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**Appendices**, including children’s booklists, resource books, and a grid comparing these standards to the Head Start Outcomes and SD Kindergarten standards can be found at [http://doe.sd.gov/contentstandards](http://doe.sd.gov/contentstandards)

The South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines were developed by The University of South Dakota through a series of contracts with the Department of Education’s Head Start – State Collaboration Office. (Grant # 08CD0008, 04, 05, 06; Contract # 2003L-193, 2004L-334, 2005L-378, 2006L-464).

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Introduction

The early years of a child’s life are of utmost importance and play a critical role in determining each child's future. Brain research has confirmed that experiences children have during the first five years of life form vital connections in the brain. These connections, and a wide range of early experiences, are important influences for later learning and social/emotional development. The South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines were developed to provide a compilation of appropriate skills and knowledge children can attain with support by the time they have finished their preschool years. Children learn these skills primarily through play and experiences guided by parents and by skilled professionals. Guidelines are designed to be used in all settings that include children 3 to 5 years of age, by preschool teachers, home and center childcare providers, parents, Head Start staff, administrators, early childhood special educators, librarians, and all who work with preschool-aged children.

Although these skills have been found to be achievable for most children by the end of their preschool years, each child is unique and has individual needs and characteristics. Children develop at individual rates, and variations in development are expected. Every child will not reach each of the benchmarks by the time he or she enters kindergarten. The guidelines are not intended to be a barrier to keep children from entrance to kindergarten. Just as we help all children to be prepared to succeed in kindergarten, kindergartens and the entire K-12 system need to be ready to support all children, regardless of the skills or background knowledge with which they enter. The guidelines do, however, provide a list of skills and understandings that we can help children develop in order for them to start kindergarten ready to succeed. Our goal is that all children will be provided with the opportunities to achieve their full potential. These guidelines can assist in designing curriculum for preschool children by outlining the goals for children to achieve. The guidelines have been aligned with the South Dakota Content Standards for Kindergarten, which are part of the K-12 State Standards. This alignment is designed to ensure a continuum of learning experiences from preschool to kindergarten and the elementary grades. Charts outlining this alignment are provided in the appendix.

The document has been written to provide support for professionals working with children from a variety of linguistic backgrounds. This would include children who are learning English as a new language, children raised in bilingual environments, and children who speak English and are learning their native language. Benchmarks and suggestions are written to recognize the fact that the child’s first language serves as the foundation for acquisition of other languages.

Assessing children’s progress toward achieving the benchmarks should be done in ways that are developmentally appropriate for preschool-aged children. Standardized paper and pencil tests are not appropriate assessment measures for preschool children. Children’s growth can be documented through collections of their work in portfolios. These portfolios could include work samples, drawings, samples of children’s writing, photographs, and could include audio and/or video tape recordings. Observations of children should be made and recorded while children are engaged in play and daily activities. There are also several developmentally appropriate, systematic assessment tools that can also be used to help assess children’s progress toward
meeting the benchmarks. These include the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment System, the Preschool Child Observation Record from High/Scope, and The Work Sampling System. Contact information for these assessments can be found in the Appendix. Children's assessments and progress should be shared with families so they can support their growth as well.

The South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines were developed by a panel of professionals and parents from the early childhood community throughout the state, including: childcare, Head Start, private and public preschool, kindergarten, special education, university early childhood programs, state agencies, and representatives from the South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children, the South Dakota Alliance for Children, and The South Dakota Early Childhood Council.

**South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines Panel**

Donna Alberts   Kim Booth   Gayle Bortnem   Sherrie Bosse   Kaay Bowman   Jaque Blaha   Vicki Byrne   David Calhoon   Julie Carpenter
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The panel wishes to extend special thanks to Marilou Hyson, Senior Consultant to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for her help in beginning the development of the guidelines and her continued guidance throughout the process.
Many resources were used in the creation of these Guidelines, including: “Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success” from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education; “Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children,” the Joint Position Statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and The International Reading Association; The Handbook of Early Literacy Research edited by Susan Newman and David Dickinson; The Creative Curriculum for Preschool and The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment System, developed by Diane Trister Dodge, Laura Colker and Cate Heroman; “A Framework for Early Literacy Instruction: Aligning Standards to Developmental Accomplishments and Student Behaviors” by Elena Bodrova, Deborah J. Leong, Diane E. Paynter, and Dmitri Semenov; Engaging Young Children in Mathematics: Standards for Early Childhood Mathematics Education edited by Douglas Clements, Julie Sarama, and Ann-Marie DiBiase; The Emotional Development of Young Children: Building an Emotion-Centered Curriculum (2nd Edition) by Marilou Hyson; The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework; other national reports; research; national content standards; and preschool standards from many states.
Guiding Principles

The following principles and beliefs about how young children develop and learn, outlined by the South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines Panel, served as guides throughout the development of this document.

1. All children are capable, competent and actively seek to comprehend the world in which they live.

2. Families are recognized as children’s first and most important teachers.
   - Families are respected and supported in the nurturing and development of their children.

3. Children are members of communities that value and support their development.

4. Teachers/Caregivers play a critical role in supporting and promoting children’s development and learning.

5. All children acquire knowledge and values through relationships with families, peers, and other adults.

6. Children's development reflects their cultural, linguistic, individual, family, and community diversity. Early childhood environments honor, respect and support the child's culture, language, family and community throughout the curriculum.

7. Young children learn through play and active exploration of their environment. They need large blocks of time to actively engage in a variety of activities.

8. Expectations for children must be guided by knowledge of children's growth and development.
   - All areas of early learning and areas of development interact and influence each other.
   - Children generally acquire concepts and skills in a sequential order.
   - Development is strongly influenced by the support and experiences adults provide.

9. All children are unique in their development and progress at different rates. Early childhood professionals must assess each child's development and provide experiences that nurture the individual needs of each child, helping them to progress in all areas.

10. Children's social and emotional competence is an essential foundation for all later learning.
    - Children’s acquisition of social skills is essential and can influence and be influenced by all areas of development.
    - Children's self esteem is a vital component to developing a healthy, competent individual.
    - Problem-solving skills help children in all areas of development and can best be acquired through everyday experiences.
Organization of the Document

The core of this document is a set of guidelines for what preschool children should know, understand, and be able to do in the areas of literacy, mathematics, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, science, health and physical development, social studies and the arts. Although they are discussed separately in this document, these areas are all inter-related. Guidelines in one area help to support growth in other areas of development. Each major area contains:

**Standards**, which are general statements that represent the information and/or skills that children should know and be able to do.

Each Standard area contains **Benchmarks** which are sub-components of standards that describe more concretely what children should know and be able to do at specific developmental levels. In the case of South Dakota’s document, the Benchmarks are written in reference to children’s performance at the end of the preschool years, usually at the age of five, upon kindergarten entry.

Each of the Standard areas includes ideas on how to set up the environment, or room, to enhance play and learning. There are also teaching suggestions that can be used by all who work with young children, including families. Although all children can learn from these activities, there are additional adaptations for individual learners. These individual learners will include children with special needs and any other children who will benefit from modifications in order to learn successfully. All children will be able to benefit from many of these suggestions. The Language and Literacy section includes benchmarks and suggestions for bilingual learners. This would include children who are learning English as a new language, children raised in bilingual environments, and children who speak English and are learning their native language. Rather than “English language learners,” the term “bilingual learners” has been used throughout this document to refer to these children to be more inclusive of all children in South Dakota. The **Helpful Terms** section at the end of this document contains definitions that may help in the use of this document. The appendixes contain a chart listing the standards and benchmarks, which shows their relationship to the Head Start Outcomes and the South Dakota Kindergarten Standards. There is also a list of resources and websites and a booklist of recommended children’s books that will enhance children’s learning.
Social/Emotional development is a key component of children’s overall growth. Educational and developmental research, including brain research has shown us that the early years in children’s lives are critical to their social/emotional development. These early years form the foundation that will be the basis of all future growth. Social and emotional skill development starts at birth, and like all areas of development this area is refined as children grow. Early relationships are key to children’s later social and emotional competence; forming secure attachments to caregivers is critical. It is important that we spend time with children in our care, responding to their needs and interests, listening and talking with them. This will help them see themselves as individuals who are worthwhile and capable of learning. Strong and respectful relationships between caregivers and families also support children’s development.

Children need warm, responsive, and predictable environments in order to thrive emotionally and socially. Adults can provide an environment that is relatively calm, predictable, positive and stable, with appropriate expectations based on the children’s age and development. Play experiences help with the development of pride, joy, and mastery of skills. As children play they learn self-control, turn taking, sharing, negotiation, and appropriate ways to express their emotions. Play also helps children to work through situations they may not understand and to explore roles that are unique to their family and culture.

According to Marilou Hyson in her book, The Emotional Development of Young Children: Building an Emotion-Centered Curriculum, there are important issues for us to consider as we scaffold or help children in their development of emotions. She believes there are several benefits to helping children understanding emotions:

- They are more likely to be sympathetic toward others and help others who are in distress;
- They are more likely to share what they have with others;
- They are generally more socially competent;
Preschool children who understand others' feelings have better academic and social outcomes.

Kindergarten teachers report that children need the following social skills in order to be successful in school: they can wait in line, take turns, respect others' opinions, listen when others are speaking, and express themselves in an appropriate manner. Children who have a positive sense of self and good problem solving skills are able to apply those competencies to their work with math, science and other academic areas.

Assistance with the transition from preschool to kindergarten can support children's social and emotional development. We know that helping children make a smooth transition into kindergarten will allow them to continue their social/emotional and academic growth without disruption. Visits to the new school, meeting the classroom teacher, reading books about kindergarten, and talking with children about future changes will help children approach this new milestone with confidence and enhance their enthusiasm for learning. More information on helping children transition can be found in the book, Successful Kindergarten Transition: Your Guide to Connecting Children, Families, and School, by Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraft-Sayre.

The attitudes children form about learning and school are very important. “Children's positive approaches to learning set the stage for later academic success and are a vital ingredient of school readiness. Children who enter kindergarten with enthusiasm, initiative, persistence, inventiveness, curiosity, problem-solving ability, and other learning behaviors are more able to take advantage of educational opportunities. These characteristics are not just inborn; children develop them over time in a supportive environment (Hyson, in press).”

Organization of Social/Emotional Development and Approaches to Learning Guidelines

We have divided the Early Learning Guidelines in this section into Social/Emotional Guidelines and Approaches to Learning. These two areas complement each other and will help children in all other areas of development. Some of the benchmarks seem very similar but will help children develop specific skills they need. The standards and benchmarks are followed by suggestions for setting up the environment and using specific, effective teaching strategies. These are simple techniques that preschool teachers, childcare providers, and parents can use every day with young children. It is important that all activities we do are developmentally appropriate. It will help children's social/emotional development if the activities we offer them are age, individually, and culturally appropriate for them. We have also included a section with additional techniques for children with social/emotional challenges, who, for a variety of reasons, require more support with their social and emotional behavior and approaches to learning.

The Guidelines are designed for children 3 to 5 years of age, prior to kindergarten entry.

**Early Learning Guidelines for Social/Emotional Development**

**STANDARD 1 — Self-concept and Self-Confidence**
Children demonstrate a positive self-concept and self-confidence in play and everyday tasks.

**STANDARD 2 — Regulating Emotions**
Children demonstrate an ability to understand and regulate their emotions in play and everyday tasks.

**STANDARD 3 — Respect and Appreciation of Similarities and Differences**
Children respect others and recognize and appreciate their similarities and differences in play and everyday tasks.

**STANDARD 4 — Speaking/Communicating and Oral Language Development**
Children demonstrate pro-social behaviors and social competence, and participate cooperatively as members of a group in play and everyday tasks.
South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines

Social/Emotional Development and Approaches to Learning

Benchmarks

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Identify themselves by name.
2. Describe themselves using several basic descriptors, such as gender and physical features.
3. Take pride in accomplishments.
4. Adjust to new situations.
5. Separate easily from family member or familiar caregiver.
6. Demonstrate self-efficacy by exerting independence in play situations and during regular routines.

Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Provide a housekeeping area (dramatic play area) with familiar, authentic materials children can use in their play, such as real telephones, pots and pans, to encourage independence.
- Designate places for toys, blocks, and supplies, such as cubbies labeled with children’s names, shelves for art projects, or a treasure box for items from home.
- Set up a “safe haven” table near the door, where children who have trouble separating may ease into the routine with play dough or simple puzzles.
- Include pictures and objects from children’s homes, cultures, and families throughout the environment.
- Display all children’s work at their eye level. Include children’s own descriptions of their work as part of the display.
- Set up a safe woodworking area with tools and safety glasses.

Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Read books about families and encourage children to talk about their families. Discuss similarities and differences.
- Provide opportunities for children to identify themselves in pictures and to identify their names from a group of other names.
- Let children know that you are interested in them, including eye contact (when culturally appropriate), smiles, and spending time with them.
- Provide developmentally appropriate materials and activities to promote learning, such as open-ended art materials, simple and more advanced puzzles, and a variety of blocks.
- Expand on children’s ideas and interests; for example, a child’s interest in dinosaurs may become the play theme.
- Prepare children for new situations (such as a field trip) with pictures, verbal explanations, and acting out what will happen.
- Greet children individually and get them engaged in activities to help make their transitions from home easier.
- Provide positive role models for both boys and girls. Read books that show positive role models for boys and girls.

Standard 1

Self-Concept and Self-Confidence

Children demonstrate a positive self-concept and self-confidence in play and everyday tasks.
STANDARD 2
REGULATION EMOTIONS

Children demonstrate an ability to understand and regulate their emotions in play and everyday tasks.

BENCHMARKS

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Use words to express their needs, wants, and feelings, as well as to identify the emotions of others.
2. Demonstrate knowledge that there are different ways of showing feelings.
3. Recognize they can do things to change the way they feel and how others feel.

Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Keep the mood positive, creating an environment where children and adults are happy and engaged most of the time.
- Encourage children to identify, interpret, and express a wide range of feelings of self and others by providing books, toys, puppets and activities such as drawing, writing, creative art and movement, and open-ended pretend play.
- Establish a predictable daily routine and post a schedule that includes both pictures and words.
- Set up a Safe Place Center in the room where children can go when they are having a difficult time. Place soft pillows or cuddly bears, and pictures on the wall of their family members for comfort.
- Have a Solution Center where children can talk out/verbalize their feelings with the help of an adult.

Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Use natural situations that provide opportunities to talk about your feelings, children's feelings, and how their actions might affect the feelings of others.
- Respond to children's verbal and non-verbal expressions of feelings.
- Talk with children about what is causing their emotions.
- Model feelings of frustration, disappointment, expression of needs, etc., and socially appropriate ways to express those feelings.
- Include words that describe feelings as part of children's overall language development.
- Give children something engaging and constructive to do when they have to wait. For example, sing songs, draw a picture, or tell a story.
- Provide techniques to help children learn to relax, stay calm and manage their anger and fears, such as breathing deeply, finding a comfortable spot to listen to music, and using words to express themselves.
- Consider teaching children a Social Problem Solving Process, which could include: #1- An active calming technique such as being a STAR (Stop, Take a deep breath, And Relax), #2- Sending good thoughts to the other child, #3-Talking it out or verbalizing feelings and emotions about the conflict, #4- Connecting with a hug, pinky hug, handshake or anchoring the resolution between children with a gentle touch.
**Standard 3**

**Respect and Appreciation of Similarities and Differences**

Children respect others and recognize and appreciate their similarities and differences in play and everyday tasks.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Express ways in which others are similar and different, such as eye color, gender, and favorite activities.

2. Play with a variety of children, regardless of gender, race, or ability.

3. Recognize that everyone has emotions and that other people may not feel the same way they do about everything.

4. Demonstrate caring and concern for others.

5. Respect the rights and property of others.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Provide an environment based on respect and caring through teaching, modeling, and guidelines.

- Provide a housekeeping/dramatic play area including a variety of materials that represent a variety of cultures and families, changing props throughout the year.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Discuss the characters in storybooks, talking about feelings of the characters, similarities and differences in their appearances, etc.

- Encourage a variety of friendships by providing small group play experiences.

- Do activities to help children get to know each other and help them recognize similarities and differences, including discussions on favorite foods, colors, holidays. Graph eye color, hair color, gender, and how they get to school.

- Talk with and listen to children, showing sincere interest about their lives and experiences.

- Provide books and music that depict a variety of cultures and traditions.

- Use music, literature, puppets, and role-playing to help children recognize the feelings of others.

- Invite family members and people from the community who model caring for others to share their cultures, traditions, and talents. Take trips to visit people and places in the community.

- Involve children in projects that help the community, such as recycling, visiting the elderly, and collecting food or other items for those in need.

- Involve children in creating a small number of rules for the group.
**Standard 4**

**Pro-Social Behaviors and Cooperation**

Children demonstrate pro-social behaviors and social competence, and participate cooperatively as members of a group in play and everyday tasks.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Develop positive relationships with peers and trusted adults.
2. Participate in group routines, and transition smoothly from one activity to the next.
3. Use materials purposefully and respectfully and participate in cleaning up and putting away materials.
4. Defend self while respecting the rights of others.
5. Identify qualities that make a good friend.
6. Play independently, in pairs, and cooperatively in small groups.
7. Initiate play and know how to enter into a group of children who are already involved in play.
8. Take turns, share, and be courteous to others, using words such as “thank you,” “please,” and “excuse me.”

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Work to develop a sense of community among the children and adults in your setting by reading books, singing and playing together. Allow each child in your care to have responsibilities such as setting the table, caring for pets, and contributing to the good of the group.
- Provide plenty of time and opportunity for enjoyable peer and adult interactions during routine times, such as snack time, hand washing, and clean up. Avoid hurrying children.
- Organize space, materials and daily routine to promote independence. Keep supplies on low, labeled shelves and use child-sized items to support choice, caring for and returning materials.
- Promote cooperation and sharing by having enough materials to allow children to play together.
Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Assume responsibility for establishing positive relationships with every child. Meet children’s needs in a timely manner. Provide children with a sense of personal security and trust.

- Invite children to participate in a variety of small-group activities such as cooking and reading together, and in large-group activities such as circle time and creative movement for short periods of time.

- Provide opportunities for children to play cooperatively in pairs and in small groups to foster friendships.

- Involve children in rulemaking and maintain clear limits.

- Help children initiate play with other children in positive ways. Model strategies to help children enter a group (“Can I be a sister?”) and give children suggestions on how to join play activities with another child or group of children, such as sharing toys and play ideas, offering to help, and giving compliments.

- Establish a transition routine, such as singing or playing a special song which lets everyone know they need to clean up or come to circle by the time the song ends.

- Promote nurturing behavior by encouraging children to help each other, reading books that demonstrate caring, and setting a good example.

- Engage in meaningful conversations with children. Listen to children and follow their lead.

- Encourage and acknowledge children when they use good manners, such as holding the door for a friend and saying “please,” “thank you” and “excuse me”. Model good manners and be sensitive to cultural practices.

- Encourage children to express their needs with words. Model appropriate language, such as “May I please have that toy.”
**Approaches to Learning**

**Early Learning Guidelines for Approaches to Learning**

**STANDARD 1 — Curiosity and Eagerness**
Children demonstrate curiosity and eagerness in play and everyday tasks.

**STANDARD 2 — Initiative and Persistence**
Children demonstrate initiative and persistence in play and everyday tasks.

**STANDARD 3 — Problem Solving and Reflection**
Children use problem solving and reflection in play and everyday tasks.

**STANDARD 4 — Invention and Imagination**
Children use invention and imagination in play and everyday tasks.
**Standard 1**

**Curiosity and Eagerness**

Children demonstrate a positive self-concept and self-confidence in play and everyday tasks.

**Benchmarks**

*By the end of their preschool years, most children will:*

1. Choose to participate in a wide variety of activities and demonstrate willingness to try new experiences.
2. Ask questions to find answers and wonder why.
3. Demonstrate eagerness to find out more about other people and to discover new things in the environment.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Regularly add new materials to the environment that will engage children’s interest and encourage them to try new experiences and ask questions.
- Provide children with adequate time to fully explore materials both indoors and outside.
- Provide many opportunities throughout the day for children to be in control of their environment and to succeed in whatever task they are working on.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Model conversation skills throughout the day. Have rich conversations with children, responding to their ideas, interests, questions, and concerns.
- Encourage children to listen carefully to others, ask questions of one another, share, and compare ideas.
- Talk with children at their eye level and use facial expressions and tone of voice to capture their interest.
- Read stories to children and encourage them to ask questions.
- Communicate that mistakes are accepted and can be fixed by responding calmly, relating to the situation, and offering solutions. For example, if a child spills paint, say, “When I spill something, I clean it up with some wet towels. Let’s get some.”
- Show genuine interest and curiosity in materials, objects, and activities. Be a role model, showing how to approach new situations and engage in learning.
- Support children’s exploration and discovery.
- Combine new materials and activities with familiar ones to allow children to explore changes, and then to return to activities they are comfortable with when needed.
- Let children watch new activities from a distance and participate over time.
**STANDARD 2**  
**INITIATIVE AND PERSISTENCE**  
Children demonstrate initiative and persistence in play and everyday tasks.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Demonstrate persistence by working toward completing tasks, and sustain attention and focus on activities.
2. Select and engage in activities, moving independently from one activity to another, and demonstrate self-direction when making choices.
3. Demonstrate self-help skills, including selecting toys and materials to use in activities and returning them when finished.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Design the room using interest areas or centers where children can make choices. Organize the environment so that children can choose materials and put them away on their own by keeping supplies on low shelves, using child-sized furniture and materials.
- Create an environment that allows children to independently select materials and activities. Give children long stretches of time to explore and play with materials.
- Keep some materials out for several days or even weeks to encourage more in-depth involvement and persistence.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Establish a daily routine that includes a variety of learning experiences for individuals, small groups, and large groups.
- Individualize activities according to children's interests, temperament, and developmental level.
- Give children plenty of time to play, create, investigate and complete tasks and projects.
- Without pushing, encourage children to keep trying (“Let's just work on this puzzle for a little while longer—it's hard but you are really trying”)
- Model persistence: for example, keep working on different ways to open a window that is stuck, and talk with the children about what you are doing.
**Standard 3**  
**Problem Solving and Reflection**  
Children use problem solving and reflection in play and everyday tasks.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Attempt several different strategies when encountering difficulty during daily routines or in the use of materials.
2. Demonstrate satisfaction or delight when solving a problem or completing a task.
3. Demonstrate thinking skills and verbal problem-solving skills (use self-talk and thinking aloud to solve problems).
4. Demonstrate resiliency and coping skills when faced with challenges.
5. Seek help from adults and peers when needed.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Be sure to have plenty of materials that challenge children’s problem-solving abilities (new, challenging puzzles; different kinds of paint brushes).
- Have a time for reflection in the daily schedule (e.g., use snack time for conversations about the morning’s play activities).
- Set up safe, engaging science activities and experiments that give children opportunities to use their thinking skills.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Encourage children to seek help when needed. Support children’s efforts.
- Talk out loud while solving problems or working through a task to model the problem solving process for children.
- Encourage children to talk out loud as they work through a task.
- Routinely involve children in thinking through real-life problems (e.g., how to clear a path through the new snow).
- Ask open-ended questions as children are working to encourage reflection.
- Help children use conflict resolution skills when they are working through problems with other children. Include talking about the problem, the feelings related to the problem and how to negotiate solutions.
- Teach children the steps involved in problem solving: identifying the problem, generating possible solutions, choosing a solution, trying it out and evaluating how well it worked.
- Acknowledge and celebrate children’s successes.
- Teach children relaxation skills, such as deep breathing, slowly counting and relaxing muscles to help them cope with challenges.
- Help children identify coping skills that will help them when feeling stress, such as asking for a hug, holding a blanket and taking a break.
- Encourage children to use mistakes as opportunities to learn alternative solutions and ways to complete tasks.
**Standard 4**

**Invention and Imagination**

Children use invention and imagination in play and everyday tasks.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:
1. Explore and experiment with a wide variety of materials and activities.
2. Make independent decisions about materials to use in order to express individuality.
3. Develop creative solutions in play and daily situations.
4. Engage in fantasy play, taking on pretend roles with real or imaginary objects.
5. Use imagination to try new ways of doing things and work with materials in creative ways.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set out a variety of art materials that encourage creativity. Change these materials periodically to give children new experiences.
- Add unique objects to the block area to expand play. This could include objects that fit with a theme or project you're working on.
- Incorporate movement and interest into the environment, using such things as fish and other pets, objects suspended from the ceiling, dancing, etc.
- Periodically rotate toys and materials to spark new ideas.
- Encourage divergent thinking by combining unlikely objects and activities, such as adding colorful fabric squares to the block area or artificial flowers to the sand table.
- Provide a variety of open-ended materials for children to investigate, including boxes, wooden blocks, and safe household materials, etc.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Expand children's experiences by exploring new places and introducing them to new activities.
- Encourage children to use materials in unique and creative ways.
- Allow children plenty of time to answer questions.
- Encourage children to ask questions.
- Ask open ended questions that encourage broad, creative thinking: “What would happen if… Why do you think… What could we do… etc.”
- Model positive approaches to new experiences. Demonstrate your own creativity and willingness to try new ideas, activities, materials, foods, etc.
- Allow children to lead play, even if it strays from planned activities.
The suggestions in the preceding sections on Social and Emotional Development and Approaches to Learning will allow you to support progress for most children most of the time. Even for children who have disabilities or other special needs, a developmentally appropriate, high quality early learning program will go a long way toward building the foundation for positive behavior. However, there are some children who, for a variety of reasons, will require more intensive supports for good social/emotional development and positive approaches to learning. These supports may include adaptations in the environment, different teaching techniques, close collaboration and planning with a family, and referral for further assessment and intervention.

In thinking about children’s behavior, it is important to remember that all behavior is a means of communication. Children who lack age level skills to express their wants and needs often use negative or inappropriate behavior to communicate them. Caregivers are encouraged to explore why a child is having difficulty or exhibiting behaviors that are difficult or challenging. First, think about the answers to these questions:

- Is there a physical reason, such as health, vision, hearing, etc.?
- Where is the child developmentally; are there any learning delays?
- What kind of communication skills does the child have; are they sufficient to meet his or her needs?

All of these may contribute to why a child is having difficulty socially or emotionally. Challenging behavior is often the result of the lack of some type of skill, which could include lack of language, social, or physical skills.

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) suggests promoting children’s social and emotional development as a means of preventing challenging behaviors. They suggest using the Teaching Pyramid that provides a model for supporting social competences and preventing challenging behavior in young children.

The Teaching Pyramid from The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning at http://csefel.uiuc.edu
Positive Relationships with Children, Families and Colleagues

Establishing positive relationships with children, families, and colleagues is the foundation for a quality program for young children. When children know that we care about them they may feel better about themselves, learn more, and have less need to act out. They are also more likely to respond to adults they have a relationship with, and may act in ways to get even more positive attention from them. Encouraging children to form relationships with their peers will also help to promote positive behaviors. Having a mutual working relationship with families and colleagues helps us work collaboratively for the good of each child. There are many things we can do to build collaborative relationships, including:

• Spend time with children and families to get to know them. Greet them when they arrive each day.
• Play with children in small groups and individually; enjoy your time together.
• Make use of snack time, outdoor play, and other times of the day for enjoyable conversations.
• Give children encouragement and praise for their positive behavior and activities. Give high-fives, thumbs-up, and hugs for their accomplishments and good behavior.
• Talk to children about their interests and share your own. Listen to children.
• Write notes or make phone calls to families to share children’s accomplishments and good behavior.
• Invite families to join you for a celebration and let them know they are welcome to volunteer, join you on fieldtrips, or share in other activities.

Creating Supportive Environments

For many children, having a safe, nurturing environment, as well as planned support and interactions throughout the day, will help them increase self-esteem, confidence, and positive behaviors. Specific environmental supports include:

• Make sure the environment has many engaging activities that are appropriate for all children’s developmental levels. Rotate and change materials to maintain children’s interest. Arrange the room into interest areas or centers, using furniture, carpet squares and colored tape to establish boundaries and promote positive behavior.
• Redirect children to other activities when appropriate if they are having behavior problems in a particular area or activity.
• Reduce frustration and encourage engagement by making sure all children can participate at the same level (for example: children in wheelchairs). Materials such as standers and adapted seating and supports can be used.
• Reduce excessive visual and auditory stimulation. For some children having too much available is distracting and can lead to inappropriate or negative behavior.
• Develop a schedule that promotes engagement and success, with a mix of large and small groups, and large blocks of time for children to choose activities in interest areas. Limit time that children are required to sit still and listen.
• Let children know about transitions that are about to occur. Let them know how much time they have before they need to stop what they are doing. Use timers to indicate transition times, such as clean-up time, lunchtime, etc. Use both visual and auditory types of timers. Minimize time children have to wait, and make sure children have something to do while they are waiting, including singing and fingerplays.
Social and Emotional Teaching Strategies

Teaching children social and emotional skills will help them with using appropriate behaviors. Children need to be able to identify feelings in themselves and others, learn anger and impulse control, problem solving, and how to form friendships. Many children will need to be taught these skills and have opportunities to practice them. We can teach children words associated with emotions and display pictures of feelings and emotions. Having mirrors available at children’s level allows them to see themselves and practice expressing feelings. Children also benefit from learning how to relax and calm themselves by activities such as:

- Counting slowly;
- Taking deep breaths, including the STAR technique of Stop, Take a deep breath, And Relax;
- Going to an adult for comfort.

Talk with children about the fact that they are safe with you. “You are safe here. Breathe with me to help you calm down. We will help you.” Model breathing techniques with the child. The Loving Guidance Website [www.ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://www.ConsciousDiscipline.com) has breathing techniques and more information on meeting challenging situations.

There are numerous children’s books we can read that deal with common emotions and feelings such as anger, loneliness, and disappointment. The appendix lists many stories that can be used and others can be found in local libraries. In addition to reading to children, another strategy is to write social stories with children. This can be done by reading a story to children, such as *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry* by Molly Bang, and then talking to children about their own emotions. The children would then dictate their responses to the adult. Their story would also include ideas as to what we can do when we experience negative feelings. Children’s stories can be added to the library area. Another way to use social stories would be to write a specific story for a challenge a child is facing. The story would include pictures to illustrate the words and positive strategies to deal with that situation. The Gray Center for Social Learning and Understanding has resources on social stories at [www.thegraycenter.org](http://www.thegraycenter.org). Additional Resources can also be found at the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning at [http://csefel.uiuc.edu](http://csefel.uiuc.edu).

Some children’s behavior will improve if they have concrete reminders of appropriate social-emotional responses. One approach is to provide a visual means, such as pictures, photographs, objects, printed words, etc., so that children who do not have good verbal skills or English language skills can point to and/or label feelings, emotions, wants, and needs. This support will reduce frustration and allow all children to learn social and emotional skills. Visual supports also provide structure to children who need help with organization or extra time to make transitions. Some examples include:

- A visual or pictorial version of the daily schedule
- Posting simple rules that children have helped to develop
- Picture communication books, to allow a child to point to what she needs or feels
- Switch/Augmentative devices that allow a child to simply push a switch to make something work.

Many of these supports can be produced in simple, low-tech ways such as drawing pictures, taking photos, or cutting out pictures from magazines. Computer software to create picture schedules and communication systems is also available.
**Intensive Individualized Interventions**

Some children will still experience challenging behaviors, even after adults have worked to establish positive relationships, provide a supportive environment, and have taught social and emotional skills. For these children more individualized intensive interventions are needed. Positive Behavior Support can be used in many of these cases (PBS). This approach works to identify the events and interactions that precede behavior problems, develops strategies to prevent future problems, and teaches children new ways to respond. Teachers, families, and other support personnel work together to assess and then form a plan to support the child and teach him or her new skills. For more information read “The Teaching Pyramid: A Model for Supporting Social Competence and Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children” by Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, and Strain in the July, 2003 issue of *Young Children* and go to The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning at [http://csefel.uiuc.edu](http://csefel.uiuc.edu).

Seeking additional help from professionals with expertise can help with Positive Behavior Support or any other intervention necessary. There are community resources to help you. For help in locating these resources contact your local school, health professionals, or The SD Office of Child Care Services. Seeking outside help is important if a child is experiencing any kind of delay in their development. Early intervention helps overcome delays and difficulties and is much more effective than waiting until children are older.
The South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines for Language and Literacy are based on research regarding the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that lead children to be successful readers and writers. Research has indicated that successful young readers and writers in elementary school have several characteristics in common:

1) They have Phonological Awareness (including the ability to hear and distinguish individual sounds in spoken words and the ability to rhyme);
2) They understand the Alphabetic Principle (the concept that the sounds of speech can be represented by one or more letters of the alphabet), and have letter name knowledge;
3) They have good vocabulary, including good oral language comprehension and the ability to use words to express themselves;
4) They can comprehend or understand what they read;
5) They have good fluency;
6) They use invented spelling;
7) They have interest and motivation to read for a variety of purposes.

The South Dakota Guidelines for Language and Literacy will build the foundation that will help children develop these characteristics. Some of these characteristics can be seen even before kindergarten entry, while others will develop later, given a good early foundation. Children will become more successful readers and writers if we help them develop an interest and enjoyment in books, reading, and writing, in addition to acquiring skills and strategies. The Guidelines are designed for children 3 to 5 years of age, prior to kindergarten entry. The guidelines are aligned with the SD Kindergarten Content Standards in Language and Literacy.
**Learning New Languages**

Brain research has been very clear that learning new languages is much easier if we begin early in life. During the first years of life connections are being formed in the brain that allow learning to take place. When children hear the sounds of language they form connections in the brain that allow further learning in that language to take place. If children do not hear a language in the early years and form these connections it will be much harder for them to learn it later.

The American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages and the Center for Applied Linguistics list several **Benefits of Being Bilingual** and state that:

> “Learning a second language at an early age…
> • Has a positive effect on intellectual growth.
> • Enriches and enhances a child’s mental development.
> • Leaves students with more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening.
> • Improves a child’s understanding of his/her native language.
> • Gives a child the ability to communicate with people s/he would otherwise not have the chance to know.
> • Opens the door to other cultures and helps a child understand and appreciate people from other countries.
> • Gives a student a head start in language requirements for later education.”

(www.actfl.org).

When considering teaching a new language, think about which language is most appropriate for your children and community. If there are a large number of Spanish speakers in the community, Spanish would be a natural choice. Ideally, you could teach a few words in other languages as well, such as French or German.

This section also contains benchmarks for children who are learning English as a new language. As we help children learn English, it is important that we support their home language and let children and families know we respect their home language. Children’s competence in their first language supports the learning of a new language.

**Early Learning Guidelines for Language and Literacy**

**STANDARD 1 — Reading**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children use skills and strategies to get meaning from print.

**STANDARD 2 — Writing**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children use writing and drawing as means of communication.

**STANDARD 3 — Listening and Phonological Awareness**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children listen, identify, and respond to environmental sounds, directions and conversations, and have phonological awareness.

**STANDARD 4 — Speaking/Communicating and Oral Language Development**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children successfully communicate for multiple purposes.

**STANDARD 5 — Learning New Languages**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding that there are multiple languages and begin to communicate in a language other than their home language.
Standard 1 — Reading

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children use skills and strategies to get meaning from print.

Benchmarks

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:
1. Demonstrate motivation, interest and enjoyment in books, reading, and acting out stories while engaged in play.
2. Demonstrate book-handling skills, such as holding a book right-side up and turning pages from front to back.
3. Recognize familiar environmental print, such as “STOP” signs, and realize it has meaning.
4. Retell a story from a familiar book and relate it to real-life experiences.
5. Make predictions of next steps in a story.
6. Demonstrate knowledge that a symbol can represent something else (e.g. a word can stand for an object, a name for a person, a picture for the real object.)
7. Recognize own first name in print.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of the Alphabetic Principle, the concept that the sounds of speech can be represented by one or more letters of the alphabet.
9. Identify at least 10 letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name.
10. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic concepts of print, such as knowing the differences between pictures, letters, and words.

Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- To develop the skills and strategies of successful readers, provide an environment filled with age appropriate reading materials, including both fiction and informational books, as well as magazines, charts, poems, and other engaging print that reflect the cultures of the children.
- Set up centers and areas that allow children to be actively engaged in literacy, including a cozy library/book area where reading is enjoyable, a writing area with a variety of paper, pencils, crayons, and markers; a listening area with books on tape or CD; a housekeeping area with notepads, pencils and books; and a computer if available.
- Post songs, poems, a schedule with the daily routine, etc. on charts or large paper using words and symbols and point to the words while singing and reading.
- Provide meaningful print in the environment. Allow children the opportunities to help label meaningful items, storage areas/containers, or designated spaces using pictures, symbols or print. Pictures and names of toys can be kept on shelves to show where they belong. Use children’s names and photos to label their cubbies/personal spaces/pictures, etc.
- Add many hands-on materials to various centers throughout the environment, including magnetic letters, alphabet blocks, and materials children can use to form letters, such as play dough and pipe cleaners.
Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Provide time in the daily schedule for large and small group activities, and large amounts of time for children to select from a variety of activities at centers or interest areas.

- Involve children in regular story time experiences which include exposure to books, finger-plays, poems, songs, rhymes, puppets, dramatic play, repeated readings of familiar text, and acting out familiar stories.

- Encourage children to read repetitive, familiar parts of stories in simple, predictable books, which have only a few words on each page, like *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*

- Ask children to predict what a story might be about after showing them the cover of the book; during the story occasionally ask them to predict what might come next in the story.

- Talk about the “beginning” and “end” of books. Run your finger under words as you read them so children can see that reading proceeds from left to right.

- Demonstrate your own enjoyment, interest, and motivation to read in a variety of ways, showing children that reading is fun and useful.

- Read high-quality books to individuals and small groups, making sure the books avoid stereotypes and reflect children’s interests, culture and home language.

- Frequently read and sing with books like *Mary Had a Little Lamb* and *The Wheels on the Bus* that contain words to songs. Sing the alphabet song while pointing to the letters.

- Engage children in making books that they can read independently. Children can collect pictures of familiar brand names (such as the front of cereal boxes), photos of children in the group with their names, photos of familiar signs, cultural events, etc. These books can be made from photo albums or stiff paper stapled together.

- Talk about some of the interesting words found in books as you read to children to help build their vocabulary.
**Standard 2 – Writing**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children use writing and drawing as means of communication.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Demonstrate motivation to draw and write during play, experimenting with writing tools, such as pencils, crayons, markers, and the computer keyboard.

2. Demonstrate understanding that their spoken words can be represented with written letters or symbols as they dictate.

3. Use scribbling and drawing to represent their ideas and then begin to use letters and developmental or invented spelling of words to communicate a message.

4. Attempt to write their own names using a variety of materials.

5. Use environmental print (such as signs, labels on food, and general print around them) to help in their writing, and ask adults for help in writing messages, lists, and stories.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Create a writing center/writing area with writing tools such as stamps, paper, envelopes, writing tablets, alphabets, over-sized paper, an old typewriter, crayons of various sizes and shapes, and other writing materials.

- Provide pencils, markers, crayons, paper, chalk, chalkboards, computer keyboards, stencils, and rubber stamps with washable ink in centers/interest areas throughout the room, including the block area, dramatic play area, art area and others.

- Provide centers where children can experiment with writing letters and words in shaving cream, salt, play-dough, etc.

- Occasionally change the dramatic play area into a post office to encourage children to write to parents and other children.

- Label common objects in the room and items children bring to share from home.
Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Model writing whenever possible for children, such as during attendance, lunch count, making lists, writing reminders, noting changes on a message board or writing other messages.

- Think out loud as you write with the children so they can understand the process you go through to write. Say letters out loud as you write them from time to time.

- Demonstrate your own enjoyment, interest, and motivation to write for a variety of reasons, such as making lists, showing children that writing is fun and useful.

- Provide dictation opportunities such as “What would you like to say in your card to your mom?” or “Tell me what you like to do outside and I’ll write it down.” Read the writing back to the child to strengthen the connection between the printed and spoken word.

- Offer shared writing experiences to small groups of children, writing down their ideas on a large piece of paper for all to see, with ideas such as “Let’s make a list of things we saw on our field trip.” Take pictures of the experiences and write captions to go with the pictures or compile pictures to create a book.

- Write songs and poems on charts with the children to share while singing and reading.

- Write the child’s name on artwork and encourage them to write their own name.

- Encourage children to dictate titles for their artwork and/or write short stories to accompanying their artwork.
**Standard 3**

**Listening and Phonological Awareness**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children listen, identify, and respond to environmental sounds, directions and conversations, and have phonological awareness.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:
1. Listen and respond to conversations with adults and other children during play.
2. Identify sounds and words in their daily environment.
3. Listen attentively to books and stories.
4. Repeat familiar songs, rhymes, and phrases from favorite storybooks.
5. Demonstrate understanding of an increasingly rich vocabulary.
6. Follow simple directions with two or more steps.
7. Recognize some rhyming sounds.
8. Demonstrate the ability to hear individual parts of words and separate the parts using clapping, finger snapping, or other movement (e.g., clapping out each syllable of pup-py, di-no-saur.)
9. Identify words that begin with the same sound from a small group of words.
10. Repeat spoken words when requested.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up a listening area/center where children can listen to books on tape, music, etc.
- Play a variety of music, including multicultural and children’s songs and taped environmental sounds.
- Establish daily routines in which you give simple directions for children to follow (“First, let’s pick up all the blocks, and then come sit on the rug”)

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Read a variety of culturally diverse books, poems, and nursery rhymes with children.
- Provide experiences that help children learn new words, such as taking field trips and sharing interesting objects.
- Create many opportunities to have conversations with individual children or small groups, during play, and also at snack time, lunch, and during other routines.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for children to talk and listen to each other.
- Play clapping games to help children be able to hear and identify separate sounds/syllables in words, such as clapping with the sounds in their name Ma-ri-a. Use musical instruments to play individual sounds heard in the words of songs.
- Play games that focus on the beginning sounds of words, words that start with the same sounds, as well as words that rhyme.
**Standard 4**

**Speaking/Communicating and Oral Language Development**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children successfully communicate for multiple purposes.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Play with the sounds of language, repeating rhymes, songs, poems and fingerplays.
2. Use an increasingly rich vocabulary.
3. Demonstrate motivation to communicate in play and everyday activities.
4. Provide meaningful responses to questions and pose questions to learn new information or clarify ideas.
5. Use complete sentences of varying length to express ideas and feelings through spoken language, sign language, or other forms of communication.
6. Initiate and engage in conversation and discussions with adults and other children.
7. Tell real or imaginary stories that have a recognizable beginning, middle, and end.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Provide a dramatic play area where children can pretend and role-play.
- Play CDs or tapes of children’s songs from various cultures, while children are playing in centers or interest areas; occasionally sing along and encourage children to join you.
- Set up interest areas with objects and experiences that will stimulate children to use descriptive language, such as putting different kinds of twigs in the science/discovery area.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Engage children in conversation while at play. Listen attentively; don’t rush children’s speech. Follow children’s lead in the conversation.
- Expand on children’s language (child says “ball”, respond with “right, big, red ball” etc.)
- Explain the meaning of words during conversations and story time.
- Encourage children to retell and act out stories you have read together. Ask questions about books and stories.
- Talk about things you are doing and the child is doing. Think of interesting words to describe details and actions. For example, if you are pretending to wash dishes, you might talk about scrubbing and scouring.
- Provide opportunities for children to talk to others, such as a sharing time, lunch and snack times, using smaller groups to allow for more meaningful conversation.
- Give children opportunities to play with sounds. Provide experiences with “stretching out” words by saying them slowly sound-by-sound.
- Use enjoyable books, poems, rhymes, fingerplays, and songs that children can repeat frequently.
Benchmarks

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Name at least one example of a language other than their home languages.
2. Say simple greetings in another language, such as “hola” (“hello” in Spanish) and “adios” (“good-bye” in Spanish) or use sign language to express a greeting.

For a child learning English as a new language:

3. Listen to peers and adults speaking in English to learn new information, and show some understanding of the language.
4. Engage in nonverbal communication with those who speak a language other than their native languages.
5. Play with the sounds and intonation of the English language as well as their home languages.
6. Identify names of common objects in the environment.
7. Use simple words and phrases to communicate with adults and other children.

Setting up the Environment to Help Children Learn New Languages

- Set up the environment to help children learn a new language. In the listening center provide books on tape or CD in other languages. You can also provide CDs or tapes that have simple songs and phrases in multiple languages. These are available on-line or in teacher supply stores. Ask volunteers, parents, or older children to record stories for the children to listen to, including the home languages of the children.
Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Invite parents and members of the community who speak other languages to come in and teach children a simple song and a few greetings or special words. Invite families to cook traditional dishes with the children and teach them the names of the foods they are preparing. Be culturally sensitive to parents; invite but do not push them to come until they feel comfortable. Instead work on building a relationship over time.

- Teach children a simple greeting, such as “hola” (hello in Spanish) “hau” (hello in Lakota). Then use this greeting with the children in the morning. Encourage them to greet you and the other children the same way.

  Expand this greeting to include “How are you?” ¿Cómo estás? (in Spanish)

  And responses that could include:

  - excelente excellent
  - muy bien very good
  - bien good
  - mal not good
  - and you? ¿y tú?

  How are you? Tokeske yaun he? (in Lakota)
  I am fine. And you? Lila Tanyan waun. Nis tok? (in Lakota)

- Teach color words and numbers in other languages, such as Lakota number words:

  1. wanci 6. sakpe
  2. nunpa 7. sakowin
  3. yamni 8. saglogan
  4. topa 9. napciyunke
  5. zaptan 10. wikcemna

- Sing simple songs in other languages, such as Frere Jacques in French, which will help children hear the sounds of the language.

- Another song to sing throughout the year with the children is:

  It's a Small World

  Es (Its) un mundo (a world) muy pequeño (very small).
  Es un mundo muy pequeño.
  Es un mundo muy pequeño.
  Es un pequeño, pequeño mundo.

- Use motions to go along with songs to help children learn the words.
Additional Strategies for Children who are Bilingual Learners

- Build relationships between parents and teachers so that children feel safe, secure, and comfortable. Involve families in all aspects of the program, helping children learn about each other’s cultures. Emphasize the importance of reading to children at home.

- Encourage parents to continue to speak to the child in his/her native language at home. Knowing their first language well will help them later in English language and literacy development.

- Help children acquire book knowledge and appreciation, print awareness, and phonological awareness in the language with which they are most proficient, drawing on family and community members as resources. These skills will transfer as children become proficient in other languages.

- Provide activities for children that help facilitate interactions between children learning the new language and those who speak the language well, but do not require them to speak until they are comfortable (safe havens), such as a table with toys and puzzles, a book area, or block area.

- Learn a few words in the child’s home language, and if possible, have a staff person available who can speak the language of the child.

- Invite parents and family members to come in to read to children in their home/native language. Involve families in engaging children in oral traditions and cultural experiences such as story telling and puppetry in their native language, as well as English.

- Ask volunteers, parents, and older children who speak the child’s language to write down stories the child dictates in his/her own language.

- Use songs to help children learn new phrases and sentences, such as a “good morning” song.

- Use simple sentences, repeat what is said, use gestures and facial expressions, point to objects and use everyday vocabulary to help children clearly understand what is said.

- Focus on helping the child learn new words in English that are useful, simple, and will help the child meet his/her needs. Describe your everyday actions aloud as you do them.

- Do not force children to produce language until they are naturally willing to do so.

- Create a buddy system. Ask a child who speaks the language well to be a buddy to a child learning the language. Explain to the child how she/he can play with, talk with, and support the child learning the language.
LANGUAGE AND LITERACY: ADAPTATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

The following adaptations will help support the language and literacy development of children who have a variety of disabilities. The adaptations may also be helpful for other children in the program.

- Ensure all children accessibility to books and materials in the environment.
- Keep hard cover board books (which have sturdy cardboard pages) on shelves where children can have easy access.
- Use computers with touch screens and interactive programs, such as “Living Books” software.
- Provide interactive books that allow children to push buttons to hear sounds in the story, and books with textures to feel. Consider adding textures to books such as fuzzy fabric scraps to books about animals.
- Use large print books.
- Use adaptive writing tools when needed, such as:
  - Oversized pencils/crayons/markers or sizes that meet the child’s needs;
  - Rubber pencil grips that fit over pencils or other adaptations to the writing utensil;
  - Adapted keyboards, such as IntelliKeys, or voice recognition software.
- Use different textures of paper to write on, including sand paper and very heavy paper.
- Provide opportunities for children to explore writing in a variety of materials, such as sand, corn meal, shaving cream, and paint.
- Writing on a slanted surface helps many children; a large binder on a table can create a slanted surface. Easels, writing on the wall (vertical surface) are good tools.
- Teach children a few basic words in Sign Language and use with familiar songs and phrases.
- Provide page-turning devices and book stands to hold books in place for children who need them. These can be purchased or made from household materials.
- Encourage volunteers from the community to assist in reading stories to individuals and small groups.
- Use photos of the child doing the routine activities of the day to help those who have difficulty with understanding directions.
- Teach children simple words and phrases in sign language and use with familiar songs and phrases.
- Provide communication devices, such as communication boards that have pictures the child can press or point at to communicate wants and needs.
- Use transitions between activities such as songs, sign language and fingerplays.
- Provide plastic toy phones (which can be made from plastic PVC pipes and corners) that allow children to hear themselves speak, providing immediate feedback.
- Do activities in small groups and individually.
- Pass around a “Talking Stick” or other interesting item that can be used as an indicator of whose turn it is to talk or share.
- Give children plenty of time to think about and formulate what they want to say.
- Provide opportunities for children to talk in front of a mirror so they can see the movement of their mouth and the sound they are making together.
- Provide interpreters for children with hearing impairments or those who do not speak English.
- Have sandpaper letters available for children.
- Provide individual dry erase boards for children to write on.
- Use many concrete, hands-on visual materials when helping children learn new words.
The South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines for Mathematics are based on current research regarding the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that lead children to be successful in using mathematics. In their position statement on Early Childhood Mathematics, The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) have several recommendations for high-quality mathematics education for three-to-six-year old children which include: providing time and materials for children to engage in play; enhancing children’s natural interest and curiosity in mathematics and their disposition to use it to make sense of their world; providing adult support; building on children’s family, linguistic and cultural backgrounds and experiences; encouraging children’s problem solving and reasoning through integrated activities; providing for sustained interaction with mathematical ideas; and continually assessing children’s mathematical knowledge and skills.

It is critical to provide early experiences that will help both girls and boys develop a positive attitude towards mathematics and self-confidence in their ability to solve problems. We can build on the various experiences children have had before preschool, and help them understand that they already know a lot about mathematics. We can help children learn mathematical concepts by talking with them, demonstrating with hands-on materials, and encouraging them to talk about the concepts with their peers and us, all in the context of play. Children learn geometry skills as they play with blocks; they learn about volume and measurement by playing in sand and water. They learn one-to-one correspondence as they help to pass out snacks to each child in the group. Through the experiences we provide for children, they can come to truly enjoy mathematics.
The primary resources that were used in the development of these guidelines were *Engaging Young Children in Mathematics: Standards for Early Childhood Mathematics Education,* edited by Douglas H. Clements and Julie Sarama and resources from The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and The National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The Guidelines are designed for children 3 to 5 years of age, prior to kindergarten entry. The guidelines are aligned with the SD Kindergarten Content Standards in Mathematics.

**Early Learning Guidelines for Mathematics**

**STANDARD 1 — Number Sense and Operations**  
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children count with understanding and use numbers to tell how many, describe order, and compare.

**STANDARD 2 — Shapes/Geometry**  
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children identify and describe simple geometric shapes (circle, triangle, rectangle) and show an awareness of their positions in relation to other objects.

**STANDARD 3 — Measurement**  
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children identify and compare the attributes of length, volume, weight, time, and temperature and use the tools needed to measure them.

**STANDARD 4 — Making Sense of Data**  
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children classify, organize, represent, and use information to ask and answer questions.

**STANDARD 5 — Patterns/Algebra**  
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children identify, repeat, and describe simple patterns using concrete objects.
**STANDARD 1**
**NUMBER SENSE AND OPERATIONS**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children count with understanding and use numbers to tell how many, describe order, and compare.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Count by ones to 10 and higher.
2. Count the number of items in a group of up to 10 objects and know that the last number tells how many.
3. Verbally count backward from 5.
4. Look at a group of up to 4 objects and quickly see and say the number of objects.
5. Recognize and name numerals 1 to 5.
6. Compare two groups (containing up to 5 objects each) and describe them using comparative words, such as more, less, fewer, or equal.
7. Use and understand the terms first, last, and first through fifth.
8. Separate a collection of 10 items into 2 equal groups.
9. Give up to 5 items when requested.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up a math area in the room where children can play with math manipulatives including materials such as Unifix Cubes, rods, pattern blocks, and counting bears.
- Add counting and number books to the library area.
- Make a number line with the children by writing numbers in order from 1 to 10 on a long sheet of paper. Keep the number line up in the room and use it when singing number songs, counting in other languages, etc.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Provide many opportunities for counting in play. Together, count the number of children in the room, the number of children wearing shoes that tie, the number of stop signs or trees you see on a walk in the neighborhood, etc.
- Practice counting backward. Use body motions such as standing on tiptoes when saying 5 and slowly moving closer to the ground as each smaller number is said, ending by saying 1 while sitting or kneeling on the floor. Use space shuttle countdowns, running races countdowns, etc.
- Count objects or children using the words first, second, third, fourth, fifth.
- Sing counting songs, such as “5 Little Ducks” and use fingers or other objects to indicate the numbers being sung, demonstrating subtraction.
- Use counting and number books, fingerplays, and number rhymes.
- Invite children to help pass out snacks, napkins, and supplies, counting each object as they pass them out.
- Do comparison activities, such as passing out five pieces of paper and three crayons. Discuss with the children which group has more. Use matching and counting to determine if groups have more, fewer, or the same.
- Do cooking activities with children. Write out the recipe so children can read it with you by using both numbers and pictures.
**Standard 2 — Shapes/Geometry**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children identify and describe simple geometric shapes (circle, triangle, rectangle) and show an awareness of their positions in relation to other objects.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Recognize and name circle, triangle and rectangle (which includes square).
2. Build and describe two-dimensional shapes, such as making circles and triangles with blocks and play dough.
3. Recognize that a shape remains the same shape when it changes position.
4. Sort and match objects with the same shape and size, and lay an object of the same shape and size on top of another to show they are the same.
5. Make a picture by combining shapes.
6. Take a shape apart (decompose) to make new shapes, such as finding two triangles in a square.
7. Demonstrate and begin to use the language of the relative position of objects in the environment and play situations, such as up, down, over, under, top, bottom, inside, outside, in front, behind, between, next to.
8. Create two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional structures that have symmetry.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Make sure there are a variety of manipulatives of various sizes and shapes, including two and three-dimensional shapes, cubes, pyramids, and objects such tangrams and nesting cups in the math area for children to include in their play.
- Provide many opportunities for children to play in the block area. Talk with children while they are playing about the shapes they are using.
- Set up areas where children can make shapes out of play dough. Talk with children about the names of the shapes they are making.
- Set out trays children can use to sort toys or blocks according to size and shape.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Provide many examples of shapes with varying attributes: big, small, long, skinny.
- Provide many examples of shapes in varying positions, upside down, turned on its side, etc.
- Provide examples and non-examples: “This is a circle, this isn’t a circle.”
- Talk with children as they play with objects. Point out that shapes remain the same even when turned upside-down or sideways.
- Play games with children that include asking them to put objects “beside”, “next to”, “behind”, “above”, “up”, “down”, “near”, and “far”.
- Give children opportunities to cover an outline with shapes without leaving gaps.
- Have materials available, such as flannel board shapes, paper, or blocks that allow children to combine shapes and create new 2 and 3 dimensional designs.
- Provide experiences breaking apart two- and three-dimensional shapes to make new shapes, such as breaking apart a square graham cracker to make 2 smaller rectangles.
**Standard 3 – Measurement**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children identify and compare the attributes of length, volume, weight, time, and temperature and use the tools needed to measure them.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Compare length and other attributes of objects, using the terms bigger, longer, and taller.
2. Compare two objects by placing one on top of another and indicate which object takes up more space.
3. Arrange objects in order according to characteristics or attributes, such as height.
4. Identify and use measurement tools, such as ruler, scales, measuring cups, thermometer, clock, and calendar.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Provide a water table or large plastic container of water where children can play with measuring cups and containers of varying sizes. Talk about which containers hold more, less, and the same.
- Provide a sand table or large plastic container of sand where children can play with measuring cups and containers of varying sizes.
- Make sure the math area contains a plastic balance scale children can use to compare weights of objects; plastic rulers; stacking toys; nesting dolls; and blocks of various sizes and types. Talk with children about which objects are bigger, taller, longer, etc.
- Set up a play store with a cash register where children can pretend to purchase play objects with real or pretend pennies.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Build on children’s curiosity about money, showing them coins and talking about their value.
- Bring in pumpkins of various sizes; weigh, measure and compare.
- Measure objects around the room with the children. Compare the measurements. Measure using a variety of non-standard objects, such as blocks, crayons, beans, or paper clips.
- Measure the children’s height at the beginning of the year and periodically throughout the year. Make a chart to display their measurements and growth.
- Measure children’s height with yarn. Compare the lengths of yarn among the children in the program. Talk about which one is longer, shorter, etc.
- Grow plants and measure their height each week. Chart this growth with the children.
- Give children experiences with various measuring devices, such as rulers, balance scales, thermometers, and measuring cups and use the correct names for the measuring tools as you and the children use them.
Plan cooking/food preparation activities, including the use of measuring cups, measuring spoons, clocks, thermometers, and balance scales.

Encourage children to place objects on a balance scale and determine if they weigh the same or if one objects weighs more. Also provide opportunities for children to hold two different objects and determine which one is heavier, and then label one heavier and the other lighter.

Share pictures and real examples of various kinds of clocks (e.g., analog, digital), thermometers (e.g., dial, mercury column), and scales (e.g., two-pan, produce department/grocery store, bathroom.)

Provide opportunities for children to play with objects such as wooden unit blocks and plastic Unifix cubes.

Use words to describe time concepts and sequence, such as yesterday, today, and tomorrow and the routine of the day.

Give children opportunities to put objects in order according to size, weight, and length, and recognize when an object is out of order.
**Standard 4**  
**Making Sense of Data**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children classify, organize, represent, and use information to ask and answer questions.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Sort objects onto a large graph according to one attribute, such as size, shape or color.
2. Name the category that has the most, least, or the same on a large graph.
3. Gather information to answer questions of interest.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up an area where children can sort a container of objects into groups and have children describe how they chose to sort them, including multicultural items.
- Provide children with a variety of materials with different attributes (color, size, shape, texture, etc.) to play with.
- Set up an area where children can sort objects, such as shapes or blocks onto a large graph. With the children compare which set of objects has more, less or the same. Before removing the objects place a mark on the table representing each object, then discuss the graph with the objects removed. This allows children to begin to see how abstract symbols can represent a real object.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Make a large graph by drawing lines on a large sheet of paper or an inexpensive, white shower curtain. Graph often with children, making graphs of things such as children's likes and dislikes of food or activities, type of shoes children are wearing, etc.
- Provide opportunities for children to participate in gathering data about a question, such as “What kind of pets do you have?” Children can place a picture or toy animal on a graph to indicate the type of pet they have. Ask questions about the graph once it is complete, such as “What kind of pet do most of our children have? Which pet do the least children have?”
**Standard 5 – Patterns/Algebra**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions, children identify, repeat, and describe simple patterns using concrete objects.

**Benchmarks**

*By the end of their preschool years, most children will:*

1. Sort, classify, and order objects by size and other properties.

2. Identify simple patterns in the context of play or daily activities (such as “block, car, block, car”) and use patterns to describe relationships between objects (“car follows block”).

3. Predict, repeat, and extend a simple pattern in the context of play or daily activities (“dish, spoon, dish, spoon”).

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Provide a variety of objects in the math areas that children can use to make patterns, such as counting bears, small cars, and blocks.
- Provide areas where children can sort objects or household items, such as socks, blocks, crayons, groceries, lids, recyclables, and toys.
- Offer materials in the art area that encourage children to create patterns (e.g., 3 colors of washable stamp pads)

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Point out patterns in the environment, such as patterns in a quilt or piece of native cloth.
- Set up patterns with children using common objects such as red grape, green grape, red grape, green grape, or sock, shoe, shoe, sock, shoe, shoe.
- Invite children to extend or continue patterns that have been started, such as red block, blue block, red block, etc.
- Make patterns with the children themselves, such as: boy, boy, girl, boy, boy, girl; or child sitting down, child standing, child sitting down, child standing. Have the children predict what would come next in the patterns.
- Play pattern games with the children, such as clap, clap, tap your toe, clap, clap, tap your toe.
- Encourage children to describe what they did first, next, and last in making their patterns.
Mathematics: Adaptations for Individual Children

The following adaptations will help support the mathematics development of children who have a variety of disabilities. The adaptations may also be helpful for other children in the program.

- Set up centers that encourage children to interact and work together so that more skilled peers can model how they are using math.
- Put out materials for math activities that every child can easily pick up and use, such as large beads and blocks.
- Make up songs and use rhythms when counting objects.
- Use objects the child is already interested in to encourage them to play, then prompt or model counting, measuring, weighing, sorting, etc.
- Use snack/meal times to practice counting meaningful objects and comparing amounts by saying, “Take three crackers,” “How many grapes do you have,” or “You have more cookies than he does.”
- Use verbal and physical prompts to help the child classify, count, or measure objects; for example, guide the child’s hand to put a blue square in an appropriate container while describing what you are doing.
- Give the child numerals made of various materials while practicing counting so she can hold up the numerals as she counts or place them next to objects for one-to-one correspondence.
- Use familiar items (toothpicks and marshmallows, children’s own bodies) to make shapes.
- Be sure areas for construction are physically accessible to all children.
- Provide computers with software that promotes and supports active learning and practice with mathematics concepts. Provide adaptive equipment when needed, such as adapted keyboards, voice activation, and touch screens.
- Provide blocks of different shapes and sizes covered with various textures to help children discriminate between shapes.
- Compare sizes of familiar objects in the environment, such as dolls, balls, people, cars, etc.
- Make large graphs out of real objects or the children themselves by having them line up according to a certain characteristic, such as their favorite fruit.
- Break activities down into individual steps, giving concrete, clear directions and prompts.
- Use routines to establish patterns, then delay a part of the pattern to allow a child to fill in the next step; for example, during snack, give each child a napkin, juice, then fruit, and let the child tell you what comes next.
- Begin pointing to and counting objects, then point to the next object to be counted, waiting for the child to provide the next counting word.
- Provide interesting toys (dolls and dollhouse, cars and garages) to help children practice putting things in, out, over, and under.
South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines for Science

The South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines for Science are based on the National Science Education Standards and are aligned with the SD K-12 content standards. Science provides the perfect opportunity for children to learn about the world around them and expand their interest and curiosity for learning. Children learn best through active engagement in meaningful, hands-on activities. Through science experiences they can learn how to organize information and solve problems. One of our goals is to help children to begin using the scientific method. This will happen as we encourage them to wonder, ask questions, predict, experiment to see if their predictions are correct, record their findings, and then reflect and draw conclusions based on the results of their findings. The National Research Council Report, Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers, reports that children’s observations and predictions are the foundation of scientific inquiry. We want all children to feel they are capable of participating in scientific endeavors. We also want to help children develop an understanding of and deep respect for nature and their environment. Children learn best when we include science inquiry throughout the year and embed it naturally into our day-to-day activities. Science complements language, mathematics, and all areas of development; learning in one area strengthens the others. Choosing rich, science-related topics, such as animal homes and recycling, for themes and long-term projects, can help children progress not just in science but in all areas.
Early Learning Guidelines for Science

STANDARD 1 — Science as Inquiry
As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children demonstrate their understanding of and ability to use scientific inquiry.

STANDARD 2 — Physical Science
As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children develop an understanding of properties, position, and motion of objects in the environment.

STANDARD 3 — Life Science
As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children develop an understanding of characteristics, life cycles, and environments of living things.

STANDARD 4 — Earth and Space Station
As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children develop an understanding of properties of earth materials, objects in the sky, and changes in the earth and sky.

STANDARD 5 — Science and Technology
As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children develop an understanding about science and technology and the ability to distinguish between natural objects and objects made by humans.

STANDARD 6 — Science, Environment and Society
As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children demonstrate an awareness of and respect for the environment and how it can be changed. Children demonstrate an understanding that people use science to explore the world and answer questions.
**Standard 1**

**Science as Inquiry**

As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children demonstrate their understanding of and ability to use scientific inquiry.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Express wonder, ask questions, and make simple predictions, such as whether an object will sink or float.
2. Observe and use senses to explore materials and their environment both indoors and outdoors.
3. Use simple tools and measuring devices, such as balance scales, thermometers, and rulers to explore the environment.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Integrate science themes and materials into dramatic play.
- Provide a science area where children can explore a variety of open-ended materials and use science tools, such as magnifying glasses, balance scales, levers, and rulers.
- Provide many hands-on experiences so that children are able to actively explore their environment.
- Take nature walks and observe details in the environment. Bring materials in and continue to observe, manipulate, discuss, and record observations.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Ask children open-ended questions, such as “What do you think will happen when you put this toy in the water?”
- Encourage children to wonder and ask questions. Model your own sense of wonder.
- Allow children to try to answer their own questions and solve their own problems by experimenting.
- Give children opportunities to taste, touch, smell, listen to, and see a variety of objects and materials.
- Encourage children to measure items with non-standards tools, such as paper clips or blocks, and with standard tools, such as rulers.
- Use thermometers to measure air temperature and the temperature of various containers of water. Encourage the children to describe the temperature as “hot” or “cold.”
- Extend activities that children are interested in over a period of days or weeks.
- Collect data and then make graphs frequently with the children, such as how many seconds it takes various objects to fall to the ground when dropped. Discuss and reflect with the children what the data they collected shows.
**Standard 2 – Physical Science**

As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children develop an understanding of properties, position, and motion of objects in the environment.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Observe and use words to describe physical changes, such as a solid turning to liquid.
2. Identify similarities and differences of objects.
3. Compare and sort materials according to one or more properties.
4. Explore ways to move objects, such as pushing or pulling and describe these motions.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Provide extended periods of time for children to experiment with block building and other ways of building structures. Make the area appealing to girls as well as boys.
- Add several different types of magnets to the science area. Also add different kinds of materials that will and will not be attracted by them.
- Give children the opportunity to play and experiment with mixing color, using different types of paints, adding two colors together, adding white to other colors, etc.
- Provide toy cars and trucks for children to play with in the block area, along with ramps and other accessories. Ask children to push and pull them and describe these actions as they do them.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Give children opportunities to play with ice cubes and watch them melt in their hands or the water table. Challenge them to try to keep them from melting as long as possible. Talk about the ice being a solid, and then melting into a liquid.
- Do cooking activities and talk about how the ingredients combine to make a new type of material.
- Do simple experiments with the children, such as adding vinegar to baking soda. Investigate other mixtures using water, flour, salt, etc. and ask children to predict what will happen each time.
- Give children objects or toys made of different types of materials, such as wood, metal, and paper, and ask them to sort them according to the material they are made of.
- Discuss positions with children as they play, talking about what objects are in front, behind, beside, or under them.
- Sing with children, asking them to sing very low and then very high, soft and then loud. Provide instruments that children can play and use to make different types of sounds.
- Make homemade instruments with children, using rubber bands around small boxes and dried beans inside two cups taped together.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn about light and rainbows by playing with prisms, flashlights, crystals, an overhead projector, or a clear dish of water in the sunshine.
- Encourage children to observe the shadows they make when they are outside playing. Place an object outside on a piece of paper and ask children to draw the object’s shadow on the paper. Go out several more times throughout the day and ask children to draw the new shadow each time, discussing why it might have changed.
**Standard 3 — Life Science**

As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children develop an understanding of characteristics, life cycles, and environments of living things.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Observe and classify living things as animals or plants and use words to describe them.
2. Demonstrate knowledge that living things have basic needs, such as food, water, and air.
3. Demonstrate knowledge that plants, animals, and humans live in environments that support their needs, such as fish living in water.
4. Recognize that living things, including themselves, change and grow throughout their life cycles.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Find or purchase animals such as caterpillars or tadpoles, create an indoor environment for them, and observe their life cycles.
- Plant seeds and observe changes. Experiment by caring for the seeds differently, such as giving one no water, putting another in a dark area, etc.
- Add stethoscopes, examples of x-rays, etc. to the science area, or incorporate into a dramatic play theme such as “hospitals” to allow children to learn about how their bodies work.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Provide examples of different kinds of plants and animals and talk about their differences and similarities.
- Take trips to places where children can observe plants and animals: a pet store, playground, backyard, gardens, or the zoo.
- Make a graph showing the different environments where animals live, including farm, forest, and river. Emphasize familiar environments. Children could add pictures of the animals to the graph according to their environment.
- Observe and compare non-living and living things. Talk about what living things need as compared with non-living objects. Although children at this age cannot usually accurately distinguish between living and non-living things, pointing out differences will help children develop this understanding over time.
- Play games where children can match pictures of baby animals and people to their parents.
- Sing songs with actions, such as the “Hokey Pokey” where children can use and identify various body parts.
- Play in and sort autumn leaves.
- Give children opportunities to show their respect for living things and their environments by caring for pets, respecting each other, and protecting the environment.
- Encourage families to bring in photos of the children as babies and compare them to how the children look today. Use the photos in a class book with permission from families.
**Standard 4**

**Earth and Space Science**

As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children develop an understanding of properties of earth materials, objects in the sky, and changes in the earth and sky.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Explore the properties of earth materials, such as sand and water, through play.
2. Name objects in the sky, including sun, moon, clouds, and stars.
3. Describe differences between night and day.
4. Recognize and describe current conditions and changes in the weather.
5. Observe and describe basic changes in the seasons.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up a water table or large plastic container of water where children can play with various objects, such as funnels, cups, and water toys.
- Set up a sand table or large plastic container of sand where children can play with various objects, such as rakes, cups, and other sand toys.
- Decorate ceilings with glow-in-the-dark stars.
- Add rocks and magnifying glasses to the science area.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Give children opportunities to explore earth materials such as rocks, soil, sand, water, and snow. Look at rocks and other materials on nature walks.
- Provide opportunities for children to mix and play with sand and water outside.
- Read books about night and day, stars, sun, moon, and space.
- Make stars, moon, and clouds from a variety of materials, such as paper mache. Help children expand their vocabulary by describing the various objects and shapes as they make them.
- Encourage children to notice differences between night and day by doing activities such as: turning off the lights; going outside; and allowing children to explore using flashlights, prisms, and sunglasses.
- Ask children to describe the current weather and keep track of the weather on a chart. Keep these discussions short and interesting. Ask children to make predictions about the future weather.
- Play outside during different seasons and observe and talk about seasonal changes. Play in the leaves and snow.
**Standard 5**
**Science and Technology**

As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children develop an understanding about science and technology and the ability to distinguish between natural objects and objects made by humans.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Use tools or objects in the environment to solve problems or complete tasks.
2. Use the computer and other technology, if available, to explore how their actions can cause an effect.
3. Identify some objects as being found in nature and others as being made by people.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Choose high quality, developmentally appropriate software, such as those recommended at www.childrenandcomputers.com. Use programs such as Kid Desk from Edmark, so children can only access programs you want them to use.
- Give children the opportunity to type words on the computer, including their names and signs and labels for the dramatic play area. This can be done using your regular word processing program with large font.
- Give children opportunities to explore new uses for materials, such as using an empty margarine container as a boat in the water table.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Point out technology that we use in our daily lives, including computers, CD players, and electronic toys.
- Use various devices with the children, such as a vegetable-peeler and an apple-peeling machine. Make ice cream with an old-fashioned, hand-operated ice cream maker or by hand, and then with an electric machine.
- Provide opportunities for children to solve everyday problems using objects in their environment, such as choosing to use a plastic fork to make stripes on a play-dough zebra. Ask children to evaluate how well their tool worked.
- Encourage both boys and girls to explore and play games with appropriate software. Many computers are equipped with a Paint program that also allows children to draw, type, and paint. Working in pairs encourages social interaction, joint problem solving, and language development.
- Encourage children to dictate letters to family members and type them on the computer. With the children, write or e-mail another group of preschool children and become technology pen pals.
- Occasionally have children help you record data in a chart on the computer, print, and display at the children’s eye-level.
- Talk about how the computer helps you. Describe how it helps you find information. Model for children how to look up a topic they are interested in or find resources to answer questions.
- Talk about cause and effect. Point out examples in day-to-day life such as: turning a knob to make a toy move or open a door; turning on a mixer to stir ingredients; and using switches to cause an effect, such as turning on a light.
- Take a walk and talk about which things are found naturally in the environment and which people have made. Graph and discuss your findings together when you return. Keep in mind that young children may have different reasons for their conclusions; the important thing is the discussion and reasoning, not the right answers.
Standard 6
Science, Environment and Society

As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children demonstrate an awareness of and respect for the environment and how it can be changed. Children demonstrate an understanding that people use science to explore the world and answer questions.

Benchmarks

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:
1. Demonstrate care and respect for the environment.
2. Demonstrate knowledge that their actions and actions of others can change the environment.
3. Recognize ways to recycle and reuse materials.
4. Demonstrate understanding that everyone can use science to explore and solve problems.

Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Set up a recycling area in the room where children can put paper scraps and sort other recyclables by type.
- Set up an art area that includes materials such as paper towel rolls and plastic lids for children to reuse in their art projects.

Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Choose interesting science topics as themes and long-term projects that children can investigate over a period of weeks and months. Engaging topics may include rocks, insects, pets, recycling, weather, seasons, and bubbles.
- Encourage children to clean up their environment by clearing the table and picking up toys and litter.
- Make recycled paper with newspaper or paper scraps by soaking the paper overnight in water. Blend the paper pulp in a blender and pour onto an old window screen. Allow several days to dry.
- Visit a recycling center if available.
- Encourage children to use both sides of a sheet of paper.
- Talk with children about the fact that science is the way we find out about the world and that both boys and girls are good at science.
- Talk about important inventors, astronauts, and scientists, including both men and women, such as George Washington Carver and Sally Ride.
SCIENCE:
ADAPTATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

The following adaptations will help support the mathematics development of children who have a variety of disabilities. The adaptations may also be helpful for other children in the program.

- Make sure every child has physical access to all science materials, including outdoor areas. Consider moving the sand and water tables to the floor if it will provide better access for children with physical disabilities.
- Supervise children when they handle living things.
- Use visual cues and body language to convey meaning.
- Add handles to tools to make them easier to grip and use.
- Break activities down into small steps and give clear directions.
- Help children participate in activities by asking them to complete one step at a time or any parts they can complete.
- Give children sensory materials in jars, bottles, or plastic bags to allow them to explore the materials without touching them if they prefer not to touch them.
- Use equipment such as a modified keyboard or mouse to make the computer accessible to all children.
- Provide picture directions for children to follow.
- Provide activities in a variety of settings. Allow children to work with materials such as the sensory table and art supplies both indoors and outdoors.
South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines for

**Health and Physical Development**

Research has demonstrated that Health and Physical Development contribute to all areas of children’s development. Healthy, well-nourished children are far better able to take advantage of learning opportunities; good health and physical well-being also bring joy to children’s lives. The preschool years are an important time to help children develop healthy attitudes and habits toward food and exercise, which can last a lifetime. Preschoolers can also learn basic safety practices that will help them avoid and respond appropriately to potentially dangerous situations.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has developed the following guidelines for physical activity:

1. Preschoolers should accumulate at least one hour of daily planned physical activity.
2. Preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of daily, spontaneous physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than one hour at a time.
3. Preschoolers should develop competence in movement skills that are the building blocks for more complex movement tasks.
4. Preschoolers should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for performing large-muscle activities.
5. Individuals responsible for the well being of preschoolers should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child’s movement skills.

NASPE, 2000

NASPE suggests that children should experience the “joy of movement.” They need an environment where they have room to move freely and explore indoor and outdoor
equipment. Children need to be active participants in planned and spontaneous movement activities. Preschoolers need time to play and make choices from a variety of activities in a risk-free, non-competitive environment. Through indoor and outdoor play experiences and movement activities, children build muscles that control their overall balance, running, climbing, and jumping abilities. Children need an environment that provides many opportunities for them to choose activities that will also help them develop their fine motor skills. Over time, engaging in these activities will help children develop the strength, control, and eye-hand coordination necessary for reading and writing and self-help skills such as dressing.

One of the most effective ways for children to learn is by observing others. Parents, teachers, and caregivers can provide good role models for children by participating in and showing enjoyment in activities and by making healthy choices.

**Early Learning Guidelines for Health and Physical Development**

**STANDARD 1 — Health and Safety**  
Children demonstrate healthy habits and safe practices.

**STANDARD 2 — Gross Motor**  
Children engage in play and movement to develop gross (large) motor skills.

**STANDARD 3 — Fine Motor**  
Children engage in play and interesting experiences to develop fine (small) motor skills.


**Standard 1—Health and Safety**

Children demonstrate healthy habits and safe practices.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Recognize and identify nutritious foods.
2. Independently practice personal care and self-help skills, including washing hands, brushing teeth, toileting, dressing, and eating.
3. Know how and when to alert adults to dangerous situations.
4. Recognize basic safety symbols, including stop signs, red lights, and poison symbols.
5. Follow street, vehicle, and bike safety rules, such as looking both ways before crossing, and using car safety seats and bike helmets.
6. Know how to respond safely in emergency situations, such as a fire or tornado, and in the presence of strangers or dangerous objects.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Provide a cooking area where children can help prepare healthy snacks.
- Include examples of nutritious foods in the dramatic play area, such as plastic fruits and vegetables or empty food boxes.
- Give children plenty of time and space to complete routine self-care tasks, such as hand washing, brushing teeth, toileting, dressing to go outside, and eating.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Prepare healthy snacks and meals for children. Expose children to a wide variety of nutritious foods, including foods from their own and other cultures. Offer new foods many times.
- Talk with children about which foods are healthy choices and which foods are not healthy.
- Give children opportunities during snacks and meals to practice pouring, using utensils, and serving themselves food.
- Point out safety signs and symbols in the environment and discuss what they mean.
- Discuss the importance of wearing bike helmets and using car safety seats. Encourage parents to bring bike helmets for their child to use.
- Practice looking both ways and using the crosswalk when crossing the street with children.
- Practice fire and tornado drills frequently. Establish a safe place to meet in case of a fire. Teach children how to safely stay with their group and caregiver while exiting to a safe location. Help children feel calm and secure during these drills, emphasizing that they don’t need to worry in case of emergency because they have practiced what they should do.
- Talk with children about dangerous objects, such as guns, knives, matches, fireworks, etc.
- Talk with children about the dangers of playing in cars, old appliances, trunks, or other dangerous areas.
- Advise children to never leave with someone they don’t know unless their parent or caregiver has approved. Teach them to call out, “This is not my mom,” or “This is not my dad” if someone tries to take them.
**Standard 2 – Gross Motor**

Children engage in play and movement to develop gross (large) motor skills.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Participate in play and movement activities and describe how physical activity contributes to their overall health (“Exercise helps make me strong!”).
2. Demonstrate loco-motor skills by walking, running, hopping, galloping, marching, and climbing.
3. Demonstrate stability, flexibility, and balance by standing on one foot, turning, stretching, bending, rolling, balancing, stopping, jumping, and twisting.
4. Demonstrate increasing coordination when pedaling, throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing objects, and hitting objects with racquets or paddles.
5. Demonstrate increasing body strength and endurance in play and movement experiences.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up the environment so children can choose activities that develop strength, endurance, coordination, and other gross motor skills. Include activities such as jumping, hopping, and throwing.
- Provide children with large areas to move and play in, both indoors and outdoors if possible.
- Provide safe tricycles and other safe wheeled vehicles for children to ride. Encourage parents to bring bike helmets for their child to use.
- Play music with different beats and from different cultures. Encourage children to move to the rhythm of the music. March and dance to the music.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Take walks with children, varying the pace and distance.
- Provide opportunities for non-competitive games and daily movement activities to allow children to practice motor skills repeatedly over a period of time.
- Encourage children to walk on balance beams, sidewalk cracks, and chalk lines on the ground both forward and backwards.
- Ask children to try standing on one foot for 5 seconds.
- Encourage children to stretch, bend, twist, and turn while keeping their feet in place.
- Give children opportunities to practice each skill in a variety of ways, such as throwing and kicking balls, beanbags, and other objects of different shapes, weights, and sizes.
- Provide opportunities for children to practice hitting balls with paddles, plastic bats, or racquets. Begin by having a stationary target, such as a large ball on the ground, gradually working up to a moving target.
- Encourage children to try new types of movement, such as skipping. Give them verbal cues, including “lift your knees,” “hop and land on one foot,” and “hop and land on the other foot.”
**Standard 3 – Fine Motor**

Children engage in play and interesting experiences to develop fine (small) motor skills.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Participate in play and movement activities that enhance fine motor development.
2. Demonstrate eye-hand coordination through activities such as stringing large beads and completing simple puzzles.
3. Practice self-help skills, such as buttoning, zipping, and snapping.
4. Display strength and control while using a variety of manipulative materials including scissors, pencils, crayons, small toys and connecting blocks.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up the environment so children can choose activities that develop fine motor skills. Set up tables with puzzles, pegboards, large beads for stringing, and small blocks, such as Duplos.
- Add dress up clothes, dolls, and doll clothes to the dramatic play area where children can practice buttoning, zipping and snapping.
- Set up an art area where children have the opportunity to use crayons, washable markers, chalk, paintbrushes of various sizes, scissors, and other art materials.
- Set up a writing area with various kinds of paper, pencils, markers, and other writing tools.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Encourage children to dress, button, snap, and zipper themselves.
- Provide activities that help children increase strength, such as putting old safety scissors and rolling pins at the play dough table.
- Do fingerplays with children such as “Where is Thumbkin” and “Five Little Ducks.”
- Work with children on effective ways to hold a pencil and scissors.
Health and Physical Development: Adaptations for Individual Children

The following adaptations will help support the health and physical development of children who have a variety of disabilities. The adaptations may also be helpful for other children in the program.

- Make changes to the environment and materials so that all children can participate. This might include providing an accessible soap dispenser and specialized writing tools or asking children to run a shorter route, making sure that each child feels equally capable.
- Ask parents about any special dietary needs. Talk with all the children in the group about respecting each other’s health needs and special diets.
- Talk with children about safety issues regarding special equipment (wheelchairs, walkers, feeding tubes, etc.) both for the child using the equipment and for those nearby.
- Provide a variety of balls that are easy to grasp. If a ball is too heavy for some children, use a lighter one, such as a beach ball.
- Attach a paddle to a glove for children who have difficulty grasping a racquet or paddle.
- Provide encouragement and many opportunities for practice. Use a variety of toys, equipment, surfaces, and settings.
- Provide clear, specific instructions for each step of an activity. Break down activities into smaller parts or fewer steps to allow all children to participate successfully.
- Make sure equipment is an appropriate size and at a level where all children can participate fully and safely.
- Make adaptations to writing instruments by placing masking tape, rubber grips or spongy padding around them. Provide thick crayons, and pencils and brushes with thick handles.
- Attach handles to objects to help children to grip them.
- Provide adaptive scissors, adaptive toys, knobbed puzzles and switches.
- Place a rubber mat or other non-slip surface under paper, puzzles, pegboards or other objects to help them stay in place while the child is working.
- Offer many strength-building experiences.
- Use eating utensils that are easy to use or add adaptations to handles to make them easier to use. Use rubber mats under plates to help them stay in place.
The creative arts provide an avenue for children to express their own ideas, feelings and thoughts. Through the arts, children can find enjoyment in creating with a variety of materials, listening to and playing music, moving creatively, and engaging in dramatic play. Children’s self-esteem increases as they participate in arts activities that encourage them to explore and create in a risk-free atmosphere. Research shows that when we give children opportunities to be creative with open-ended materials, their creativity blossoms. Requiring children to copy adult models, or asking them simply to fill in coloring book pages, does not foster this creativity. Adults need help in understanding that the process children go through as they create their art is more important than the final product they produce.

By giving children many opportunities to explore with a variety of materials and demonstrating art techniques, we can help children acquire the skills they need to be able to represent their thoughts and ideas. As they learn how to represent their thoughts and ideas, they begin to understand the concept that symbols can stand for something else. This understanding will help with literacy and mathematics understanding as they begin to make the connection that symbols, such as letters, can stand for sounds and form letters. The schools in Reggio Emilia are renowned for their approach to helping children express themselves and represent their ideas through their artwork. The arts can be integrated into and can strengthen all areas of the curriculum.

We want to help children develop an appreciation for the arts. This appreciation can broaden their perspective of the world. The arts can help children gain greater understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures, as well as their own. The arts may be able to deepen this appreciation more than most other areas of the curriculum.
Early Learning Guidelines for Creative Arts

STANDARD 1 — Visual Arts
Children use a variety of art materials for enjoyment and self-expression and demonstrate an appreciation for art.

STANDARD 2 — Music
Children engage in a variety of musical activities for enjoyment and self-expression and demonstrate an appreciation for music.

STANDARD 3 — Creative Movement
Children engage in a variety of creative movement activities for enjoyment and self-expression and demonstrate an appreciation for various forms of expressive movement.

STANDARD 4 — Dramatic Play
Children engage in pretend play for enjoyment and self-expression and demonstrate an appreciation for various forms of dramatic expression.
**Standard 1—Visual Arts**

Children use a variety of art materials for enjoyment and self-expression and demonstrate an appreciation for art.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Use a variety of materials for constructing, painting, drawing, and sculpting.
2. Demonstrate enjoyment and confidence in their ability to freely plan and create artwork of their own design.
3. Describe experiences, ideas, emotions, people, and objects represented in their artwork.
4. Use words to describe their artwork in terms of color, line, shape, space, and texture.
5. Demonstrate value and respect for their own artwork and that of their peers.
6. Show appreciation for a variety of artwork, including that of their own culture and community, as well as others.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up an art area so children can access materials independently.
- Provide a variety of art materials, such as paints, modeling materials, crayons, markers, chalk, and pencils.
- Have a place where children may store unfinished artwork to continue at a later time.
- Make available a variety of washable paints both inside and outside. Put out a variety of shapes and sizes of brushes for children to experiment with, including wide, angled, fine point, foam, make-up brushes, and toothbrushes.
- Provide many different items for stamping or painting, including household items such as potato mashers and thread spools, items from nature such as leaves and sticks, and other shapes and textures.
- Provide glue or paste and materials for making collages such as craft feathers, ribbon, fabric scraps, small pom-poms, and shells.
- Use mess trays and smocks or old oversized shirts to make cleaning up easier and to keep clothes clean.
- Provide woodworking tools, wood scraps, glue, and paint in a closely supervised woodworking area.
- Include books with artwork in the library area and hang pictures on the wall. Some libraries have paintings you can check out for extended periods of time. Encourage children to talk about what they like about the pictures.
Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Allow children to freely create their own artwork, focusing on the creative process rather than the finished product.

- Talk with children individually about what they would like to create, the materials they will use, and how they will carry out their plans. Encourage them to spend time developing their artwork.

- Encourage children to mix primary colors and predict what color will result from the mixing. Provide white paint to mix with colors to make pastels.

- Put out play-dough of many different colors, encouraging children to mix colors as they mold and shape the play-dough with their hands, craft sticks, rolling pins, and other materials.

- Paint with golf balls and tennis balls. Have children roll the balls in a shallow container of paint. They can pick up the balls with a large spoon or set of tongs and drop the balls on a piece of paper in a box. Children can tilt the box back and forth and watch the balls roll and the lines that develop.

- Ask children to tell you about their artwork, what they like about it, how they created it, and what they might like to try in the future. Express an encouraging attitude without judgment.

- Show respect for children’s art by displaying it at their level and making frames or mats to go around their artwork. Glue the artwork to a larger piece of colored construction paper, wallpaper, or tag board. Frames can also be made by folding a large piece of colored construction paper in half, cutting out the center and placing the child’s artwork under the frame.

- Expose children to a variety of art from the past and present.

- Share examples of prints of famous works of art from many cultures. These can be found in books, postcards, second-hand stores, the Internet, and calendars.

- Model your own sense of wonder about various types of artwork by asking questions about how the artists created their work and what messages they were trying to convey. Prompt children to ask questions as well. Provide opportunities for children to use similar materials and techniques in the art area to create their works of art.
**Standard 2 — Music**

Children engage in a variety of musical activities for enjoyment and self-expression and demonstrate an appreciation for music.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Show enjoyment and participate in a variety of musical and rhythmic experiences, including singing, listening, and using musical instruments.
2. Use music to communicate and express feelings, ideas, and experiences.
3. Notice and imitate changes in vocal and instrumental music (high and low, loud and soft, etc.)
4. Show appreciation for a variety of music, including that of their own culture and community as well as others.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up a music area with different types of instruments that children can play such as xylophones, rhythm instruments, triangles, bells, and multicultural instruments, including rain-sticks, maracas, and drums.
- Play a variety of music, including classical, jazz, and multicultural music, on a CD or tape player.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Sing often with the children in large and small groups both inside and outside.
- Repeat familiar songs often so children can sing them by heart.
- Teach children simple songs with repetitive refrains. Write the words on large chart paper and point to the words as you sing to encourage literacy development.
- Read and sing along with books that have words to songs, such as *The Wheels on the Bus,* or *Mary had a Little Lamb,* to help children acquire beginning literacy skills.
- Make homemade musical instruments such as oatmeal box drums.
- Use household items such as pots and pans and wooden spoons as instruments.
- Talk to children about how different types of music make them feel and what they like about music.
- Model your own enjoyment of music and the feelings you have while listening to, singing, or playing music.
- Encourage children to sing along and to play instruments in rhythm with recorded music. Talk with the children about varying the tempo from fast to slow and the dynamics from loud to soft. Use this type of musical terminology when talking to children about music.
- Invite family members and people from the community to come in and play instruments and sing with the children.
**STANDARD 3**

**CREATIVE MOVEMENT**

Children engage in a variety of creative movement activities for enjoyment and self-expression and demonstrate an appreciation for various forms of expressive movement.

**BENCHMARKS**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Participate in a variety of creative movement experiences, which could include dance and rhythmic activities.
2. Explore ways to move imaginatively with and without music, such as stretching, galloping, twisting, bending, swaying, marching, and clapping.
3. Use movement to communicate and express feelings, ideas, and experiences.
4. Respond and move to the beat, tempo, and dynamics of music.
5. Show appreciation for a variety of expressive movement, including that of their own culture and community, as well as others.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Build time into the daily schedule for movement activities (e.g., at the end of group time, or at transitions).
- Play music with many different beats and rhythms, such as marches, waltzes, polkas, Reggae, Latin, folk music and jigs. Encourage children to move to the music.
- Provide streamers, ribbons, and scarves for children to use as creative movement props.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Add movement activities to curriculum themes or projects (for example, in a project on fish, children can move like fish).
- Encourage children to listen carefully to music and move according to the beat and feeling of the music.
- Clap hands and pat knees in rhythm to songs or chants.
- Play rhythm instruments or clap out the syllables in children’s names.
- Sing songs or play tapes or CDs with movement directions, such as Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes and The Hokey Pokey.
- Invite parents and community members in to teach simple dances from a variety of cultures.
**Standard 4 – Dramatic Play**

Children engage in pretend play for enjoyment and self-expression and demonstrate an appreciation for various forms of dramatic expression.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Participate in a variety of spontaneous, imaginative play experiences alone or with others and create and engage in increasingly detailed and extended scenarios in their dramatic play.

2. Use dramatic play to communicate and express feelings, ideas, and experiences.

3. Use words and actions to imitate a variety of familiar stories, roles, and real-life or fantasy experiences.

4. Use materials and props to represent objects in creative play.

5. Show appreciation for a variety of dramatic experiences from their own culture and community as well as others, including storytelling, puppetry, and theater.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up a Dramatic Play area where children can act out a variety of roles. A Housekeeping area might include dolls from a variety of cultures, doll beds and clothes, child-sized table, chairs, refrigerator, stove, sink, dishes, pots and pans, pretend food and dress up clothes.

- Provide props for dramatic play that go along with current interests, projects or themes.

- Encourage children to act out familiar stories by providing props to go along with stories or nursery rhymes.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Take trips to local plays, puppet shows and other performances that are geared toward young children.

- Invite family members or people from the community to come in and demonstrate acting, miming or storytelling.

- Play with children in the dramatic play area by taking on a role, making suggestions, or demonstrating how to use new props or materials.

- Use role-playing during large or small group times to help children express feelings, discuss conflicts, or solve problems. For example, an adult could act out the role of a child who feels left out, and then ask the children for suggestions about how to solve the problem.
**The Creative Arts: Adaptations for Individual Children**

The following adaptations will help support the development of the creative arts for children who have a variety of disabilities. The adaptations may also be helpful for other children in the program.

- Make sure that all children have physical access to areas and materials.
- Use paintbrushes with large handles.
- Provide painting mitts or gloves for finger painting.
- Provide thick crayons, markers and pencils that are easier to grasp and control.
- Set up easels on the table or at the child’s level to help hold paper in place and to provide a raised surface.
- Use special scissors that children with motor disabilities can squeeze together.
- Attach musical instruments to a mitten or glove to make them easier to grasp and hold.
- Encourage children who have difficulty singing to participate in music activities by humming or some other vocalization or by playing an instrument.
- Encourage children who have difficulty with movement to move any parts of their body they can.
- Give children with hearing impairments opportunities to touch speakers as music is played, feel instruments as they are played, and to learn familiar songs in sign language.
- Support the creative expressions of each child to boost confidence and help children see value in their own work.
Social Studies helps children learn about themselves and their role in their family and community. In preschool we typically start work in social studies with the child and his or her self-identity. Next, children learn about themselves as members of a family, and then as a member of a community. This community may be their classroom, church, or neighborhood. All social studies in preschool should be personally meaningful to the child.

Many experts recommend integrating the curriculum to help children understand concepts and their interrelationships. Integrating curriculum areas can easily be done through themes or projects. The Bank Street College of Education recommends doing long-term studies or projects based on social studies themes throughout the year. All developmental areas can be integrated into these studies. It is important that these themes, projects, or studies have personal relevance to the child. Children can study families or jobs in the neighborhood, bringing in visitors from the community or taking walks in the neighborhood. A construction project next door may lead to the children becoming interested in the machines used, different types of houses, or buildings, and all could be excellent themes. While working on the social studies topic, children will also be learning new skills in literacy, mathematics, the arts, and physical development as they read books and do activities related to the topic. They will also be learning social/emotional and science skills, some of which are closely related to the Social Studies Standards.

We can assess children’s progress toward meeting the standards by observing the children and watching their interactions with other children. We can also observe them trying out roles in the dramatic play area, drawing or making constructions,
and telling stories that reflect their growing understanding. As with all areas we want to keep in mind that the benchmarks outline the skills and knowledge children may be able to acquire by the end of their preschool years.

**Early Learning Guidelines for Social Studies**

**STANDARD 1 — Families/Cultures**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding of self, families, and cultures.

**STANDARD 2 — Community/Civics**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be a participating member of groups and communities.

**STANDARD 3 — History/Time**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding of the passage of time and how the past influences their future.

**STANDARD 4 — Geography/Places, People, and Environments**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an awareness of their physical environment and its impact on daily living.

**STANDARD 5 — Economics**
Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding of how people work together to grow, produce, distribute, and consume goods and services that meet their wants and needs.
**Standard 1**  
**Families/Cultures**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding of self, families, and cultures.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Identify themselves as individuals and as belonging to a family.
2. Describe what a family is and roles that family members can play.
3. Share family traditions and daily routines and demonstrate interest in learning about the traditions of others.
4. Demonstrate understanding that there are diverse families and cultures and all have value.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Give children opportunities to role-play in the dramatic play area.
- Display pictures of children and families from many different cultures.
- Play music from many cultures while children are playing. Bring in instruments from a variety of cultures, such as rainsticks, drums, and maracas for children to play.
- Use fabrics from various cultures to decorate the room.
- Add multicultural dolls, clothes, and other items to areas around the room, such as the dramatic play area and math area.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Ask families to bring in pictures of their families including their children. Hang at the children's eye level, checking with parents first for their permission.
- Talk with children about what makes a family and what it means to be a good family member. Read books about many different types of families, including a variety of family members and cultures.
- Invite family members to share family customs, stories, celebrations, music, dance, traditions, and dress from their culture.
- Ask families to bring in recipes to share and help prepare with the children.
- Have children draw pictures of their families and, as a group, talk about similarities and differences.
**Standard 2**

**Community/Civics**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be a participating member of groups and communities.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Demonstrate confidence in expressing individual opinions and thoughts.
2. Demonstrate respect for the thoughts and opinions of others, even when different from their own.
3. Demonstrate understanding that communities are composed of groups of people who live, play, or work together and identify communities to which they belong.
4. Participate in creating and following rules and routines.
5. Take responsibility for simple tasks that contribute to the well-being of the group.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Have interest areas or centers around the room, such as an art area, puzzle area, dramatic play area, etc. Allow children to make choices about which areas to go to and how long to spend.
- Build in opportunities to discuss different points of view during group times or when a conflict arises.
- Have a Safe Place where children can go when they are frustrated by social situations. Include pillows, stuffed animals, and pictures of their families for comfort.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Involve children in making simple decisions as a group, such as voting for which snack to have that day. Help them see democracy in action.
- Talk with children about their ideas of what a neighborhood is. Take a walk around the neighborhood if possible, pointing out places of interest.
- Involve children in helping others, such as making cards for elderly.
- Ask children to help develop rules for the group. Display these rules with both words and pictures to help children see what is expected of them.
- Create a display about “Our Community,” “Our Family,” or “Our Group,” including drawings and descriptions of children, family members, and staff (if applicable to your setting).
- Help children develop skills as community members and leadership skills by having a job for each child, such watering the plants or feeding the fish. This will help child be seen as an important part and contributing member of the group.
Standard 3 – History/Time

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding of the passage of time and how the past influences their future.

Benchmarks

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Describe past, current and future events.
2. Describe their day and coming activities in terms of daily routines (first we..., then we...).
3. Describe how a past event relates to something happening currently or in the future.
4. Share stories or pictures about themselves in the past.

Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Ask parents to bring in pictures of the children when they were younger. Hang these up around the room with parental permission.
- Make a chart with pictures, showing the schedule for the day. Hang it up in the room where both parents and children can see it.

Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks

- Take pictures as you work together with the children on a long-term project. Make documentation panels with the pictures, art, and other work children have done to document things that happened during the project. Revisit the panels and discuss with the children.
- Take pictures of an event the children shared or ask children to draw pictures and then ask children to put the photos or pictures in order.
- Use terms such as yesterday, today, and tomorrow to describe events.
- Label days, or parts of the day, by what is happening, such as snack time, circle time, stay home day, swim day.
- Talk with children about past, present, and future as they are playing. For example, in the block area, ask them to tell you about what they built yesterday and today, and how they might add to it or change based on what happened in their past building.
- Have brief sharing times with the group where children can share events that have happened in the past (remember that to children, last night is the “past”—not just long-ago events).
- Ask children to tell stories about things that have happened in the past. Write down their words and read back to the group.
- Encourage children to retell stories you have read, including a beginning, middle and end.
- Make personal histories with photographs of the children, as infants, toddlers, and current photographs.
**Standard 4**  
**Geography/Places, People and Environments**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an awareness of their physical environment and its impact on daily living.

**Benchmarks**

By the end of their preschool years, most children will:

1. Describe where they live and where others live in relationship to them.
2. Identify various living environments, such as farm, ranch, city, town, and country.
3. Describe familiar places in their environment, such as a house, classroom, park, lake, or river.
4. Draw or build representations of familiar places with a variety of materials.
5. Identify various weather conditions and seasons and how they affect what we wear and what we do.
6. Name natural resources, such as water, soil, clean air, and trees, describe how they help us, and how we can be good stewards of the environment.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- In the library area, provide books of many different places and different terrains, such as deserts, mountains, plains, and valleys, as well as farms, ranches, cities and towns.
- Place posters on the wall of different geographic places.
- Add maps to the dramatic play and/or block areas.
- Add clothes, including multicultural clothes, to the dramatic play area for different seasons.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- When playing outside point out things that are over, under, up, down, near and far. Ask children to make these movements with their bodies.
- Take walks around the neighborhood to look at buildings, houses, schools, parks, playgrounds or other features. Observe different types of homes and/or apartments in the neighborhood.
- Go to a construction site if possible to observe workers building a house or other building. Provide materials for children to make their own representations of homes, including clay, blocks, wood working materials, paint, paper, and recycled materials.
- Take children to visit a market, restaurant, bakery, post office, library, home, or other building. Help children change the dramatic play area, to represent what they’ve observed during the trip.
- Show pictures and read books about homes and transportation in other countries.
- With the children, make a map of your room, your family childcare home, or your building, and a map of the playground, yard, or other nearby outside area.
- Show children pictures and books about various geographic places, emphasizing those that are familiar. Point out items, including bridge, building, hill, woods, lake, and road. Childcraft has a book called “I Love the Mountains” which includes Mt. Rushmore.
- Observe and talk about what we wear during different seasons and how the temperature changes. Talk about what people in different climates wear, especially if children have lived in or visited different climates.
- Discuss and participate in ways we can take care of the environment, such as picking up litter and recycling. Talk about and notice what happens when people don’t take care of the environment.
**Standard 5 – Economics**

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding of how people work together to grow, produce, distribute, and consume goods and services that meet their wants and needs.

**Benchmarks**

*By the end of their preschool years, most children will:*

1. Identify several community helpers and the services they provide.
2. Describe source of familiar foods, such as milk, apples, and eggs.
3. Express knowledge that money can be used to purchase goods.
4. Demonstrate understanding that people work to earn money to provide for their families and buy what they need.

**Setting up the Environment to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Set up a play store. Invite children to use play money to purchase things.
- Create opportunities for children to work together, for example to prepare and distribute a special snack for other classes.

**Effective Teaching Strategies to Help Children Reach These Benchmarks**

- Read books about Community Helpers, such as doctors, nurses, and police officers, emphasizing their helpful role and that we don’t need to fear them.
- Investigate jobs in the community, at home, and at school. Create pictures, charts, or dramatic play about these jobs.
- Visit a farm if possible so children can see where much of our food comes from. Read books about food and farming. Make butter from milk, and talk about how milk comes from the cow. If possible, create special ways to involve children who live on farms, or whose families lived on farms.
- Talk with children and develop hands-on activities about our basic needs: food, clothing, and shelter.
- Using children’s experiences as examples, discuss how people work and get jobs in order to earn money to provide for their needs.
- Invite parents and community members in to talk about their jobs. Prepare questions with the children before the guest arrives to help guide the discussion. Follow up with dramatic play.
Social Studies: Adaptations for Individual Children

The following adaptations will help support the development of the creative arts for children who have a variety of disabilities. The adaptations may also be helpful for other children in the program.

- Be sure that all areas, both inside and outside, are physically accessible to all children.
- When taking walks or field trips, plan ahead for any obstacles that may prevent any child from participating, such as stairs, grass to cross, or busy streets.
- Pair up children with a peer to complete jobs, such as watering plants or feeding the fish.
- Provide assistive devices for children who need them to dictate stories or share information about their experiences or families. For example, a picture board, sign language, computer, or other electronic device may help children express themselves.
Adaptations  Changes made in a material or activity to make it more helpful or usable for an individual. Adaptive devices, such as communication boards and page-turning devices can help children with special needs participate more fully in the early childhood program, and make better progress in the areas described in the Guidelines. More information on adaptive devices can be found at http://assistivetech.sf.k12.sd.us/early_childhood.htm.

Alphabetic knowledge Rote knowledge of the alphabet, beginning with singing or memorization as in the alphabet song, and progressing to pointing to letters and saying their names.

Alphabetic principle The concept that the sounds of speech can be represented by one or more letters of the alphabet. This is the knowledge that the written words are composed of letters that are related to the sounds of spoken words. The alphabetic principle includes an understanding that words that start with the same sound often will begin with the same letter.

Attribute A quality or characteristic of an object, such as size, color, or shape. With age and experience, children develop the ability to sort objects by attributes.

Author’s chair A chair in the classroom designated for children to use as they share their writing and illustrations with the other children and adults in the group.

Benchmark A single component of a larger standard. A benchmark describes what a child should know or be able to do at a specific developmental level. The benchmarks in South Dakota’s document are written for children by the time they finish their preschool years.

Bilingual learners Children who are acquiring more than one language. This would include children who are learning English as a new language, children raised in bilingual environments, and children who speak English and are learning their native language, such as Lakota.

Cognitive development The development of children’s ability to think, understand and learn.

Comprehension The ability to understand what is written or said.

Concepts of print Basic knowledge about written language and books, such as knowing the front and back of a book, the difference between a letter and a word, that print proceeds from left to right, and that it is print not the pictures that carries the written message.

Content Standards General statements that describe the knowledge and skills children should know in each subject area.

Coping Skills The ability to use techniques to handle challenging situations, such as taking deep breaths, counting to ten and responding calmly.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) means working with young children at a level that is just right for each individual. In DAP, decisions are based on knowledge of child development (age appropriate), each individual child (individually appropriate), and the social and cultural contexts of the children (socially and culturally appropriate).

Developmental continuum A predictable sequence of accomplishments that children typically go through to achieve a certain skill or concept.

Dictate Speaking aloud, often telling a story, to someone else who writes the words down.

Early literacy A continuum or range of behaviors, starting in the first years of life, that reflect young children’s beginning ideas about print, writing, and reading. As children work with adults and other children in meaningful literacy activities, they gradually acquire conventional skills in reading and writing.

Engagement Being actively, continuously involved in a learning experience, such as a block building activity. Engagement predicts learning, but children with disabilities often have difficulty becoming and staying engaged. Adult support can promote engagement.

Environment The surroundings, indoors and outdoors, where a child lives, plays and learns.

Environmental print Words, signs, posters, and other print that are part of the everyday world around a child, including signs, food labels, logos, etc.
Environmental sounds Sounds that are part of the everyday world around a child, including music, voices, wind in the trees, car horns, etc.

Fine Motor Skills Actions that require control of the small muscles of the body to achieve skillfulness. Examples include drawing, cutting with scissors, handwriting, and playing a musical instrument. (NASPE).

Fluency Reading smoothly, easily and consistently.

Gross Motor Skills Actions that use the large muscles of the body to achieve skillfulness. Examples include walking, jumping, skipping, and throwing (NASPE).

Interest Areas/Centers Areas within a classroom, home or childcare setting that are supplied with materials related to a certain area such as reading, writing, discovery/science, blocks, etc. to allow children to be actively engaged in hands-on learning experiences.

Invented spelling/Developmental spelling/Estimated spelling Young children’s attempts to write words using letters with which they are familiar, progressing to using letters associated with sounds they hear in words.

Journals Notebooks in which young children can experiment with the writing process, using scribbling, drawing, and their own spellings.

Language The use of sounds, signs and/or symbols as a means of communication.

Linguistic Referring to language, such as a person’s native language.

Literacy Activities associated with reading and writing.

Locomotor Skills Movements that transport an individual from one place to another. Examples include rolling, walking, running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping (NASPE).

Manipulatives Various objects or toys used to teach concepts and skills through hands-on activities. Examples of manipulatives are puzzles, Legos, and beads for stringing.

Numeral A written symbol that denotes a number; “2” is the numeral that represents the number/quantity “two.”

Number sense An understanding of what numbers are, how to use them, perform operations on them, and compute with them. Children demonstrate number sense by counting with understanding, using numbers to tell how many, describing order, and comparing.

One-to-one correspondence Matching one set of items with another set of items. For example, putting one cup and one saucer together, or matching the number 1 with the first item in a set and the number 2 with the second item in the set.

Operation A mathematical process or action, such as addition or subtraction, which can be applied to numerals, expressions or objects.

Phonics The understanding that specific letters or letter combinations are related to specific spoken sounds (phonemes); instruction that emphasizes how spelling is systematically related to the sounds of speech.

Physical Fitness A condition where the body is in a state of well-being and readily able to meet the physical challenges of everyday life. Most experts believe physical fitness is the result of practicing a physically active lifestyle. For young children, appropriate movement tasks and experiences can enhance overall body strength, bone density, and developmental functioning of the cardiovascular system (NASPE).

Phonological awareness The ability to think and talk about the differences in speech sounds. Children with phonological awareness can identify rhyming words and can clap out syllables in words. Phonological awareness is a broad term that includes an awareness of, or an ability to detect the following from easiest to most difficult: Rhyme – matching the ending sounds of words Alliteration – producing groups of words that begin with the same beginning sound Sentence Segmentation – dividing sentences into spoken words, such as clapping for each word in a song Syllables: either combining syllables to say words or dividing spoken words into syllables, such as clapping for each syllable when singing.
Onsets and Rhyme – Onset is the beginning consonant or group of consonants and rhyme in the remainder of the syllable or word. In the word “hot,” /h/ is the onset and /ot/ is the rhyme.

Phonemic Awareness – The ability to hear and distinguish individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.

Phoneme The smallest unit of speech that distinguishes one sound from another in spoken language. For example, the word dog is made up of three phonemes (d-o-g). English has about 45-50 phonemes.

Predictable books Books that repeat simple, familiar words or phrases, allowing the child to predict what is coming next, such as “Sometimes it looked like spilt milk, but it wasn’t spilt milk” which repeats on every page of the book.

Project Approach In The Project Approach teachers guide children through in-depth studies of real world topics worthy of their attention and effort. The study may be carried out by a class or by small groups of children. In the Project Approach children listen to books about the topic, visit sites and invite experts to come in to talk about the topic, and investigate answers to their questions on the topic. The projects do no usually make up the whole educational program; children play and engage in other activities as well as the project. More information can be found at www.project-approach.com.

Pro-social Behavior Acting positively toward others. Pro-social behaviors include: helping, sharing, cooperating, comforting, sympathizing, rescuing, defending, and treating people with kindness.

Reggio Emilia A small city in Northern Italy that has received international recognition for its early childhood programs. They use a project approach and have a deep respect for children and their abilities. Children learn to represent what they are learning through art, writing, and many other media. The preschools in Reggio Emilia place great emphasis on the partnerships between parents, children, and educators. They were chosen by Newsweek as one of the 10 best schools in the world.

Resiliency The ability to keep going or recover quickly through hard times or change. Although some children seem to be born more resilient than others, early childhood programs can also help children develop resiliency.

Self-Efficacy The belief that one is capable of accomplishing something or reaching a certain goal (Bandura). Early childhood programs try to help children develop self-efficacy.

Social Competence Ability to handle situations with other people. Children who have social competence are able to get along well with their peers and adults, accept reasonable compromises, and feel secure in social settings.

Standard A general statement that describes what children should know or be able to do, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes or habits of mind.

Statistics Collecting, organizing, and making sense of data. Young children do not learn statistics in the technical sense, but they are able to and enjoy gathering information and thinking about what it means.

Planned Physical Activity Activity guided by the parent, caregiver, or teacher and designed to accommodate the pre-schooler’s developmental level. (NASPE).

Symmetry Occurs when one side of an object is the mirror image of the other side (a butterfly’s wings). Objects may have repetitive symmetry like patterns on pottery, or cyclic symmetry such as a pinwheel.

Spontaneous Physical Activity Child-initiated physical activity that occurs as the child explores his or her environment (NASPE).

Appendices, including children’s booklists, resource books, and a grid comparing these standards to the Head Start Outcomes and SD Kindergarten standards can be found at http://doe.sd.gov/contentstandards/