Another great activity is taking the class for a walk in the neighborhood and pointing out areas of interest on the walk. After you return to the class use scaffolding techniques to identify the interests of the children and develop activities and curriculum based on the children's interests.

**Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:** Waiting in line can be difficult for anyone but especially difficult for young children. Standing in line for long periods of time lends it self to behaviors and disagreements between children. If children must wait in lengthy lines, give them distractions such as singing songs or chants to keep them busy until the line can begin to move.

## CIVICS

Children begin to understand why society needs rules, laws, and governments.

*(Pre-K Standard 1.0)*



### *Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Follow home or classroom rules.
- Participate in group decision making.
- Follow rules made with adults and/or peers in a game or play.
- Follow safety rules.

## Rules and Laws

### *Tips to help children understand why society needs rules, laws, and governments:*

- Talk about the rules and maintain them consistently, but compromise when appropriate.
- Talk to the children about appropriate rules before entering a different type of environment such as a library or church setting.
- Play a variety of simple games (e.g., board games, card games, or ball games) with your child. Comment on “my turn” and “your turn.”
- Model safety rules (e.g., wear your seat belt while in the car, wear a helmet while biking, and wait for the “walk” signal at crosswalks.

**Activity:** “Class Safety Rules”

**Materials:** A large sheet of paper, different colored markers, tape.

Have a class meeting and discuss the importance of safety in the classroom. Ask the children what the rules for the class should be. List them on the sheet of paper and discuss each one that the children suggest. Discuss what rules would make their classroom safer. Rules could consist of wearing a jacket when the weather gets cold or a when it reaches a certain temperature. Keep the rules in positive terms.

**Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:** Classrooms rules are important but you only need a few to help to keep the children safe. If you have too many rules children feel stressed and confused. It is more important to have a consistent schedule and to give children opportunities to problem solve situations so that they feel confident understand why we have certain rules.

# ECONOMICS

Understanding economic concepts including scarcity, choice, cost, incentives, and costs versus benefits to describe and analyze problems and opportunities.

*(Pre-K Standard 1.0)*



## *Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Decide between two choices.
- Be aware that adults work in order to earn money to buy the food, clothing, and housing that a family needs.

## *The Economic way of Thinking*

### *Tips to help children begin to understand economic concepts:*

- Create opportunities for children to choose and discuss consequences of choices.
- Involve children in using real money in everyday situations.
- Encourage children to participate in problem solving activities in the classroom. Create a pro and con chart and write down the children's responses so that they can determine what will be the best solution.

**Activity:** "Activity Centers"

**Materials:** Children need opportunities to make choices on a daily basis. They need to explore and experiment during activity time. This is important so that they may master new skills, attempt something new and, more importantly, make choices. Children need these daily encounters so that they can develop problem solving skills. Children need to be encouraged to try new centers and activities such as reading books, writing stories, building in the block area. Children will be better able to analyze information and problem solve situations when they can process the information and make their own decisions.

**Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:** Provide materials and opportunities for children to make choices throughout their daily schedules.

## ECONOMICS

Understanding various forms of money, how money makes it easier to trade, borrow, save, invest, and compare value of goods and services.

*(Pre-K Standard 5.0)*



### *Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Show the roles of consumers through dramatic or pretend play.
- Play store or restaurant with play or real money, receipts, credit cards, telephones.
- Recognize that things have to be paid for with money and that sometimes he/she can't buy what is wanted if there is not enough money.

## Money

### *Tips to help children begin to understand various forms and purposes of money:*

- Provide materials for dramatic play.
- Use the names of coins and currency and their worth for children to hear and understand.
- Involve children in using real money to help buy items.



### **Activity:** "Playing Store"

Set up a "store" in your classroom where children can take turns being the clerk or the purchaser. Have children participate in making choices about what to include in the store and what type of store should be represented (i.e., grocery, clothing, tool, computer, office materials). Change the store theme each time with the children's input and discussion. Allow ample creativity from children in deciding themes, materials, etc... for the store.



# ECONOMICS

Understanding the U.S. economic system as a whole (e.g., resources, production, income, unemployment, prices, and variations in individual income).

*(Pre-K Standard 6.0)*



## *The U.S. Economy as a Whole*

### *Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Show an understanding of the consumer's role through dramatic or pretend play.
- Role play different occupations.
- Talk about what he/she wants to be when grown up.
- Be aware of the fact that adults work to pay for necessary items, housing, food, etc..

### *Tips to help children begin to understand the U.S. economic system as a whole:*

- Read books about many different occupations.
- Help children about questions they may have about various careers and talk to or about people in these careers.
- Help children think about their future careers/jobs.

#### **Activity:** "Learning about Work and Careers"

Read a book to the class about different careers and talk to the children about what each type of career is and what the people need to do their jobs. Using scaffolding, list the types of workers that there are. Promote careers by setting up a different career in each center. Ex: scientists, janitors, journalists, chefs, etc. Provide the props, books and any other materials that the children will need to explore the different occupations.

# GEOGRAPHY

Understanding the use of maps, globes, and other geographic tools to locate and understand information about people, places and environments.

*(Pre-K Standard 1.0)*



## *Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Identify direction and location (e.g., up/down, above/below).
- Name and point to body parts.
- Ask many questions about what he/she sees and finds.
- Move in directions by a command (e.g., forward, backward, sideways, left, right).
- Identify and locate familiar places.
- Recognize that streets have signs and houses have numbers.
- Make roads for toys trucks, bikes, or cars.

## *The World in Spatial Terms*

### *Tips to help children understand the world in spatial terms:*

- Allow many opportunities for children to explore environments.
- Allow children to climb, run, jump, and roll to physically experience space.
- Play games such as “Simon Says,” “Mother May I” to help children move in various directions.
- Use positional and directional words like “above” and “below,” or “left” and “right.”
- Use words that describe color, size, shape, etc...
- Read and use maps and globes.
- Provide maps and discuss routes for trips.

**Activity:** “Lets take a Trip”

**Materials:** Provide a globe, assorted maps, pictures and magazines of different places, countries and regions from around the world. Provide paper, pencils and markers for the children to use.

Have a class meeting and discuss traveling. Ask the children where they would like to visit if they were going to go somewhere. Choose a place as a group and explore and discover information about the destination. Expand on the activity and plan a day of packing. Ask the children to help you write a list of the items that they will need on the trip. Expand the idea to have the children dictate stories about adventures that they might have at that location. Encourage them to draw pictures or build structures that they might see there.

**Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:** Spend some time gathering maps and pictures for the children to explore.

# GEOGRAPHY

Understanding the physical and human features and cultural characteristics of places and use this information to define and study regions and their patterns of changes.

*(Pre-K Standard 2.0)*



## Places and Regions

*Tips to help children understand places and regions:*

- Discuss characters in books, talking about feelings of the characters, similarities and differences in appearances, etc..
- Read books and listen to music that represent a variety of cultures and traditions.
- Model kindness and caring for all people.
- Provide opportunities for your child to discuss physical changes (e.g., increases in his/her height, weight).
- Discuss the city, state, and country where your family lives in relation to other people.

*Teachers may see children begin to:*

- Share information about their family practices, customs, and culture.
- Be exposed to diverse family practices, customs and culture.
- Learn the name of his/her own city or town.
- Give information about where he/she lives.
- Can express how others are similar or different from one another.

**Activity:** "Family Albums" (*Virtual Pre-K, All About Me, Lesson 8*):

**Materials:** A blank three-page family album for every child and a letter with directions to parents, construction paper and crayons

Begin this lesson when all students have brought in their completed family albums. Display albums in your classroom's reading area. During circle time or self-selected reading, allow the children to share their albums with their classmates. Provide time for children to introduce their family album to the class. Encourage comparisons, however be sensitive to differences. Ask questions about each family, such as the number and name of family members and what occasion the picture was taken. Suggest that your students look for similarities between their families and other children's families. On white construction paper, encourage your students to draw a picture of their family members. Individually, invite students to dictate sentences to you - telling who's who and what their family likes to do. Display the drawings on a bulletin board where all children can appreciate them. At the end of the unit, create a classroom book with all of the family drawings and display it in the reading area. Encourage parents to take the book home and read it to their children. This allows parents to learn about developmentally appropriate preschooler drawings and writing abilities.

**Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:** It usually takes a week to receive all the albums. Each day of the week, briefly introduce the new albums that were brought in that day. If a family is unable to provide photographs, encourage the child to draw pictures in their album. It is imperative that each child has an opportunity to participate in this lesson with their own family album.

# GEOGRAPHY

Understanding how physical processes shape Earth's surface patterns and ecosystems.

*(Pre-K Standard 3.0)*



## Physical Systems

***Tips to help children understand places and regions:***

- Talk about clothing choices based on weather.
- Discuss experiences of being in different weather patterns (e.g., rain, snow, wind, sun).
- Discuss how things look different in different weather patterns (e.g., when it is foggy, when it is raining).
- Look at thermometers and discuss the numbers.
- Watch and discuss the weather forecast.
- Talk about clouds and what they might predict about the weather.

***Teachers may see children begin to:***

- Identify familiar weather conditions (e.g., rain, sunshine, snow, fog).
- Use words such as hard/soft, rough/smooth, and water/land when describing surfaces.
- Identify various natural features.
- Determine what type of clothing to wear based on the weather.
- Identify seasons by temperature or other characteristics.
- Draw pictures representing seasonal changes.

**Activity:** "Packing for Weather" (*Virtual Pre-K, Taking Care of Me, Lesson 10*):

**Materials:** Flannel board, weather or season symbols, three suitcases or shopping bags, clothing for a variety of seasonal conditions, large bag, drawing paper, crayons, or markers.

Introduce the activity with a related story or game such as "What's in the suitcase?" Put something like an umbrella in a soft-sided suitcase. Have students try and guess the contents by touching the suitcase. Open the case and ask, "When do we use this?" Have the students pick a destination and discuss weather conditions for it. Bring in a large bag of clothing and tell the students to help you pack the right clothing for the trip. Place the symbols for rainy, snowy, and sunny on the flannel board and put a suitcase under each. Students take turns reaching into the bag and naming the item of clothing each pulls out. Then the student decides which suitcase the clothing belongs in and puts it into the case. Ask for agreement from the students or discuss alternatives. After the suitcase activity, have children discuss their favorite weather and draw pictures of it. These may be combined into a book with chapter names for the weather conditions or seasons.

**Teacher-to-Teacher Tip:** Weather conditions overlap, so make sure the students understand that rain means wet conditions, snow means cold conditions, and sun means hot conditions. Thrift shops are a good source of clothing for this lesson. The clothing can also be used for dress-up clothes.

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## Additional Websites:

[www.doe.nv.gov/equity/prekstandards.htm](http://www.doe.nv.gov/equity/prekstandards.htm) (To download complete copy of Nevada's Pre-K Standards)

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) (Federal Even Start Family Literacy)

[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org) (PBS)

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) (National Association for the Education of Young Children (See Position Statement on School Readiness and Signs of Quality Programs)

[www.nas.edu](http://www.nas.edu) or [www.4nationalacademies.org](http://www.4nationalacademies.org) (National Research Council)

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) (U.S. Department of Education)

[www.ala.org/ALSCTemplate.cfm?Section=ALSC](http://www.ala.org/ALSCTemplate.cfm?Section=ALSC) (American Library Association)

[www.nea.org/parents](http://www.nea.org/parents) (National Education Association)

[www.ncpie.org/](http://www.ncpie.org/) (National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education)

[www.npin.org](http://www.npin.org) (National Parent Involvement Network)

[www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/](http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/) (The Children's Literature Web Guide)

[www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) (Parent Teacher Association)

[www.virtualpre-k.org/reno/en/](http://www.virtualpre-k.org/reno/en/) (Virtual Pre-K website)

[www.teachersandfamilies.com](http://www.teachersandfamilies.com) (Teachers and Families Working Together)

[www.teachersfirst.com](http://www.teachersfirst.com) (Teachers First website)

[www.universalpreschool.com](http://www.universalpreschool.com) (social Development)



# Appendix

The Pre-K Content Standards are guidelines for teachers to use when developing learning experiences for young children that are grounded in the following guiding principles:

## Guiding Principles

### 1. Children are active learners.

- Children are not passive learners. Instead, they learn through physical, social, and mental activities (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Because children learn through firsthand actions with objects and things in their world, their learning occurs and is linked to the overall environment and their cultural experiences (Vygotsky, 1986).
- As active learners, young children need opportunities to observe things and events in their here-and-now world, develop their own ideas, try them out, find out what happens, and come up with their own answers (Dewey, 1944; Glassman, 2001).
- Play is how children find out about their world. All types of play—manipulative play, play with games, rough-and-tumble play, and socio-dramatic play—provide children with opportunities to try things out, see what happens, and learn (Rubin, Bukowski & Parker, 1998).
- Organizing children’s learning spaces through centers of interest is a good way to help children learn. Centers are clearly marked, organized play and work areas with a theme. Centers encourage children to make decisions, learn new skills, practice skills previously gained, as well as interact with others.
- Centers offer children and teachers a great deal of flexibility. Because they do so, centers may support the needs of the children, especially diverse learners. For example, the needs of children with physical disabilities can be accommodated by providing pathways, low tables, or other necessary adjustments.

Those children who need privacy or less stimulation can be offered quiet, protected centers and spaces for active learning.

2. **Development and learning are interrelated.**

- Learning about oneself, developing social skills and achieving motivation are all part of intellectual development. Children's ideas about themselves affect not only interactions with others, but also how they understand themselves as learners (Ladd, 1990). In turn, children's intellectual abilities and their control over language are also linked to their social skills. Children who can use language well in social situations or those who can understand another person's point of view are more likely to be those with strong social skills.
- Likewise, learning to write and read depends in great part on how children feel about themselves and their ability to achieve (Bandura, 1997). Children who believe they can learn, and expect to achieve, do so (Seefeldt, Denton, Galper & Younosai, 1999).

3. **Growth and learning are sequential.**

- Growth and learning move in a basic sequence (Berk, 2001). For instance, learning generally proceeds from the concrete to the abstract. The early years are when children learn best from concrete, firsthand experiences. These firsthand experiences will help children with their ability to express their ideas through drawing, painting, and verbal and written descriptions (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969).

4. **Each Child is an individual learner.**

- Each child is an individual. Each will grow, develop, and learn at his or her own pace. Because children's development is due to both biological maturity and the environment, the rate of their development and learning varies. Therefore, actual age is not the best sign of where a child should be developmentally.

- Even though development and learning occur in an orderly way, development is often uneven. Some children will move ahead in language learning while being behind in physical or motor development. Others will demonstrate a skill one day and not repeat it for another month.
- A child's genetic makeup may be related to health growth and development, but an environment that does not provide good nutrition or language experiences may slow down healthy growth. Severe disabilities affect normal growth and development as well. Children with disabilities may benefit more from early intervention than those without these disabilities.

5. **Development and learning are embedded in culture.**

- Culture, the social context in which children learn, grow, and develop, is defined as the language, knowledge, beliefs, art, moral, laws, customs, and ways of living that are passed on to future generations (Cole, 1999). Social groups, the family, neighborhood, religious or ethnic groups within a society pass on their customs, values, or moral principles to the young.
- Beginning at birth, the culture socializes children to become members of a society. But children are not just products of the culture they grow in. As children grow, they may decide what to model from the cultural influences they are exposed to, shaping their cultural context over time (NRC & IM, 2001).

6. **Family involvement is necessary.**

- To develop a close attachment between young children and their families demands family involvement. Teachers should consider each child's unique circumstances, respect each family, and encourage involvement between families and preschools to help with a child's academic success and later school achievement (NRC, 2001a).

- Family members and teachers must work together. Preschool experiences build on and extend what children learn at home. In turn, children's learning in school is extended and continued in the home.
7. Children's learning can be clarified, enriched, and extended.
- Appropriate early educational experiences can extend, expand, and clarify the ideas, concepts, language and social skills children gain spontaneously. With the guidance of highly knowledgeable, trained, and skilled adults who understand both children and what children need to know, children can learn more than could on their own (Vygotsky, 1986).

