

Preschool Curriculum

We follow the State of Michigan's *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten* to drive our preschool curriculum. Below is a summary of these learning expectations and standards.

Approaches to Learning

Children show increasing initiative and curiosity about their work and play in all areas of the curriculum.

Children will:

1. Choose to participate in an increasing variety of tasks and activities using all five senses.
2. Make choices and value decisions, as they solve the problems in their work and play.
3. Become more comfortable with taking risks and with generating their own ideas.
4. Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, inventiveness, and confidence.
5. Grow in eagerness to learn about and discuss a growing range of topics, ideas, and tasks.
6. Demonstrate comfort with open-ended questions and problems.
7. Value the uniqueness of their own work.

Children show increasing engagement and persistence in their work and play in all areas of the curriculum.

Children will:

1. Grow in abilities to persist in and complete a variety of tasks, activities, projects, and experiences.
2. Demonstrate increasing ability to set goals and develop and follow through on plans.
3. Show growing capacity to maintain concentration in spite of distractions and interruptions.
4. Begin to demonstrate the ability to follow a sequence of steps to create a finished project.
5. Grow in the ability to plan individually, in small groups, and with the whole class.

Children show increasing invention and imagination in their work and play in all areas of the curriculum.

Children will:

1. Experiment, explore, and ask questions freely.
2. Try new things and take risks.
3. Problem solve using a variety of strategies.
4. Grow in their ability to elaborate on their original ideas.
5. Increasingly show originality and flexibility in their work.
6. Use more and more complex scenarios in play.

7. Explore movement, music, and a variety of artistic modes.

Social and Emotional Development

Children develop and exhibit a healthy sense of self.

Children will:

1. Develop greater self awareness.
2. Continue to develop personal preferences.
3. Demonstrate growing confidence in expressing their feelings, needs and opinions.
4. Become increasingly more independent.
5. Recognize and have positive feelings about their own gender, family, race, culture and language.
6. Identify a variety of feelings and moods (in themselves and others).

Children show increasing ability to regulate how they express their emotions.

Children will:

1. Grow in their capacity to avoid harming themselves, others, or things around them when expressing feelings, needs and opinions.
2. Grow in their ability to follow simple, clear, and consistent directions and rules.
3. Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully more and more of the time.
4. Begin to know when and how to seek help from an adult or peer.
5. Manage transitions and follow routines most of the time.
6. Adapt to different environments.

Children develop healthy relationships with other children and adults.

Children will:

1. Increase their ability to initiate and sustain age-appropriate interactions with peers and adults.
2. Begin to develop and practice the use of problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
3. Recognize similarities and differences in people (gender, family, race, culture, language).
4. Increase their capacity to take another's perspective.
5. Show increasing respect for the rights of others.
6. Show progress in developing and keeping friendships.
7. Participate successfully as a group member.
8. Demonstrate an increasing sense of belonging and awareness of their role as a member of a family, classroom, and community.

Intellectual Development

Children explore with increasing understanding the physical characteristics and relationships of objects and happenings in their environment.

Children will:

1. Explore and identify the characteristics of objects, including their similarities and

differences.

2. Progress from categorizing objects and events using one attribute to categorize the same set of objects or events in multiple ways.
3. Provide reasons for grouping objects in particular ways.
4. Classify objects and events by identifying sets of large groups (e.g., all horses and all dogs are animals, all houses are buildings).
5. Progress from sequencing objects and events by using one attribute to sequencing the same set of objects or events in multiple ways, providing reasons for sequencing in particular ways.

Children represent what they understand about the world through actions, objects, and words.

Children will:

1. Recognize symbols in the environment (e.g., traffic signals, signs).
2. Use symbols to represent their thoughts and ideas through play and expressive language.

Children gain, organize, and use information increasingly complex way.

Children will:

1. Gather information and learn new concepts through experimentation and discovery, making connections to what they already know.
2. Share through words or actions the acquisition of increasingly complex concepts.

Children move from solving problems through trial and error to beginning to use varied strategies, resources, and techniques to test out possibilities and find solutions.

Children will:

1. Demonstrate problem-solving skills in their hands-on activities.
2. Increase their ability to observe attentively.
3. Increase their ability to ask questions appropriate to the circumstance.
4. Increase their ability to predict outcomes by checking out and evaluating their predictions.
5. Try a variety of ways of solving problems.
6. Demonstrate enjoyment in solving their own problems.

Language and Early Literacy Development

Children begin to understand written language read to them from a variety of meaningful materials, use reading-like behaviors, and make progress towards becoming conventional readers.

Children will:

A. In comprehension strategies:

1. Retell a few important events and ideas they have heard from written materials (e.g.,

in stories and in books about things and events).

2. Enlarge their vocabularies both with words from conversation and instructional materials and activities.
3. Use different strategies for understanding written materials (e.g., making predictions using what they already know, using the structure of texts, linking themselves and their experiences to the written materials, asking relevant questions).
4. Demonstrate reading-like behaviors with familiar written materials [i.e., moving from labeling pictures to creating connected stories using book language (e.g., “Once upon a time . . .”); using patterns and vocabulary that occur in printed material to making use of printed text (e.g., trying out what one is learning about words and sounds)].
5. Talk about preferences for favorite authors, kinds of books, and topics and question the content and author’s choices (critical literacy).

B. In print and alphabetic knowledge:

1. Show progress in identifying and associating letters with their names and sounds.
2. Recognize a few personally meaningful words including their own name, “mom,” “dad,” signs, and other print in their environment.
3. Participate in play activities with sounds (e.g., rhyming games, finger plays).

C. In concepts about reading:

1. Understand that ideas can be written and then read by others.
2. Understand print and book handling concepts including directionality, title etc.
3. Understand that people read for many purposes (e.g., enjoyment, information, to understand directions).
4. Understand that printed materials have various forms and functions (e.g., signs, labels, notes, letters, types).
5. Develop an understanding of the roles of authors and illustrators.

Children begin to develop writing skills to communicate and express themselves effectively for a variety of purposes.

Children will:

1. Begin to understand that their ideas can be written and then read by themselves or others.
2. Use a variety of forms of early writing (e.g., scribbling, drawing, use of letter strings, copied environmental print) and move toward the beginning of phonetic and/or conventional spelling.
3. Begin to develop an understanding of purposes for writing (e.g., lists, directions, stories, invitations, labels).
4. Represent their own or imaginary experiences through writing (with/without illustrations).
5. Begin to write familiar words such as their own name.
6. Attempt to read or pretend to read what they have written to friends, family members, and others.
7. Show beginnings of a sense of the need to look over and modify their writings and drawings (e.g., adding to picture or writing).
8. Develop greater control over the physical skills needed to write letters and numbers.

Children develop abilities to express themselves clearly and communicate ideas to others.

Children will:

1. Use spoken language for a variety of purposes (e.g., to express feelings, to ask questions, to talk about their experiences, to ask for what they need, to respond to others).
2. Show increasing comfort and confidence when speaking.
3. Experiment and play with sounds (e.g., rhyming, alliteration, playing with sounds, and other aspects of phonological awareness).
4. Continue to develop vocabulary by using words learned from stories and other sources in conversations.
5. Speak in increasingly more complex combinations of words and in sentences.
6. Understand the roles of the participants in conversation (e.g., taking turns in conversation and relating their own comments to what is being talked about; asking relevant questions).
7. Take part in different kinds of roles as a speaker (e.g., part of a group discussion, role playing, fantasy play, storytelling and retelling).
8. Use nonverbal expressions and gestures to match and reinforce spoken expression.
9. Show progress in speaking both their home language and English (if non-English speaking children).
10. If appropriate, show progress in learning alternative communication strategies such as sign language.

Children grow in their capacity to use effective listening skills and understand what is said to them.

Children will:

1. Gain information from listening (e.g., to conversations, stories, songs, poems).
2. Show progress in listening to and following spoken directions.
3. Show progress in listening attentively, avoiding interrupting others.
4. Respond with understanding to speech directed at them.
5. Understand the concept and role of an audience (e.g., being part of an audience, being quiet, being considerate, looking at the speaker).
6. Understand and respond appropriately to non-verbal expressions and gestures.
7. Show progress in listening to and understanding both their home language and English (if non-English-speaking children).

Children begin to develop strategies that assist them in viewing a variety of multimedia materials effectively and critically.

Children will:

1. View multimedia materials for a variety of purposes (e.g., to gain information, for pleasure, to add to their understanding of written materials).
2. Use different strategies for understanding multimedia (e.g., making predictions using what they already know, using the structure of the media, linking themselves and their experiences to the content of the media, asking relevant questions).
3. Begin to compare information across sources, question the content and producer's choices, and discriminate between fantasy and reality (critical viewing).

Children develop positive attitudes about themselves as literate beings--as readers, writers, speakers, viewers, and listeners.

Children will:

1. Choose to read, write, listen, speak, and view for enjoyment and information, and to expand their curiosity.

Children begin to understand that communication is diverse and that people communicate in a variety of ways.

Children will:

1. Understand that some people communicate in different languages and other forms of English.
2. Become aware of the value of the language used in their homes.
3. Become aware of alternate forms of communication (e.g., Braille, sign language, lip reading).
4. Begin to understand the value and enjoyment of being able to communicate in more than one language or form of communication.

Creative Development

Children show how they feel, what they think, and what they are learning through experiences in the visual arts.

Children will:

1. Use their own ideas to draw, paint, mold, and build with a variety of art materials (e.g., paint, clay, wood, materials from nature such as leaves).
2. Begin to plan and carry out projects with increasing persistence.
3. Begin to show growing awareness and use of artistic elements (e.g., line, shape, color, texture, form).
4. Create representations that contain increasing detail.

Children show how they feel, what they think, and what they are learning through listening, participating in, and creating instrumental and vocal music experiences.

Children will:

1. Participate in musical activities (e.g., listening, singing, finger plays, singing games, and simple performances) with others.
2. Begin to understand that music comes in a variety of musical styles.
3. Begin to understand and demonstrate the components of music (e.g., tone, pitch, beat, rhythm, melody).
4. Become more familiar with and experiment with a variety of musical instruments.

Children show how they feel, what they think, and what they are learning through movement experiences.

Children will:

1. Respond to selected varieties of music, literature, or vocal tones to express their feelings and ideas through creative movement.
2. Begin to show awareness of contrast through use of dance elements (e.g., time: fast/slow; space: high/middle/low; energy: hard/soft).
3. Begin to identify and create movement in place and through space.

Children show how they feel, what they think, and what they are learning through dramatic play.

Children will:

1. Grow in the ability to pretend and to use objects as symbols for other things.
2. Use dramatic play to represent concepts, understand adult roles, characters, and feelings.
3. Begin to understand components of dramatic play (e.g., body, voice).
4. Contribute ideas and offer suggestions to build the dramatic play theme.
5. Begin to differentiate between fantasy and reality.

Children develop rich and rewarding aesthetic lives.

Children will:

1. Develop healthy self-concepts through creative arts experiences.
2. Show eagerness and pleasure when approaching learning through the creative arts.
3. Show growing satisfaction with their own creative work and growing respect for the creative work of others.
4. Use alternative forms of art to express themselves depending on the avenues available to them (e.g., through the visual arts, if hearing impaired; through listening to music, if physically impaired).
5. Be comfortable sharing their ideas and work with others.
6. Use the creative arts to express their view of the world.
7. Begin to develop their own preferences for stories, poems, illustrations, forms of music, and other works of art.
8. Begin to appreciate their artistic heritage and that of other cultures.
9. Talk about their creations with peers and adults.
10. Begin to develop creative arts vocabulary.

Physical Development and Health

Children increase their ability to understand and control their bodies and learn that regular physical activity can enhance their overall physical, social, and mental health.

Children will:

1. Begin to recognize and learn the names of body parts and their locations.
2. Begin to understand spatial awareness for themselves, others, and their environment.
3. Participate actively and on a regular basis, in games, outdoor play, and other forms of exercise that enhance physical fitness.

Children experience growth in gross motor development and use large muscles to improve a variety of gross motor skills in both structured and unstructured settings.

Children will:

1. Begin or continue to develop traveling movements such as walking, climbing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, and galloping.
2. Show their ability to use different body parts in a rhythmic pattern.
3. Show increasing abilities to coordinate movements (e.g., throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing balls, using the slide and swing) in order to build strength, flexibility, balance, and stamina.

Children experience growth in fine motor development and use small muscles to improve a variety of fine motor skills both in structured and unstructured settings

Children will:

1. Develop and refine motor control and coordination, eye-hand coordination, finger/thumb and whole-hand strength coordination and endurance using a variety of age-appropriate tools (e.g., scissors, pencils, markers, crayons, blocks, putting together puzzles, using a variety of technology).
2. Use fine motor skills they are learning in daily activities (e.g., dressing themselves).

Children participate in activities that encourage self-motivation, emphasize cooperation, and minimize competition.

Children will:

1. Learn to cooperate with others through games and other activities and actions that show a growing knowledge of the rights of others.
2. Take pride in their own abilities and increase self-motivation.
3. Begin to develop an appreciation and respect for the varying physical abilities and capabilities of others.

Children begin to have knowledge about and make age-appropriate healthy choices in daily life.

Children will:

1. Show growing independence in keeping themselves clean, personal care when eating, dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth, use of tissues for nose-blowing (and their disposal), and toileting.
2. Grow in understanding of the importance of good health and its relationship to physical activity.
3. Talk about ways to prevent spreading germs and diseases to other people.
4. Develop an understanding of basic oral hygiene.
5. Begin to be able to recognize activities that contribute to the spread of communicable diseases (e.g., sharing of cups, eating utensils, hats, clothing, foods).
6. Begin to recognize some symptoms of disease or health issues (e.g., a sore throat is not a “sore neck”) and common instruments used in diagnosing disease (e.g.,

thermometer, x-ray machines).

7. Begin to become aware of activities, substances, and situations that may pose potential hazards to health [e.g., smoking, poisonous materials, edible, non-edible items (e.g., plants/berries), medications (appropriate use of)].

Children recognize that they have a role in preventing accidents or potential emergencies.

Children will:

1. Begin to learn appropriate safety procedures (e.g., in the home, at school, as a pedestrian, outdoors, on the playground, with vehicles, with bicycles, around bodies of water).
2. Identify persons to whom they can turn for help in an emergency situation.
3. Begin to know important facts about themselves (e.g., address, phone number, parent's name).
4. Become aware of issues relative to personal safety (e.g., inappropriate touching, good and bad secrets, learning how to say 'No' to inappropriate touching by any other person, recognizing when to tell an adult about an uncomfortable situation).
5. Begin to learn the correct procedure for self-protection in emergency situations (e.g., tornados, fire, storms, gun fire, chemical spills, avoidance of other's blood and vomit).

Children become aware of and begin to develop nutritional habits that contribute to good health.

Children will:

1. Grow in their understanding of the importance of eating nutritious meals and snacks at regular intervals.
2. Begin to listen to body signals of hunger and fullness, learn to choose how much to eat at meals and snacks, and are able to convey their needs for food to adults.
3. Use age/developmentally-appropriate eating utensils safely and correctly.
4. Become aware of foods that cause allergic reactions for some children and/or other dietary needs or restrictions.

Early Learning in Mathematics

Children begin to develop processes and strategies for solving mathematical problems.

Children will:

1. Try to solve problems in their daily lives using mathematics (e.g., how many napkins are needed).
2. Generate new problems from every day mathematical situations and use current knowledge and experience to solve them (e.g., distribute crackers).
3. Begin to develop and use various approaches to problem solving based upon their trial and error experiences.
4. Begin to talk about the processes and procedures they used to solve concrete and simple mathematical situations.

Children begin to develop skills of comparing and classifying objects, relationships and events in their environment.

Children will:

1. Describe, match, and sort.
2. Identify likenesses and differences.
3. Place objects or events in order, according to a given criterion (e.g., color, shape, size, time).
4. Recognize that the same group can be sorted and classified in more than one way.
5. Describe why they group or sequence in a particular way.

Children begin to develop the ability to seek out and to recognize patterns in everyday life.

Children will:

1. Recognize, describe, copy, extend, and create simple patterns with real objects and through pictures.
2. Identify patterns in their environment.
3. Investigate patterns and describe relationships.
4. Recognize patterns in various formats (e.g., things that can be seen, heard, felt).

Children begin to develop skills of sorting and organizing information and using information to make predictions and solve new problems.

Children will:

1. Can generate problems that involve predicting, collecting, and analyzing information.
2. Use simple estimation to make better guesses.

Children explore and discover simple ways to measure.

Children will:

1. Show an awareness that things in their environment can be measured.
2. Begin to understand concepts of weight.
3. Show an awareness of the concept of time, beginning with the recognition of time as a sequence of events.
4. Recognize personal time as it relates to their daily life (e.g., breakfast, snack).
5. Show an awareness of temperature as it affects their daily lives.
6. Use beginning skills of estimation in solving everyday measurement problems (e.g., about how many cookies are needed for a small group of children).
7. Begin to use non-standard (e.g., length of hand) measures for length and area of objects.
8. Begin to understand that tools (e.g., rulers, scales, counters) can be used to measure properties of objects and amounts.

Children can translate a problem or activity into a new form (e.g., a picture, diagram, model, symbol, or words) by applying emerging skills in representing, discussing, reading, writing, and listening.

Children will:

1. Participate regularly in informal conversations about mathematical concepts and number relationships.
2. Talk about their own mathematical explorations and discoveries using simple mathematical language and quantity-related words.
3. Show growth in understanding that number words and numerals represent quantities.
4. Begin to use symbols to represent real objects and quantities.
5. Make progress from matching and recognizing number symbols to reading and writing numerals.
6. Recognize that information comes in many forms and can be organized and displayed in different ways.
7. Begin to record their work with numbers in a variety of simple concrete and pictorial formats, moving toward some use of number symbols.
8. Begin to understand that simple concrete and representational graphs are ways of collecting, organizing, recording, and describing information.

Children begin to develop an understanding of numbers and explore simple mathematical processes (operations) using concrete materials.

Children will:

1. Develop an increasing interest and awareness of numbers and counting as a means for determining quantity and solving problems.
2. Match, build, compare, and label amounts of objects and events (e.g., birthdays in the week) in their daily lives.
3. Make progress in moving beyond rote counting to an understanding of conceptual counting (one-to-one correspondence).
4. Recognize and match number symbols for small amounts with the appropriate amounts.
5. Show progress in linking number concepts, vocabulary, quantities and written numerals in meaningful ways.
6. Use cardinal (e.g., one, two) and ordinal (e.g., first, second) numbers in daily home and classroom life.
7. Understand how numbers can be used to label various aspects of their lives (e.g., house number, phone number, ages of classmates).
8. Develop an increasing ability to count in sequence up to ten and beyond.
9. Begin to describe comparative relationships (e.g., more/less/same number of objects or quantities).
10. Begin to develop the ability to solve problems involving joining, separating, combining, and comparing amounts when using small quantities of concrete materials.

Children build their visual thinking skills through explorations with shape and the spaces in their classrooms and neighborhoods.

Children will:

1. Make models, draw, name, and/or classify common shapes and verbally describe them in simple terms.
2. Investigate and begin to predict the results of combining, subdividing, and changing shapes.
3. Begin to recognize and appreciate geometric shapes in their environment.

4. Begin to build an understanding of directionality, order, and positions of objects through the use of words (e.g., up, down, over, under, top, bottom, inside, outside, in front of, behind).

Early Learning in Science

Children develop positive attitudes and gain knowledge about science through observation and active play.

Children will:

1. Demonstrate curiosity about and interest in their natural environment that leads them to confidently engage in activities related to science.
2. Ask questions related to their own interest and observations.
3. Talk about their own predictions, explanations and generalizations based on past and current experiences.
4. Expand their observational skills (e.g., extending the time they observe, being able to describe and confirm their observations by using a variety of resources).
5. Begin to participate in simple investigations (e.g., asking questions manipulating materials; anticipating what might happen next; testing their observations to determine why things happen).

Children show a beginning awareness of scientific knowledge related to living and nonliving things.

Children will:

1. Demonstrate a growing ability to collect, talk about, and record information about living and non-living things (e.g., through discussions, drawings).
2. Begin to categorize living and nonliving things in their environment based on characteristics they can observe (e.g., texture, color, size, shape, temperature, usefulness, weight).
3. Use observation skills to build awareness of plants and animals, their life cycles (e.g., birth, aging, death) and basic needs (e.g., air, food, light, rest).
4. Begin to describe relationships among familiar plants and animals (e.g., caterpillars eat leaves).
5. Begin to describe the places in which familiar plants and animals in their neighborhood live (e.g., city, drainage ponds, parks, fields, forests).
6. Demonstrate greater knowledge and respect for their bodies (e.g., describe visible parts of the human body and their functions).
7. Observe and can describe and compare the motions of common objects in terms of speed and direction (e.g., faster, slowest, up, down).
8. Understand the way simple tools work through their play with common toys (e.g., wheels, pulleys, gears, screws).

Children show a beginning awareness of scientific knowledge related to the earth.

Children will:

1. Talk about observable characteristics of different seasons.
2. Talk about the observable properties of earth materials (sand, rocks, soil, water) and living organisms.
3. Talk about major features of the earth's surface (streams, hills, beaches) when found in the children's neighborhood and neighborhoods that they visit.
4. Begin to describe weather and its changing conditions (e.g., wind, rain, snow, clouds).
5. Talk about ways to be safe during bad weather

Early Learning in the Social Studies

Children begin to understand and interpret their relationship and place within their own environment.

Children will:

1. Include representations of various physical features (e.g., roads, bodies of water, buildings) in their play.
2. Use and understand words to indicate size.
3. Use and understand words for location and direction.

Children begin to recognize that many different influences shape people's thinking and behavior.

Children will:

1. Talk about personal information (e.g., name; family members; and, by four, knowledge of personal traits, address, telephone number).
2. Begin to recognize themselves as unique individuals and become aware of the uniqueness of others.
3. Show an understanding of family and how families are alike and different.
4. Talk about ways members of a family can work together to help one another.
5. Begin to recognize that people celebrate events in a variety of ways.
6. Grow in understanding of and respect for differences among cultural groups, as well as their contributions to society.
7. Participate in creating their own classroom celebrations.

Children show growth in their understanding of the concept of time and begin to realize that they are a part of a history, which includes people, places, events, and stories about the present and the past.

Children will:

1. Use words to describe time (e.g., yesterday, today, tomorrow).
2. Talk about recent and past events.

Children begin to learn about the reasons for rules and laws, the importance of a democratic process, and the responsibilities of being a member of a classroom, a family, and a community.

Children will:

1. Grow in their understanding of the need for rules for their learning environment.
2. Begin to understand consequences of following and breaking (disobeying) rules.
3. Identify people (e.g., parents, teachers, bus drivers, lunchroom helpers) who have authority in their home and early learning programs (e.g., who helps them make rules, who tells them when they are breaking a rule, who helps enforce rules).

Children increase their understanding about how basic economic concepts relate to their lives.

Children will:

1. Talk about some of the workers and services in their community.
2. Talk about some of the ways people earn a living.
3. Begin to understand that people pay for things with a representation of money (e.g., currency, checks, debit cards, credit cards).
4. Make simple choices about how to spend money.

Children increase their understanding of the relationship between people and their environment and begin to recognize the importance of taking care of the resources in their environment.

Children will:

1. Begin to identify what families need to thrive (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, love).
2. Participate in improving their environment (e.g., pick up litter, recycle, plant trees and flowers, conserve lights, water and paper).

Early Skills in Using Technology

Children explore and use various types of technology tools.

Children will:

1. Describe and creatively use a variety of technological tools independently or with peer or adult help.
2. Understand that technology tools can be used throughout the day.
3. Follow simple directions to use computers and other technology tools.

Children can name various components of computer systems and use various input devices.

Children will:

1. Name components (e.g., screen, printer, mouse, disks, CD, keyboard).
2. Use adaptive devices to operate a software program as necessary.

Children work cooperatively with others while using technology tools.

Children will:

1. Talk, ask questions, solve problems, and share ideas with peers and adults, when using computers and other technology tools.
2. Work cooperatively when other children are present at the computer.

3. Begin to state and follow rules for using the computer.

Children demonstrate responsible handling of technology equipment.

Children will:

1. Learn to keep foreign materials (e.g., play dough, water, paint, crayons, chalk, and small toys) away from equipment surfaces and openings.
2. Learn to handle equipment gently and avoid dropping items.
3. Learn to avoid turning computers off during operation.