NH EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

Birth
through
Five

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Purposes of the NH Early Learning Standards

The New Hampshire Early Learning Standards are a statewide resource for everyone who loves, cares for, and educates young children. The Standards provide essential information to support and enhance children's development and learning.

New Hampshire's Early Learning Standards:

- Provide a resource about children's development from birth through age five;
- Promote a whole-child approach that affirms that learning and development are interrelated and build on previous learning;
- Acknowledge, honor, and embrace the tremendous diversity and variation that exists for children and families;
- Recognize and celebrate what children learn to help plan for the next stages of growth and development;
- Align with the NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators, which are aligned with the NH College and Career Ready Standards;
- Provide a list of resources for more information about children's learning and development; and
- Guide the choice of developmentally appropriate curriculum, teaching strategies, and assessment.

New Hampshire's Early Learning Standards aspire to:

- Encourage dialogue and sharing between everyone who loves, cares for, and educates young children;
- Inform professional development for early childhood professionals;
- Incorporate current and culturally inclusive research on child development; and
- Develop and nurture the relationship between early learning and K-12 so that all schools are ready for all children and all children are ready for school.

As important as it is to understand what the Early Learning Standards are, it is equally important to understand what they are not.

What New Hampshire's Early Learning Standards are NOT:

- Not an exhaustive guide to child development or a developmental checklist. Children's development is highly individualized and unique to each child;
- Not an assessment tool or for use to determine children's eligibility for various programs or services;
- Not a curriculum;
- Not an instrument to collect statewide information on the overall status of children in the State of New Hampshire; and
- Not permanent and unchanging. New Hampshire is committed to updating the Early Learning Standards periodically.

Guiding Principles

We believe that the NH Early Learning Standards should:

- Respect and be inclusive of diverse families, cultures, languages, perspectives, and abilities;
- Build from what we know about young children's development and respect the holistic nature of early learning and the key role of play;
- Provide a tool for families, early childhood professionals, and elementary school teachers to use in understanding developmentally appropriate expectations of children in order to successfully transition from early childhood programs to elementary schools;
- Inform adults' intentional practice with children and knowledge of child development;
- Include domains that are meaningful to the respective developmental stages and be responsive to developmental expectations included in the 11 domains expected by the Federal Office of Child Care;
- Be user friendly, including accessible language that is clear and straightforward for families, teachers, and other early childhood professionals;
- Align* with NH College and Career Ready Standards, Head Start Child Development & Early Learning Framework, and preschool special education outcomes;
- Be responsive to the skills and knowledge young children need for success in a changing world; and
- Be informed by the current research.

*For the purposes of these guiding principles, the word 'align' will mean "to bring into desirable relation, to harmonize the aims and practices of two systems." This means, therefore, that we are not seeking a one to one correspondence between an early childhood developmental indicator and an elementary school standard, but, instead, are seeking to assure that early childhood and elementary school teachers are attending to the same domains and subject areas.

Early Learning Standards Task Force and Steering Committee, 2011

Early Learning and Development. . . It Matters!

The early years of a child's life are amazing.

Today we know a great deal about how children grow and develop. Children are learning at birth—even before. The early years are the most extraordinary period of growth and development in a child's lifetime. A child's very first year is crucial for building the brain. The figure at right highlights how a child's senses, language, and knowing (cognition) all burst into high gear from before birth and in the first 12 months of life. Interactions with parents, early childhood professionals, and other caring adults play a key role in brain development. There are less than 2000 days from the time a child is born until he or she enters kindergarten. Every day counts.

Birth through kindergarten sets the foundation.

As infants and toddlers develop, they first become aware of and then start to make sense of their world. The years from birth through kindergarten lay the foundation for a child's future learning and development. This is the time to maximize each child's learning potential. Birth through kindergarten is also the time for families and early childhood professionals to observe and monitor each child's development closely. Every child grows and develops at his or her own pace. It is important for families to talk with early childhood professionals about milestones the child has reached and what to expect next. It is also important for families to tell the child's health care provider if they have any concerns.

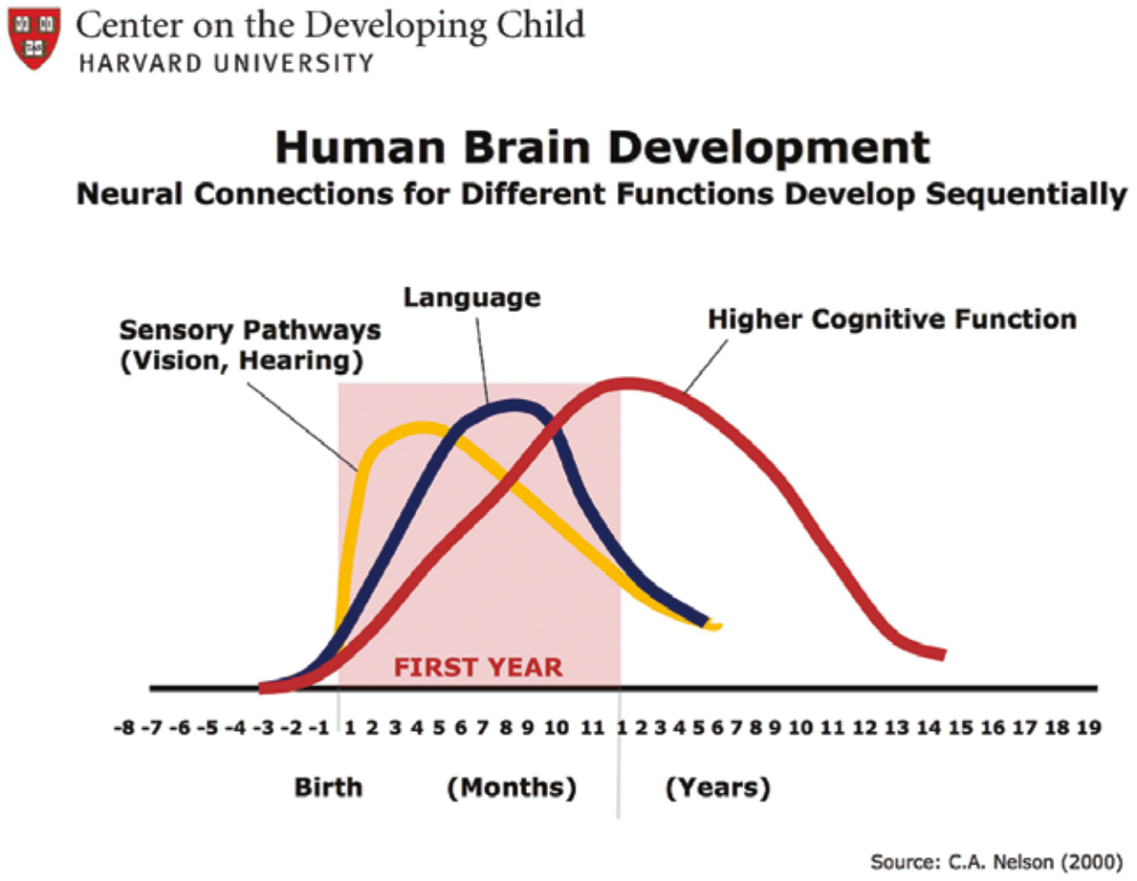

Photo credit: Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Used by permission. Nelson, C.A., in From *Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* (2000). Shonkoff, J. & Phillips, D. (Eds.).

How Children Learn

Learning starts with families and communities.

Families are their children's first, most important, and life-long teachers. They are also responsible for their children 24 hours a day, seven days a week, no matter what, until the children grow up. Families care about their children and look for ways to support their healthy growth. This can be hard work! Families embed their children in a web of relatives, friends, and social networks. This community offers safety, opportunities, learning, and support. Family and community traditions, languages, and activities are the foundation for children's learning and development. Children build their identities from the people, communities, and places in their lives. Over time, the web of support expands to include early childhood professionals, health care providers, librarians, and others who serve children and families.

Good communication among families, caregivers, and teachers is essential for children's learning. Children are in several different environments during the course of a day. To promote consistency for children, families can talk with caregivers and teachers early on about the family's traditions, language, daily routines, and the family's and child's preferences for foods and activities. Together, they can look for ways to provide continuity, such as having consistent meal times and familiar foods. Caregivers and teachers can make sure they say the child's and family's name correctly, learn a few key words and phrases in the child's home language, and find out what the child enjoys. They can also include in the care setting or classroom some materials, photographs, and/or art that reflect the interests of the child and family. Over time, families can pay attention to their child's connection with the various caregivers to ensure there are strong attachments.

It is important to remember that expectations for learning and development are in part determined by social and cultural values and goals. Your ideas about learning and development are influenced by your culture and background and may differ from the ideas of the families with whom you work. Communication with families is essential for understanding and working to honor their values and goals.

Every child and family has unique gifts and abilities.

Each child has a unique set of strengths, talents, and interests, along with areas where he or she needs more support. Children grow and learn at their own pace. It is not possible to tell exactly when a child will perfect a given skill. For some children, health care needs, disabilities, or developmental delays may affect how and when they learn and grow. It is important for adults to support children where they are, developmentally, to extend their learning and development.

Children who have disabilities or developmental delays, or who are at risk for delays, may need special attention. Like all young children, they are developing the ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings and learning about social cues. Early childhood professionals support the social and emotional development of all children, including providing individual guidance as needed. For example, some children face challenges in developing successful relationships with other children or in sustaining play. Screening and early intervention are crucial.

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, and have good nutrition.

Children need to have their basic needs met in order to learn. Health care for pregnant women is a first step for healthy development. Well-child visits provide important reviews of development, behavior, immunizations, oral health, vision, and hearing. Every day, balanced nutrition, adequate sleep, and physical activity help children grow, and set the stage for lifelong healthy habits and learning. Children also need safe places to live and play. They need to learn when and how to call on a trusted adult for help.

Children learn through relationships, play, and active exploration.

Children learn through the relationships they have with their parents, families, early childhood professionals, and communities. Children observe their families and caregivers closely and respond. When children reach out for connections with adults and adults reciprocate, this back-and-forth process of "serve and return interactions" helps build children's brains.

Nurturing relationships help children become secure, confident, curious, and communicative people. These relationships help children learn how to control and express their emotions and relate to others.

Children also learn through play and exploration. In play children express their zest for living. They learn hands-on through interacting with the world around them. They observe, listen, touch, taste, and smell. They try things out and notice what happens. They use their creativity and imagination.

Learning and development build on prior learning and development.

Children learn in the same way that a house is built, from the bottom up. Early experiences set the foundation for the architecture of the maturing brain, establishing the base for all the learning, health, and behavior that follows. It's important that this foundation be strong and sturdy. The NH *Early Learning Standards* provide examples of what children are learning to be, do, and know at different ages, whether at home, in their communities, or in formal early learning settings. The steps in growth and learning may span several ages as they develop, because children develop and grow at their own individual pace. Figure 1, to the right, shows how learning builds on prior learning and progresses across ages.

Building executive function is crucial for learning and development.

Children who are feeling good, and feeling good about themselves, develop key self-management skills, called executive function. Children develop these skills through interactions with adults, starting at birth. Developing executive function helps children learn to: pay attention; reason logically; exercise judgment; control their impulses; plan; identify goals and persist to achieve them; and assess what is happening and adjust as needed. These are the kind of skills that will support their later academic success. Families and early childhood professionals can help by:

- Being responsive to the child's needs;
- Encouraging the child to try different ways to do something;
- Playing hide-and-search games with the child;
- Playing games that require following "rules" that you and the child agreed on and can change together, such as when playing make-believe;
- Providing ample time and enough materials for make-believe play with other children;
- Asking the child what he or she is doing and feeling, and why;
- Asking the child: "What else could you do? What do you think would be best?" in a nonjudgmental, interested tone;
- Sharing your own thinking about what you are doing and feeling, and why;
- Problem-solving with the child in daily activities;
- Creating an environment that allows the child to play freely, explore, and make choices;
- Encouraging and allowing the child to move through different activities at his or her own pace;
- Listening to and talking about the child's ideas and thoughts;
- Noticing what allows laughter to bubble up and playing in ways that allow for the child's laughter (avoiding tickling, which can feel overwhelming);
- Involving the child in cultural activities; and
- Encouraging families to talk with the child in their home language.

Figure 1. How Learning Builds: Approximate Age When Reading Skills Develop

Reads closely to find main ideas and supporting details in a story				↗
Retells familiar stories using beginning, middle, and end			↗	Continues
Pretends to read a book or tell a story or during play		↗	Continues	Continues with actual reading and storytelling
Enjoys being read to and talked to, focusing on the person speaking	↗	Continues	Continues	Continues
	Young Infants (0 to 11 months)	**Ages 3 to 4 years**	**Age 5 and Kindergarten**	**3rd Grade**

Children learn in and through their environment.

Whether a child is in an early learning setting or at home, the environment plays an important role in learning. Some questions to consider in developing environments that support children's learning and development include:

- Does the environment create a sense of belonging?
- Does it reflect the child's family and culture?
- Is it safe and organized? Is it aesthetically inviting and engaging?
- Are the spaces flexible and accessible?
- Does the environment give the child opportunities to explore, wonder, and try new things? Does it inspire curiosity?
- Is it appropriate for the child's age and stage of development?
- Do materials allow a variety of uses? Are there different things to see, hear, and feel – indoors and out?
- Are there opportunities for the child to be physically active and to use the hands and fingers?

Children's environments are likely to include technology and screen media. It's important for adults who care for young children to know that advances in technology are moving much faster than research about the impact of screen media on children's learning and development. As of yet, there is no research to show that children under age 2 learn or benefit from exposure to screen media, and there is some evidence of potential harm. Because of this, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting or avoiding screen media for children under age 2. Screen media and other forms of technology can support and promote learning in children ages 2 and older, when used intentionally and in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Two helpful sources of information are Zero to Three's Screen Sense guidelines, available at *http://www.zerotothree.org/parenting-resources/screen-sense/* and the NAEYC/Fred Rogers Center Joint Position Statement on "Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8," available at *http://naeyc.org/content/technology-and-young-children.*

Learning is interrelated.

A child's growth and development in one area influences and/or depends on development in another area. No one area of development and learning is more important than another. All areas of development reinforce each other.

The Early Learning Standards are organized within five areas of development (social and emotional; language and emergent literacy; cognitive; physical development and health; and creative expression and aesthetic appreciation), across seven age groups (birth to 9 months; 9 to 18 months; 18 to 24 months; 24 to 30 months; 30 to 36 months; 3 years old; 4 and 5 year olds). Activities in any of these areas will enhance development in other areas, too. For example, exploring outdoors can help children develop in many ways, as shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Example of Interrelated Learning: Exploring Outdoors

Activity	Area of Development
Short outdoor explorations give an infant new sounds to hear, things to see, smells, and motions. They help an older child develop coordination and physical health.	• Physical and Health • Cognitive: Approaches to Learning • Creative Expression and Aesthetic Appreciation
Listening with interest to what the child says and adding more details help the child develop trust and comfort with familiar adults.	• Social and Emotional • Language and Emergent Literacy
Asking questions about what you see outdoors, such as "where do you think the ant is going with the load he's carrying?" encourages the child's creativity and curiosity.	• Language and Emergent Literacy • Cognitive: Science and Social Studies • Cognitive: Approaches to Learning
Having the child describe and compare the color, size, shape, and surroundings of things you see outdoors develops the child's thinking and observation skills.	• Language and Emergent Literacy • Cognitive: Early Numeracy
Taking turns naming things you see helps increase the number of words the child knows and expands his or her knowledge about the environment.	• Language and Emergent Literacy • Cognitive: Science and Social Studies

Cultural Influences on Development and Learning

Cultural differences and the content of Early Learning Standards

Here are ten parameters within which there is potential for cultural differences among young children in terms of how they demonstrate the skills and knowledge described in early learning and development standards (ELDS). While no culture is "right" or "wrong" in its approach to early childhood development, a family's cultural heritage provides an important lens through which children experience, interpret, and learn from the interactions and events of their young lives. As a set of expectations for what children should know and be able to do, therefore, ELDS inherently contain content that is culturally relevant.

1. Individual Autonomy

While some cultures view children as semi-autonomous individuals, other cultures consider their children more as interdependent members of a community in which personal autonomy is not encouraged. In the individualist approach, children are socialized to perceive themselves as individuals for whom personal wants, preferences, accomplishments, and rights are encouraged. In the interdependent approach, children are socialized to be part of a group in which personal preferences are downplayed and accomplishments are perceived as collaborative in nature, reflecting not only on themselves, but also on their family and community. They may favor a consensus approach to conflict resolution, rather than one that emphasizes individual rights.

2. Initiative

Cultures vary in the extent to which they expect children to demonstrate initiative, i.e., the use of independent thought or action to meet their needs and wants, particularly in interactions with adults. While some children may eagerly engage adults in interaction, other children may have been socialized to wait for the adult to initiate interactions, showing a high degree of deference to adults. In cultures where initiative is highly valued, children may be comfortable suggesting and beginning tasks and activities. In cultures where children have not been encouraged to show initiative, children may prefer to defer to the judgments and leadership of adults.

3. Curiosity and Exploration

Cultures differ in the extent to which they value children expressing interest or curiosity, and in their expectations for how children express interest or curiosity. Some cultures encourage children to demonstrate curiosity by actively exploring their environments, while other cultures encourage children to take a more passive stance in a more formal structure for inquiry guided by adults. Children who are encouraged to be active explorers may often venture out into their environment and ask questions to satisfy their curiosity, while other children may be socialized to wait for adults to impart information about topics and interests.

4. Understandings of Family

Because families from different cultures may define "family" differently, children's understanding of what constitutes their family may vary accordingly. They may have extended family and kinship networks, or they may have small-unit families that show little reliance on multiple relatives and caregivers. These varying definitions of "family" can affect children's concept of their own identities and how they identify family members. While some children experience one or two primary caregivers, other children experience multiple caregivers in an extended and nurturing family. Some children are accustomed to multiple caring relationships and others have fewer trusting relationships with adults.

5. Expression of Attachment Relationships

While empirical research suggests that children from every culture form secure attachment relationships, children from different cultures may express or demonstrate attachment behaviors in different ways. While in some cultures, overt affection is thought to be a marker of a secure attachment relationship, in others, such displays of affection may be rare, even while children's physical and emotional needs are promptly addressed.

6. Self-Care and Self-Regulation

Cultures define the length of infancy and childhood differently. As a result, in some cultures, children are expected at an early age to develop self-care skills and to be able to regulate themselves physically. In other cultures, children are not expected to be able to conduct self-care tasks and to regulate themselves physically without assistance until a later age. Similarly, in cultures that define infancy on a shorter timeline, children might be held accountable for their behaviors at an early age, while in other cultures, children may not be considered responsible for their behaviors until a later age.

7. Compliance

Children may demonstrate behavioral regulation skills differently, depending on the type of disciplinary approach they have experienced. Children who are accustomed to an authoritarian approach to discipline will expect the teacher to be a strong authority figure who commands compliance; if the teacher does not act in this way, children may not feel the need to comply. Children who have experienced a more conversational approach to discipline may regulate their behaviors only after acquiring a satisfactory understanding of the rules and expectations. Children who do not comply with teacher requests or directives may be perceived as lacking in receptive communication skills, when in fact they are not understanding the need to comply.

8. Emotional Expression

Some cultures value emotionally rich and expressive communication, while others discourage explicit expressions of emotions. Some cultures encourage children to label and express their emotions at a young age, while others encourage children to internalize their emotions, preferring a quiet and introspective approach to emotions.

9. Social Conventions

How children are socialized at home regarding what social behaviors are considered conventional and appropriate (i.e. understandings regarding "manners" and "politeness") may depend on the family's cultural identity. Therefore, children from various cultures may come to the classroom with different understandings about what behaviors are socially expected and appropriate. Children who are accustomed to different social conventions may vary, for example, in whether they think it is polite to make eye contact with adults, to let others go first, to share their belongings, and to work quietly on their own.

10. Language and Literacy Conventions

Children from various cultures experience patterns of language use and conventions at home that may differ from those of the classroom. For example, children may have different understandings of the conventions and courtesies of speech, such as the rhythm of question and answers, the length of time to wait for a response, and whether overlapping speech ("interrupting") is appropriate. In addition, the sheer number of words that a child is exposed to, and also the types of words, may vary by culture. Also, some cultures place a heavy emphasis on book reading, while others place a higher value on oral storytelling. The typical narrative structures of storytelling may also vary across cultures.

Definitions of cultural parameters used with permission from: Reid, J.L., Scott-Little, C. and Kagan, S.L. (2015 March). Cultural Differences and the Content of Early Learning and Development Standards.

Dual Language Learners

Young children can learn more than one language.

There are over 100 languages spoken by children in schools across New Hampshire. Many children learn two or more languages at a very young age. They may:

- Learn two or more languages at the same time from birth, or
- While still mastering the home language(s), learn an additional language.

Children in both situations are sometimes called "Dual Language Learners (DLL)" or, when one of the languages being learned is English, "English Language Learners (ELL)." Learning two or more languages or dialects at a young age benefits a child in a number of ways. These benefits include a higher level of thinking and reasoning abilities, and better problem solving and listening skills.

The Office of Head Start (2008) defines "Dual Language Learner" as follows: "Children who are Dual Language Learners acquire two or more languages simultaneously, and learn a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language. The term 'dual language learners' encompasses other terms frequently used, such as Limited English Proficient (LEP), bilingual, English Language Learners, English learners, and children who speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE)." (p. 1)

Not only are children capable of learning more than one language, research shows that there are benefits to being bilingual or multilingual. A recent review of the research on multilingual children found that "multilingual children are not at a cognitive disadvantage; to the contrary, there is a large body of work that suggests that being multilingual fosters children's ability to think about language" (Bornstein, M.H., et al., 2013, p. 9).

Respect the home language and add English.

Early childhood professionals need to respect and foster children's languages. Doing so can go a long way toward supporting children's social and emotional development and academic achievement. For many NH families, being fluent in their home language or dialect of English is part of preserving and connecting with their culture. Young children need opportunities to continue home language development as well as opportunities to transfer knowledge between the home language and English, to build vocabulary and the meaning of concepts in both languages.

Language patterns and structure vary from one language to another. Some cultures place more importance on talking and some on nonverbal communication. Adults need to take these factors into account when considering the child's progress in learning English.

Early childhood professionals can honor multiple languages and cultures by:

- Using pictures, props, and culturally sensitive gestures, as needed;
- Using gestures to show what an expected action is, while saying the words;
- Attending to the child's tone, facial expressions, and gestures;
- Learning words and phrases of the child's language;
- Learning and teaching a song in the child's language;
- Encouraging the child to use all his or her communication skills to build friendships;

- Providing books, pictures, and print that reflect the child's language/culture (while recognizing that some languages rely more on oral tradition than on writing);
- Encouraging the child or family to teach the child's classmates a song or tell a story from their language and culture;
- Inviting families to explain the differences in expected behaviors between home and the care/school setting;
- Creating predictable routines and systematic activities (familiar sequences) in order to help dual language learners anticipate next steps; and
- Providing opportunities for dual language learners to engage in activities that do not require language, such as creating art and music, and active play.

Know the stages of second language development.

The following excerpt is used with permission, from the NAEYC publication *Basics of Supporting Dual Language Learners* (pp. 20-22):

Stages of second language development are not attached to any specific ages. The learning process depends on when children start, their skills in the first language, and the quality of support for learning a new language.

Home language only. When children enter a new language environment, they may still use their home language for a while. This is to be expected, and an adult who can share even a few words of that home language can foster a positive relationship with children from day one.

Possible silent period. Many teachers report experiences with DLLs who stop talking for a period of time as they observe the new environment and listen to the new language. This may be similar to the experiences of first language development when we think of how much infants learn by observing and listening to language before they say their first word. For many DLLs this is a normal part of their learning process, but we can't predict the length of a typical silent period since it varies from child to child and there may be other developmental and personality variables at work. It is a good idea to keep an eye on a child during this time in case there is another reason for her silence. Is the child playing with the other children in ways that are appropriate for her age? Is she showing signs of depression? Is it possible that the silent period is actually a sign of hearing loss? Don't let six months go by ignoring the child's silence because you think it might be due to the new language. However, if you have investigated the possible causes and found no significant problems, then it may just be this child's way of adjusting to the new language.

Actions show understanding. As with young children learning their first language, the brain acquires and catalogs a vast collection of receptive language before it is ready to start producing or saying the words. For some time before they can speak their new language, DLLs will begin to show that they understand by responding to instructions or being able to participate in a game. As careful observers of these behaviors, teachers will be able to document and interpret a child's progress.

> Jean-Marc started kindergarten without seeming to know a word of English, and his school did not have any staff who spoke Haitian Creole. As his teacher tried to help him get used to the new classroom, she noticed that he was first in line whenever she announced recess time. Then she saw Jean-Marc playing a new game that she had just introduced to the children that morning. She could see from his actions that he wasn't ready to speak in English, but he certainly understood a great deal. She became more confident in talking with Jean-Marc using English with lots of visuals and gestures, realizing that he really could understand and learn in the new language.

Formulaic speech. This stage is similar, but not identical, to the telegraphic speech stage of first language development. In this stage, older DLLs are able to recognize multiword groups or formulas and use them with some degree of accuracy before they can break down the groups into individual words. For example, Isaac learned to say "gimmedat" before he could say the individual words give, me, and that. This early attempt to communicate is not an error - it is a useful way for the brain to begin making sense out of short phrases a child can use to get needs met. Communication is the main focus of the brain's language learning efforts, so this is a good start.

Informal language. Many young children have an amazing ability to pick up their new language very quickly. Soon they are talking in sentences, understanding much of what's happening in the classroom, and telling you what they did over the weekend. They may communicate very well in their new language in a year or less. While this progress is important, it represents informal fluency – what we call playground language. Within the first six to eight years, much of children's prior learning is coded in their brain in their first language. It's important for teachers to help them build on all of their prior knowledge – learned in English and the home language. Research tells us that children under the age of 6 need continuing support of their home language while they are also developing their second (Espinosa 2010).

Academic fluency. Experts believe it may take six or more years for children to develop full academic fluency in the second language to the point that they are ready to do all learning in that language at grade level (Pearson 2008). That means that most children in early childhood settings need ongoing home language practice and experience while they are learning English. Helping children stay in touch with their home language concepts and preliteracy skills seems to allow them to use all of that knowledge plus the new concepts and literacy skills they are learning in English. This powerful combination strengthens children's ability to succeed in school.

Nemeth, K.N., 2012. *Basics of supporting dual language learners*, pp. 20-22. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC

Dual Language Learners' emergent literacy in English is dependent on their experience with the language.

Depending on the level of their familiarity with English, Dual Language Learners may:

- Demonstrate eagerness to participate in songs, rhymes, and stories in English and in their home language;
- Repeat parts of songs or poems in English and in their home language;
- Point to pictures and say the word in English and in their home language;
- Talk with peers or adults about a story read in English and in their home language;
- Tell a story in English and/or in their home language with beginning, middle, and end;
- Identify some letters in English and/or in their home language;
- Attempt to write letters in English and/or in their home language; and
- Begin to copy or write their own name in English and/or in their home language.

For a complete listing of resources related to Dual Language Learners, please see the Resources and References Section, p. 52.

How the Standards Can Be a Resource for You

The NH Early Learning Standards can help families and professionals build knowledge together.

The NH Early Learning Standards are a resource that all the adults in children's lives can use to share information with each other. The Standards recognize two equally important types of expertise:

- Families' deep knowledge, experience, and observations about their children, and
- Early childhood professionals' knowledge and experience

The Standards' intent is to build bridges between families and early childhood professionals. To help everyone speak the same "language," the Standards use as little jargon as possible.

The following open-ended questions invite families to describe what they observe about their children and what they consider to be important. These descriptions might not conform to the Standards' categories or examples of skills. Families' expectations about development may differ from what is in the Standards and that is to be expected. We encourage early childhood professionals to discuss these questions with families. Where there are differences, there are opportunities for building new knowledge together about how their children develop and learn.

1. What has your child done that surprised you with a new ability, skill, or understanding?
2. How does your child go about trying something new?
3. What does your child really enjoy doing?
4. How does your child respond to new situations or challenges?
5. Who among your family and friends does your child enjoy spending time with? What are some of the things that person does with or teaches your child?

The NH Early Learning Standards relate to and can be used in conjunction with professional guidelines.

The Standards are intended to be in harmony with other learning standards and guidelines and their underlying research. The Task Force examined and incorporated elements from: the 2005 NH Early Learning Guidelines; the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework; the NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators (2012); New Hampshire Early Learning Curriculum Guidelines and Preschool Child Outcomes for Young Children with Disabilities Ages 3-5; other states' early learning guidelines and standards; and many other sources. The Standards are intended to support and supplement these resources.

The NH Early Learning Standards can help early childhood professionals promote young children's learning and development.

Early childhood professionals who are involved in direct services to young children and their families can use the Standards to inform their work and their understandings of young children's development and learning. The Standards provide information that early childhood professionals can draw on in observing and interacting with young children, as well as designing developmentally appropriate learning experiences for them. The Standards can also inform decisions related to the selection and adaptation of curricula for use with young children. In addition, the Standards can provide opportunities for discussions with families about what they are noticing about their children's development and any concerns or questions they may have.

Guide to the NH Early Learning Standards

The NH Early Learning Standards are organized by developmental domains.

The NH Early Learning Standards consist of five developmental domains: Social and Emotional; Language and Emergent Literacy; Cognitive; Physical Development and Health; and Creative Expression and Aesthetic Appreciation. Domains are broad areas of children's learning and development. Each domain is addressed separately, but children's development is interconnected and occurs across all domains. The guiding questions that connect to each developmental domain highlight the process of learning and stimulate adult thinking on how to facilitate young children's learning.

Each of the five developmental domains contain several strands, which are broad developmental categories that are important to consider. Strands help to define the domain. The strands are further divided into constructs. Constructs are identified key concepts that are essential to learning and development. They help to define the strand and developmental domain.

In an effort to balance comprehensiveness and usefulness, we needed to make decisions regarding what was most important to address and what to leave out. In making these decisions, we found that there are constructs which touch on one concept in some age ranges and a slightly different concept in other age ranges. These differences are subtle but important and it was difficult to leave certain milestones out of this document, but our primary goal was to make this useful to teachers of young children. You can find additional information about each developmental domain and early childhood development in general in the Resources and References section at the end of this document.

Within each developmental domain, the Standards describe indicators of progress from birth through age five.

Within each developmental domain, the NH Early Learning Standards are organized by seven age groups, from birth through age five. These age categories are intended to help families and early childhood professionals find information about the children they care for and teach. For each age group, within each developmental domain, there are specific indicators of progress that can be observed during children's play and interactions within the environment. These indicators are not intended to be used as a checklist, but are presented as a guide.

The indicators illustrate a progression of what children think, feel, and can do as they develop at their own rate. Children grow and learn at their own speed and a child may demonstrate a new skill before or after the age group indicated. As children develop a new ability, they may not use it consistently. As children build higher level skills, they will continue to use skills developed at earlier ages until they have mastered the new skill.

The Standards show alignment with the NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators.

The NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators are embedded in the NH Early Learning Standards to provide a seamless transition of developmental skills and knowledge for children as they move between before school entry learning experiences and their public kindergarten education. By including the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators in the NH Early Learning Standards, we acknowledge that early childhood professionals work in multiple settings toward the same goal of understanding the child's strengths and abilities in order to support learning and development. To access the NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators, go to:

http://education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/documents/kindergarten-readiness.pdf

Social and Emotional Development

How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Themselves and Others?

Relationships are essential for learning. For infants and toddlers, a consistently nurturing and safe environment fosters a healthy sense of self and the ability to trust others and build relationships. Preschool children also need supportive adults to help them navigate increasingly complex social situations. Through social interactions, many of which occur during play, children build their knowledge of self and learn what it means to be a contributing member of a group. Adults can support young children's social and emotional development by offering them time and providing guidance to experience positive interactions with adults and other children. Children's healthy social and emotional development will enable them to build and enjoy friendships.

The following four interconnected strands and constructs are important to consider when creating opportunities for social and emotional learning:

- **Self-Concept and Social Identity:** Self-esteem; self-confidence; and social identity
- **Attachment:** Relationships with primary caregivers; and relationships with less familiar adults
- **Social Competence:** Relationships and social skills with peers; recognition of others' feelings; and behavioral regulation
- **Emotional Competence:** Emotional expression; and emotional regulation

We highly recommend that those using the NH Early Learning Standards refer to the Cultural Influences on Development and Learning section on page 7.

Social and Emotional Development – How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Themselves and Others?

STRANDS		Ages	Birth to Nine Months	Nine Months to Eighteen Months	Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months	Twenty-Four to Thirty Months	Thirty Months to Three Years	Three Years
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
	Self-Concept and Social Identity	**Self-esteem**	Smile or are comforted when a trusted caregiver speaks kindly to them	Show likes and dislikes in ways that are consistent with the family's cultural expectations *(E.g. Brady vocalizes pleasure while playing, but cries while having a diaper changed.)*	Show awareness of being seen by others such as repeating an action when someone is watching *(E.g. Whenever she sees a camera, Ruby smiles and poses.)*	Show delight in their abilities	Call attention to themselves in photographs or videos	Draw adult's attention to their actions and creations *(E.g. On the playground Luna keeps telling her father, "Watch me, watch me!")*
		Self-confidence	Smile and laugh when imitating an adult *(E.g. 8-month-old Ashton smiles when he imitates his teacher clapping.)*	Take actions in the expectation of getting a response from an adult *(E.g. 11-month-old Carolyn lifts her arms up knowing that her caregiver will pick her up.)*	Show more awareness of their abilities	Perform the tasks requested of them and may initiate tasks on their own *(E.g. Kyle's nana spoons food onto his plate and Kyle says, "Me do it!" and reaches for the spoon.)*	Show independence and competence	Begin to experiment with their own potential and show confidence in their own abilities
		Social identity	By 9 months, recognize that they are separate and distinct from primary caregivers *(E.g. 8-month-old Taniesha cries whenever her mother leaves the room.)*	Show preference for their family members and primary caregivers	Mimic adult behavior and responses to other people	Point out or comment on differences in gender and physical characteristics, using social labels *(E.g. Eddie points to each classmate and labels each as "boy" or "girl.")*	Identify or point to characters that resemble themselves or their family members in books or magazines	Continue to develop awareness of differences and their own gender and cultural identity *(E.g. Delia says to her teacher, "I'm a girl, so I can be a mommy someday.")*
	Attachment	**Relationships with primary caregivers**	Demonstrate interest in familiar adults and develop strong attachment to primary caregivers	Rely on trusted adults to feel secure trying new activities	Continue to need the security of a trusted adult; ask for help, if needed, in verbal and non-verbal ways	Imitate and attempt to please familiar adults *(E.g. Rylee joins in singing when her caregiver sings a silly song with her.)*	Continue to need adult approval and validation but show more competence	Respond appropriately to social and emotional cues of adults
		Relationships with less familiar adults	Are able, over time, to differentiate between familiar and unfamiliar adults	Show strong preference for familiar adults and may demonstrate fear or rejection responses to unfamiliar adults	Continue to show hesitation around unfamiliar adults *(E.g. Billie hides behind his father when the store clerk says "hi" to him.)*	Dependent on experience, may show more interest in unfamiliar adults, but are still cautious	Are more comfortable around unfamiliar adults	May initiate contact with unfamiliar adults, when familiar adults are nearby

Social and Emotional Development – How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Themselves and Others?

STRANDS		Ages	Birth to Nine Months	Nine Months to Eighteen Months	Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months	Twenty-Four to Thirty Months	Thirty Months to Three Years	Three Years
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
	Social Competence	**Relationships and social skills with peers**	Demonstrate increasing awareness of other children *(E.g. While lying on a blanket close to her, Carlos reaches for Becca's arm.)*	Show interest in other children	Play alongside other children, with or without acknowledging their presence	Engage in brief or momentary interactions with other children, but may need adult support *(E.g. Siddarth yells, "Run, run," to several other children on the playground.)*	Begin to play cooperatively for brief periods with other children	Play cooperatively with other children and show preference for some children over others *(E.g. Jose and Chris are playing together. When Martin comes over, Chris says, "No, go away.")*
		Recognition of others' feelings	May cry when another baby cries	Show awareness in other people's emotions	Demonstrate interest in the feelings of another child	May try to comfort children who are distressed *(E.g. Filomena gives her teddy bear to Ellen, who is crying.)*	Begin to display empathy towards other children	Begin to label others' feelings and recognize reasons for those feelings
		Behavioral regulation	Calm themselves *(E.g. 9-month-old Vinod babbles in his crib until his father comes to get him up from his nap.)*	Need adult support to regulate physical expressions of emotions *(E.g. Marigold pulls another baby's hair until the teacher takes her hand and shows her how to pat the baby gently.)*	With guidance, demonstrate they can use some classroom materials appropriately *(E.g. The teacher shows her toddlers how to handle books gently and Clara turns the pages carefully.)*	With adult guidance, can begin to tone down aggressive behaviors.	Show increased self-regulation and awareness of how their actions affect others	Follow classroom rules and routines with guidance
	Emotional Competence	**Emotional expression**	Express enjoyment and unhappiness in their environment	Begin to express a variety of feelings through vocalizations, facial expressions, and body movements	May express their feelings strongly including extended episodes and may not be easily distracted	Share their feelings through talking and pretend play	Verbally relate their needs, wants, and feelings to others	Express their feelings verbally with greater frequency
		Emotional regulation	By 9 months, stop crying when their needs are met or they expect their needs to be met	Follow their caregiver to keep him/her in sight	Use comfort objects or certain behaviors to calm themselves *(E.g. Finn finds and holds his blanket to calm himself.)*	Have difficulty regulating strong feelings	Begin using words to describe their feelings while still expressing strong emotions	Begin to respond to an adult's cues about regulating their emotions *(E.g. At drop-off time, Sage begins to control his crying when his teacher says, "I know you're sad, would you like to see what your friends are doing?")*

		Social and Emotional Development – How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Themselves and Others?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 3 – Science & Social Studies Domain 5 – Social & Emotional Development**
STRANDS	**Self-Concept and Social Identity**	**Self-esteem**	• Continue to seek adult attention and recognition of what they know and can do • Boast about what they know and can do *(E.g. Quinn says, "I am really good at drawing rainbows.")*	
		Self-confidence	• Are confident, self-directed, purposeful and inventive in play	**Domain 5: Element B – Self-concept, self-regulation and confidence** 3. Demonstrates confidence in approaching new tasks and experiences
		Social identity*	• Notice differences and make comparisons between their physical characteristics and others' and the way things are done in different settings *(E.g. Consuela says "My abuela talks Spanish and my grandma talks English.")* • Express or describe their own characteristics and preferences *(E.g. Jacob only chooses brown sweatpants when clothes shopping with his mother.)*	**Domain 3: Element C – Social Studies: Self, Family & Community** 1. Demonstrates knowledge about self and others **Domain 5: Element B – Self: Concept, regulation, confidence** 2. Identifies personal characteristics and preferences
	Attachment	**Relationships with primary caregivers and less familiar adults**	• Interact easily with familiar adults, but may be hesitant to approach or respond to less familiar adults • Seek adult help when needed for emotional support, physical assistance, social interaction, and approval • Imitate familiar adults in culturally appropriate ways in everyday situations	**Domain 5: Element A – Establishes and sustains positive relationships** 1. Engages with trusted adults as resources and to share mutual interests 5. Seeks adult help when needed to resolve conflicts

*When they experience anti-bias teaching and environments, 4- and 5- year olds may exhibit the following:

- Demonstrate positive feelings about one's social identity and physical features along with interest in and acceptance of differences in others
- Recognize fair and unfair attitudes and behavior towards people because of physical appearance, gender, or other social group membership

		Social and Emotional Development – How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Themselves and Others?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 3 – Science & Social Studies Domain 5 – Social & Emotional Development**
STRANDS	**Social Competence**	**Relationships and social skills with peers**	• Approach others with expectations of positive interactions • Build skills needed to participate successfully as a member of a group, such as taking turns • Sustain interaction by cooperating, helping, sharing, and expressing interest, though they may need adult guidance • Develop friendships, sometimes based on shared interests or characteristics	**Domain 5: Element A – Establishes and sustains positive relationships** 3. Accepts peers in the classroom, 4. Initiates, joins and sustains positive interactions with individuals or groups of children
		Recognition and understanding of others' feelings	• Begin to understand the reasons for others' emotions and respond appropriately *(E.g. Audrey says to a friend who is upset over not getting the toy she wanted during play, "You'll get to play with it next time.")*	**Domain 5: Element A – Establishes and sustains positive relationships** 2. Responds to emotional cues; shows empathy
		Behavioral regulation	• Begin to be able to stop undesirable behaviors on their own or with a gentle reminder *(E.g. Xavier starts to grab Zach's car, but stops himself and asks, "Can I use that when you're done?")*	**Domain 5: Element B – Self-regulation and confidence** 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
	Emotional Competence	**Emotional expression**	• Demonstrate increasing competencies in recognizing and describing their own emotions • Explore emotions in various ways (through play, art, music, and dance)	
		Emotional Regulation	• May still have difficulty regulating strong emotions • Increasingly use words instead of actions to express their emotions	**Domain 5: Element B – Self-regulation and confidence** 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors

Language Development and Emergent Literacy

How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Language and Use It to Communicate with Others?

How Do Young Children Learn to View Literacy as a Tool for Expressing Themselves and Interacting with the World?

Children are born ready to communicate. Newborns use crying, gazing, facial expressions, and body movements to express themselves and engage others. Toddlers have the ability to communicate (babble) and understand language long before they speak words. As children grow in their ability to understand and communicate more complex ideas, they move from putting sounds together to saying words and then forming sentences. Young children progress in language development by observing, listening, conversing, asking questions, singing songs, and retelling well-loved stories. By engaging with and responding to young children's verbal and non-verbal communications, adults encourage their attempts to understand others and express themselves.

Understanding and using language is an important foundation of literacy. Children increasingly gain an interest in reading and writing by watching adults engage with and create print in everyday situations. On their own, children are curious to create symbols and shapes in a variety of ways. Adults support children's emergent literacy by reading to them, telling stories, playing with sounds and words, and providing opportunities to play with written language. Children learn about literacy through frequent daily exposure to the sounds and symbols of print in authentic and playful experiences with reading and writing.

Language is an important part of cultural identity. Language skills begin in the children's home language. Bilingual and bicultural families may speak more than one language at home. Children who are dual language learners acquire two or more languages at the same time and learn a second language while continuing to develop their first language.* Language confusion is common during dual language development in young children. It is important to support the home language and accept the child's use of both languages in order to increase the child's overall language development (Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Birth through 3rd Grade, 2012).

The following interconnected strands and constructs are important to consider when creating opportunities for language and literacy learning:

- **Listening Comprehension:** Receptive verbal communication
- **Non-verbal Communication**
- **Communication Concepts:** Pragmatics and social language
- **Verbal Expression:** Vocabulary development; expressive language or speaking; and meaning and linguistic concepts
- **Emergent Reading:** Participation in language and literacy activities; narrative and story sense; comprehension and interpretation; interest in and appreciation of reading; phonological awareness (which refers to understanding the sound structure of language such as sounds, rhymes, syllables, and words); and book awareness
- **Emergent Writing:** Print and alphabet awareness; and interest in and emergent writing

**For information regarding supporting Dual Language Learners, please refer to the Dual Language Learners Section on page 8.*

We highly recommend that those using the NH Early Learning Standards refer to the Cultural Influences on Development and Learning section on page 7.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Language Development – How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Language and Use it to Communicate with Others?

STRANDS		Ages	Birth to Nine Months	Nine Months to Eighteen Months	Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months	Twenty-Four to Thirty Months	Thirty Months to Three Years	Three Years
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
	Listening Comprehension	**Receptive verbal communication**	Show interest in the speech of others and prefer familiar voices	Demonstrate their understanding of others' speech through their actions, such as responding physically to simple requests *(E.g. Joshua, 15 months, smiles when his father says, "Smile at Daddy.")*	May show by their actions understanding of simple statements *(E.g. Blaine sits down at the table when his teacher says, "It's time to eat.")*	Show by their actions that they understand simple one-step directions *(E.g. When her teacher says, "Put on your coat," Doretta picks up her coat and puts her hand in the sleeve.)*	Respond to simple questions	Show awareness of others' comments or statements that have to do with them *(E.g. Milo shouts, "Don't want to go to the doctor!" after overhearing his parents talk about his illness.)*
	Non-Verbal Communication	**Non-verbal communication**	Use various sounds and movements to communicate	Communicate using consistent sounds, gestures, and facial expressions	Understand others' nonverbal symbolic cues such as nodding for yes or shaking head for no	Use gestures to augment what they are trying to communicate with words *(E.g. Destiny shakes her head emphatically as she says, "No, no, no.")*	Begin to understand other children's nonverbal social cues	Notice other children's body language and try to interpret it
	Communication Concepts	**Pragmatics and social language**	Use sounds to get adult attention and to engage adults	Begin to use single words to communicate	Convey a variety of meanings through simple vocabulary *(E.g. Jeff says "milk," which can mean, "I want milk," "I'm finished drinking milk," or "I spilled my milk.")*	Use language for a variety of functions	Can participate in simple conversational exchanges, usually with adults	Begin to understand the rules for communication in different situations *(E.g. Charlie whispers when dad explains that he needs to use a quiet voice when visiting grandpa in the hospital.)*
	Verbal Expressions	**Vocabulary development**	At this age children are not communicating with words	Produce their first word and may have a vocabulary of up to 15 words	Combine two words to express wants or needs *(E.g. As Harper walks to the car she says, "Car go.")*	Demonstrate a burst of new vocabulary words, which they may or may not use correctly	Correctly use a growing number of vocabulary words and show interest in new words *(E.g. Liam knows that fast, quick, and speedy mean the same thing.)*	Continue to build their vocabulary including more descriptive words
		Expressive language or speaking	Begin vocalizing using a variety of sounds *(E.g. Stan uses different types of cries to communicate different needs.)*	Move from imitating single words to beginning to use single words to communicate	Begin to use words to communicate and may combine two to three words to form short phrases or sentences	Use words and some common rules of speech to express their ideas and thoughts *(E.g. Margie exclaims, "I climbed up stairs!")*	Use more connecting words, such as "and" or "then"	Can relate a simple story *(E.g. When asked about her day, Rhianna says, "I went out on the playground and it was so icy and I fell and I cried and cried and my teacher helped me.")*

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Language Development – How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Language and Use it to Communicate with Others?

STRANDS		CONSTRUCTS	We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:	NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 1 – Language Arts & Literacy
	Listening Comprehension	**Receptive verbal communication**	• Listen with understanding to stories, directions, and conversations • Follow instructions that include a two or three step sequence of actions such as setting up a game or following a recipe	**Domain 1: Element A – Listens to and understands increasingly complex language** 1. Comprehends language 2. Responds appropriately to complex statements, questions, vocabulary, and stories 3. Follows detailed, instructional, multi-step (2-3) directions
	Non-Verbal Communication	**Non-verbal communication**	• Understand non-verbal cues • Communicate needs, wants, or thoughts using nonverbal gestures, actions, or expressions *(E.g. 5-year-old Devin points to the block area when he is asked what he wants to do next.)*	
	Communication Concepts	**Pragmatics and social language**	• Use language according to rules appropriate for the cultural context (may need adult help in recognizing appropriate cultural context) *(E.g. 4-year-old Savannah asks her peer, "Can I please have the purple crayon?")* • With adult support, can take turns in conversations and group discussions	**Domain 1: Element C – Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills** 1. Engages in conversations with multiple exchanges 2. Uses acceptable language and social rules while communicating with others; may need reminders
	Verbal Expressions	**Vocabulary development**	• Use increasingly complex and varied vocabulary and language • Use words and phrases learned through conversations and being read to *(E.g. 4-year-old Hazel says, "The end", when she finishes her snack.)*	**Domain 1: Element B – Uses language to express thoughts and needs** 1. Describes and tells the use of many familiar items 3. Uses complete, four-to-six word sentences
		Expressive language or speaking, and meaning and linguistic concepts	• Speak clearly enough to be understood • Use language for a variety of purposes, including communicating information *(E.g. 5-year-old Sean shows his friends his new race car and they ask him questions about it and tell him stories about theirs.)* • Ask questions and initiate and respond in conversations with others • Tell stories with multiple characters and events	**Domain 1: Element B – Uses language to express thoughts and needs** 2. Speaks clearly enough to be understood without contextual clues (is understood by most people; may mispronounce new, long, or unusual words) 3. Uses complete, four- to six-word sentences 4. Tells about another time or place

		LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGENT LITERACY						
		Emergent Literacy – How Do Young Children Learn to View Literacy as a Tool for Expressing Themselves and Interacting with the World?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Emergent Reading**	**Participation in language and literacy activities***	Focus on picture books while an adult is reading to them *(E.g. 6-month-old Alisha sits on her mother's lap and looks and pats her hand on the book that her mother is reading.)*	Enjoy being read to and may seek opportunities to be read to and to interact with books	May show preferences for specific books and turn pages at the appropriate time with adult assistance	While being read to, point to and comment on illustrations and repeat or anticipate familiar words or phrases in the text	Enjoy being read to and looking at books independently; May say familiar words and phrases while looking at the appropriate page *(E.g. Kali, 33 months, sings along to the repetitious book, Brown Bear, Brown Bear, as her teacher reads it to her.)*	May describe what's happening in the pictures while turning the pages in a familiar book
		Narrative and story sense*	Look at the face of an adult describing the sequence of what will happen next *(E.g. 5-month-old Nate stares intently at his father's face when he describes how he will change Nate's diaper.)*	Participate in book reading activities *(E.g. Brandon, 15 months, makes a shhh sound and puts his finger on his lips at the appropriate time when reading The Napping House.)*	Can recognize that a story is beginning from a clue such as 'Once upon a time'	May relay or retell simple stories	Can react to dramatic elements of a story and may respond with predictions when asked, "What will happen next?" *(E.g. Addison, 33 months, is able to predict what is hidden under the flap on a page of a familiar book.)*	Relate or retell stories with more parts
		Comprehension and interpretation*	Enjoy hearing a book being read and looking at the pictures, but do not understand the sequence of the story	May focus on certain elements in the illustrations, but often skip pages or focus on a particular page	Point to and vocalize about an illustration or imitate an action seen in a picture *(E.g. 18-month-old Angelique imitates the jumping action of the frog when being read, Jump Frog Jump.)*	Identify with a particular character or scene *(E.g. When listening to the book, Where's My Teddy Said Eddie, Zaviel, 25 months, makes a scared face, identifying with the little boy in the woods.)*	Ask for familiar books to be read in exactly the same way each time and know when sections are being skipped	Can ask and answer simple questions about the story
		Interest in and appreciation of reading*	Show enjoyment at being read to through vocalizing, eye contact, and movement *(E.g. 8-month-old Sophia squeals in delight when her mother reads Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes.)*	Bring a book to an adult to be read to and/or respond positively to an adult's offer to read	Name and/or ask for favorite book and may show preference for books on certain topics	May ask an adult to read the same book repeatedly	Ask for familiar books to be read in exactly the same way each time and know when sections are being skipped	Say what they like about a favorite book

*Achieving milestones in emergent literacy development is dependent on the extent of the child's exposure to books and print.

		LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGENT LITERACY						
		Emergent Literacy – How Do Young Children Learn to View Literacy as a Tool for Expressing Themselves and Interacting with the World?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Emergent Reading**	**Phonological awareness (which refers to understanding the sound structure of language such as sounds, rhymes, syllables, and words)***	Respond to sounds and words heard often	Recognize and react to the sounds of language and can discriminate between non-speech environmental sounds *(E.g. Jamie continues playing when he hears the refrigerator door open, but stops when he hears a jar being opened.)*	Enjoy chants and songs and books that rhyme	Enjoy chants and songs and books that rhyme	Participate in chants and songs and books that rhyme	Enjoy playing with the sounds of language *(E.g. Claire laughs loudly when her friend calls her Clairey Berry.)*
		Book awareness*	Treat books as any other object by exploring with hands and mouth *(E.g. 5- month-old Colby grabs a board book and puts it to his mouth to chew on it.)*	Look at pictures in books, but often treat books like other toys and objects in the environment	Hold the book properly and turn pages, sometimes several at a time	Can identify the front of the book and use clues on the cover to select a book *(E.g. Using the cover of the book as a clue, Charna, 28 months, picks up The Itsy Bitsy Spider and says to her mother, "Spider book.")*	Can turn the book to the first page for an adult to begin reading and close the book and say, "The end"	Understand proper handling of books to avoid damage and help repair books, with adult support
	Emergent Writing	**Print and alphabet awareness***	Note: Children at this age are not aware of print as being distinct from anything else in their environment.	May begin to recognize that labels convey meaning *(E.g. Jared sees a box of cheerios and says, "Oh, Oh!")*	Can show awareness of and recognize some print in the environment	Recognize that print and numerals are symbols that convey meaning *(E.g. Colin, age 2, points to the bottom of his painting on his classroom wall and says, "There's my name.")*	Point to print and ask, "What does that say?" or ask someone to write for them	Begin to recognize their own name and may notice words that start with the same letter as their own name
		Interest in and emergent writing*	Note: Children at this age are not aware of writing.	Use writing tools (crayons, markers, pens) and notice that they can make marks with these utensils	Gain more control over the kinds of marks they make (lines vs. circular marks)	Scribble and draw and see these as the same	Use their increased fine motor control to control the size and shape of their scribbles	Begin to differentiate between drawing and writing, and their scribbles may look more like writing *(E.g. After painting a picture, 3-year-old Isaiah makes a series of vertical lines, representing his name.)*

*Achieving milestones in emergent literacy development is dependent on the extent of the child's exposure to books and print.

		LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGENT LITERACY		
		Emergent Literacy – How Do Young Children Learn to View Literacy as a Tool for Expressing Themselves and Interacting with the World?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 1 – Language Arts & Literacy**
STRANDS	**Emergent Reading**	**Participation in language and literacy activities***	• Learn new information from books being read to them • Ask for a story to be read and respond to stories told or read aloud • Respond to adult questions about a book or story • Ask questions about a book or story • Make connections between a book or story to personal experiences *(E.g. Irena points to a picture of a dog and says, "I have a dog like this, only bigger and my dog never chews shoes".)*	**Domain 1: Element E – Comprehends and responds to books and other texts** 1. During read-alouds and book conversations interacts in a way that relates to the story
		Narrative and story sense*	• Guess what will happen next in a story using pictures as a guide • Tell their own stories	**Domain 1: Element E – Comprehends and responds to books and other texts** 4. Retells a familiar story in proper sequence, including major events and characters
		Comprehension and interpretation*	• Represent stories told or read aloud through a variety of media or in play • Use their own words to retell a simple familiar story while looking at a book • Retell information from a book *(E.g. 5 year old Mac tells his Papa that Tyrannosaurus Rex runs as fast as a horse.)*	**Domain 1: Element E – Comprehends and responds to books and other texts** 1. During read-alouds and book conversations interacts in a way that relates to the story 2. Begins to identify and recall story-related problems, events, and resolutions with guidance from an adult 3. Pretends to read, reciting language that closely matches the text on each page and using reading-like intonation
		Interest in and appreciation of reading*	• Select favorite books, authors, or illustrators • Request or respond to informational books on favorite topics	

*Achieving milestones in emergent literacy development is dependent on the extent of the child's exposure to books and print.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Emergent Literacy – How Do Young Children Learn to View Literacy as a Tool for Expressing Themselves and Interacting with the World?

STRANDS		CONSTRUCTS	We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:	NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 1 – Language Arts & Literacy
	Emergent Reading	**Phonological awareness (which refers to understanding the sound structure of language such as sounds, rhymes, syllables, and words)***	• Listen to and recognize different sounds in rhymes, songs, and familiar words *(E.g. When the teacher sings, "Willaby wallaby Wecca an elephant sat on...", Becca shouts, "Becca!")* • Play with sounds of spoken language including letter sounds, rhymes, and words *(E.g. Ray says, "My name rhymes with play.")* • Can distinguish the beginning sounds of some words	**Domain 1: Element F – Demonstrates phonological awareness** 1. Notices and discriminates rhyme 2. Decides whether two words rhyme 3. Notices and discriminates alliteration 4. Hears and shows awareness of separate syllables in words
		Book awareness*	• Identify parts of books such as cover, first page, and title • Understand that print carries a message	**Domain 1: Element D – Demonstrates knowledge of print concepts and conventions** 2. Has some knowledge of books (top, bottom, front, back, left to right)
	Emergent Writing	**Print and alphabet awareness***	• Recognize some letters in the alphabet, especially those in their own name *(E.g. While putting her things away in her cubby, 4-year-old Azlyn notices other children's names on their cubbies. She exclaims,"Hey, Autumn starts the same as me!")* • Begin to associate sounds with words or letters • Understand that specific symbols are used to communicate in writing	**Domain 1: Element D – Demonstrates knowledge of print concepts and conventions** 1. Uses and appreciates print 3. Shows awareness of various features of print: letters, words, spaces, upper- and lowercase letters, some punctuation **Domain 1: Element G – Demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet** 1. Names some letters 2. Matches some letters to their sounds 3. Identifies and names letters in own first name 4. Shows understanding that a sequence of letters represents a word
		Interest in and emergent writing*	• Understand that writing is a way of communicating • Use scribbles, shapes, pictures, or dictation to represent thoughts or ideas • Engage in writing using letter-like symbols to make letters or words • Begin to copy or write their own name	**Domain 1: Element H – Demonstrates emergent writing skills** 1. Writes own first name (some letters recognizable) 2. Uses letter-like shapes, symbols, and letters to convey meaning 3. Represents ideas and stories through pictures, dictation and play

*Achieving milestones in emergent literacy development is dependent on the extent of the child's exposure to books and print.

Cognitive Development – Early Numeracy

How Do Young Children Develop Mathematical Thinking and Use It to Make Sense of Their World?

Through their daily routines and play interactions, children from earliest infancy begin to discover mathematical concepts, such as more or less. When adults and children engage in "math talk" such as making comparisons and using position words, children gain a deeper understanding of mathematics in their world. As young children explore their environments with adult guidance, their knowledge about mathematical concepts becomes more advanced. Adults support this progression by offering hands-on play opportunities that encourage children to pose questions, explore, and problem solve. This lays the foundation for the development of logical reasoning and abstract thought.

The following six interconnected strands and constructs are important to consider when creating opportunities for early numeracy learning:

- **Number Operations:** Concept of number; quantity; ways of representing numbers; one-to-one correspondence; and counting
- **Geometry and Spatial Sense:** Shapes and their attributes; position; comparing and contrasting two or more objects; and distance
- **Measurement:** Size, volume, quantity, and other measurable qualities and the tools to measure them
- **Patterns and Relationships:** Recognizing or creating planned or random repetitions and comparisons
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Gathering; organizing and analyzing information; and drawing conclusions to make sense of the world
- **Time and Sequence:** Concept of time as it relates to daily routines and sequencing of events

We highly recommend that those using the NH Early Learning Standards refer to the Cultural Influences on Development and Learning section on page 7.

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT						
		Early Numeracy – How Do Young Children Develop Mathematical Thinking and Use it to Make Sense of Their World?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Number Operations**	**Concept of number, quantity, ways of representing numbers, one-to-one correspondence, and counting**	Develop an awareness of one or more than one *(E.g. 7-month-old Gary holds one toy in one hand, another toy in the other hand.)*	Begin to understand the concepts of "more" and "all gone" and begin to request "more" or indicate "no more" verbally or non-verbally	Can use number words in songs and finger plays without understanding that numbers represent quantity	Develop an understanding of the relationship between spoken numbers and quantity for quantities up to 2 or 3 *(E.g. Blake picks up a car and a block and says, "Two toys.")*	Begin to initiate one-to-one matching for four or fewer items	Show an interest in counting 1 to 10, may hold up fingers to indicate quantity
	Geometry and Spatial Sense	**Shapes and their attributes, position, comparing and contrasting two or more objects, and distance**	Develop an understanding of where things are in their environment	Demonstrate an awareness of the distance between their body and materials in space *(E.g. Jayce crawls across the room to grab a toy.)*	Demonstrate an understanding of simple position words *(E.g. Hayden climbs a hill and says, "Me on top!")*	Demonstrate an understanding of many position words *(E.g. Brittany says to her teacher, "I'm next to you.")*	Use comparison words and position words correctly	Explore and identify shapes in their environment and begin to notice attributes of shapes with adult help *(E.g. Addy, 3 years old, says, "Look, my paper plate is a circle!")*
	Measurements	**Size, volume, quantity, and other measurable qualities, and the tools to measure them**	Explore and begin to notice differences in temperature of objects in their environment	Show some awareness of the relative size of objects in their environment	Explore the concept of volume *(E.g. Chase and Jade pick up a bucket of sand and dump it into the sandbox, over and over.)*	Show awareness of measurable qualities, such as size, distance, temperature, and weight, which, in toddler terms, are big/small, near/far, hot/cold, heavy/light	Recognize that objects and people can be measured *(E.g. Brianna asks her mother, "How big am I?")*	Use non-standard tools to measure, with adult assistance *(E.g. Marla, Stacy, and Tim pass a lump of clay between them to see if it is bigger or smaller than each child's hand.)*

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT						
		Early Numeracy – How Do Young Children Develop Mathematical Thinking and Use it to Make Sense of Their World?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Patterns and Relationships**	**Recognizing or creating planned or random repetitions and comparisons**	Engage in sustained gazing at objects or people, or track movement with their eyes	Explore similarities and differences among objects in their environment	Show awareness of objects and pictures that are the same	Show awareness of and interest in patterns	Recognize simple patterns *(E.g. Malik looks at the plastic animals on the shelf and says, "Mommy, baby, mommy, baby.")*	Extend simple patterns
	Data Collection and Analysis	**Gathering, organizing, and analyzing information, and drawing conclusions to make sense of the world**	Focus attention to people or objects in their environment for a period of time	Focus on details in people and objects in their environment	Can sort objects that are the same and different on one attribute *(E.g. Amy puts all the red vehicles in one basket.)*	Can find people and objects that are the same based on one attribute	Notice that objects can be classified in different ways based on different attributes *(E.g. Leo and Peter argue over whether to sort their vehicles by color or by size.)*	Sort objects or people into subgroups by one attribute
	Time and Sequence	**Concept of time as it relates to daily routines, and sequencing of events**	Associate a specific occurrence with meeting their needs *(E.g. Emma hears footsteps and lifts her arms anticipating that mommy is coming to pick her up.)*	Demonstrate some understanding of when things happen in relation to routines	Can recall information about the immediate past *(E.g. Jack recalls what he had for morning snack when his aunt asks him after lunch.)*	Show increased knowledge and memory for daily routines	Can anticipate what will happen next in daily routines	Can remember and describe daily sequence of events

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT		
		Early Numeracy – How Do Young Children Develop Mathematical Thinking and Use it to Make Sense of Their World?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 2 – Cognition & General Knowledge (Logic & Reasoning, Mathematics)**
STRANDS	**Number Operations**	**Concept of number, quantity, ways of representing numbers, one-to-one correspondence, and counting**	Develop progressively more complex knowledge and skills about numbers, in the following sequence*: • Identify by sight how many are in a small group of up to 3 items • Demonstrate understanding of one-to-one correspondence • Recognize that the last number used in counting is the same as the total *(E.g. Leila counts four cars and when the teacher asks her, "How many cars do you have?" she answers, "Four.")* • Count objects in two different collections (up to ten in each) to determine which is the larger one • Can answer the question "What comes after..." a number without having to recount *(E.g. When asked, "What comes after five," Sawyer says, "Six," without having to count up from one.)* • Change small collections of objects by combining or removing objects and then counting to determine how many they have *(E.g. Avery counts out three blocks, then adds two more, and counts all of the blocks and says, "I have five blocks.")* *While many children move through all of the steps of this sequence by five years old, others may still be only partially through this sequence by that age. • Begin to recognize and attempt to write numerals up to 10	**Domain 2: Element E – Uses number concepts and operations** 1. Verbally counts to 20; counts 10–20 objects accurately; understands the value of a whole number; tells what number (1–10) comes next in order by counting 2. Shows beginning understanding of numbers and quantity; understands which set has more than, less than or equal to; counts to answer how many 3. Identifies numerals to 10 by name and connects each to counted objects (one-to-one correspondence) 4. Explores operations to solve mathematical problems
	Geometry and Spatial Sense	**Shapes and their attributes, position, comparing and contrasting two or more objects, and distance**	• Use words that show understanding of order and position of objects • Identify and name common shapes • Describes basic features of shapes *(E.g. Finnley says, "This triangle has three sides and this square has four sides.")* • Compare the shape of two objects *(E.g. Reanna draws two round shapes and says, "This one is an oval and this one is a circle.")*	**Domain 2: Element F – Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes** 1. Begins to appropriately use positional words indicating location, direction, and distance 2. Describes basic two- and three-dimensional shapes by using math vocabulary; recognizes basic shapes when they are presented in a new orientation
	Measurements	**Size, volume, quantity, and other measurable qualities, and the tools to measure them**	• Recognize that objects can be measured by height, length, weight, and volume *(E.g. Palo makes a stack of unifix cubes next to his friend and says, "You're 40 cubes tall.")* • Make comparison such as bigger or smaller between two groups of objects • Recognize that time is measured in units *(E.g. John asks how many more minutes he can stay outside.)*	**Domain 2: Element H – Compares and measures** 1. Uses multiples of the same unit to measure; makes comparisons among objects 2. Creates pictograph for quantities up to 10 3. Knows the purpose of standard measuring tools 5. Attempts to make quantifiable predictions

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT		
		Early Numeracy – How Do Young Children Develop Mathematical Thinking and Use it to Make Sense of Their World?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 2 – Cognition & General Knowledge (Logic & Reasoning, Mathematics)**
STRANDS	**Patterns and Relationships**	**Recognizing or creating planned or random repetitions, and comparisons**	• Order or sequence several objects based on one characteristic • Begin creating simple patterns with familiar objects *(E.g. Max places the blocks in rows of long, short, long, short, etc.)*	**Domain 2: Element G – Demonstrates knowledge of patterns** 1. Extends and creates simple repeating patterns 2. Sorts objects into subgroups that vary by one or two attributes 3. Recognizes and extends simple patterns and duplicates them
	Data Collection and Analysis	**Gathering, organizing, and analyzing information, drawing conclusions to make sense of the world**	• Sort objects and count and compare the groups formed *(E.g. Carlo says, "There are 3 brown teddy bears and 4 black teddy bears.")* • Organize and represent information visually, with adult support *(E.g. The teacher helps the preschoolers create a picture graph showing the numbers of children who walked to school or rode in a car.)*	**Domain 2: Element C – Uses classification skills** 1. Groups objects by one characteristic; then regroups them using a different attribute and indicates the reason
	Time and Sequence	**Concept of time as it relates to daily routines, and sequencing of events**	• Begin to differentiate between yesterday, today, and tomorrow	**Domain 2: Element B – Remembers and connects experiences** 1. Tells about experiences in sequences and provides details, and evaluates the experiences based on applied knowledge from memory **Domain 2: Element H – Compares and measures** 4. Develops a sense of time (yesterday, today, tomorrow, days of the week and seasons)

Cognitive Development – Science and Social Studies

How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Their Physical and Social Worlds?

Young children act just like scientists. They observe their world, wonder about what they see and experience, and ask questions about the physical and social aspects of their environment. Through child-directed, adult-guided interactions, infants and toddlers begin to understand how the world affects them, and how they affect the world. Similarly, preschool and kindergarten-aged children begin to seek answers to their questions, such as "How do the clouds hang in the sky?" They develop theories about how the world works. Adults support this development of scientific and social thought by offering play-based experiences that involve creativity, communication, cooperation, and collaboration. By encouraging these skills, adults guide children to respect and care for themselves, other people, and the world around them.

The following three interconnected strands and constructs are important to consider when creating opportunities for science and social studies learning:

- **Key Concepts:** Object permanence; and representational/symbolic thought
- **Exploring the Physical World:** Physical science; life science; earth and space science; and environmental science
- **Exploring the Social World:** Social conventions (rules and expectations, authority and governance); self, family, and community (culture, ethical and human issues)

We highly recommend that those using the NH Early Learning Standards refer to the Cultural Influences on Development and Learning section on page 7.

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT						
		Science and Social Studies – How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Their Physical and Social Worlds?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Key Concepts**	**Object permanence**	Track moving objects and begin to understand that people and objects no longer in sight still exist	Show understanding that people and objects no longer in sight still exist *(E.g. Molly watches her mother put keys in her purse. Molly then searches in the purse to find them.)*	Can find objects that are not in sight	Ask for people or things that are not in sight	Enjoy hiding games	Play simple memory games
	Exploring the Physical World	**Physical world**	Explore objects in various ways using their senses	Through trial and error, begin to develop an understanding of some basic physical science concepts such as gravity, force, and motion. *(E.g. Penelope repeatedly drops her cup off the high chair and watches it fall to the floor.)*	Through repeated observation, experimentation, and/or exploration, further develop their understanding of basic physical science concepts and the natural world	Show interest in observing, experiencing, and/or exploring physical science concepts and the natural world	Focus on small details in indoor and outdoor environment *(E.g. Esme lays on the grass and watches an ant move.)*	Ask many questions about the physical world and investigate with adult guidance
	Exploring the Social World	**Social conventions**	Recognize cultural and social labels for people and relationships in their family	Use culturally appropriate labels for people and relationships in their family	Recognize that there are routines and may test the expectations	Participate in expected behavior including greetings and good-byes	Understand that certain rules and customs apply in some situations and not in others *(E.g. Sam tells his baby sister, "No yelling in church.")*	Demonstrate and follow different customs in different settings
		Self, family, and community	Recognize primary caregivers	Interact with members of their household and their classroom *Relates to social/emotional construct of relationships and social skills with peers*	Identify family members of other children in their class	May sort items or toys into "families" and label with different roles in their own terms	Explore various roles in their home and classroom *(E.g. Natalie tells James, 20 months old, that he is the baby and that she is going to be the mommy. She then begins acting out the role by giving him a bottle.)*	Ask questions about other people's experiences in their families and communities

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT		
		Science and Social Studies – How Do Young Children Develop Understandings of Their Physical and Social Worlds?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 2 – Cognition & General Knowledge (Logic & Reasoning, Mathematics) Domain 3 – Cognition & General Knowledge (Science & Social Studies) Domain 5 – Social & Emotional Development**
STRANDS	**Key Concepts**	**Object permanence and representational/ symbolic thought**	• Talk about things or people that are not present • Use a variety of forms (drawings, block structures, movement, and other materials) to represent their ideas and feelings	**Domain 2: Element D – Uses symbols and images to represent something not present** 1. Plans and then uses drawings, constructions, movements, and dramatization to represent ideas
	Exploring the Physical World	**Physical science, life science, earth and space science, and environmental science**	• Begin to identify the properties of various living things and what living things need to be able to survive • Begin to talk about environmental changes and phenomena (weather, seasons, sun, and moon) • Show interest in caring for the earth and environment • Explore simple physical science concepts such as force, motion, and gravity *(E.g. Three children in the preschool room build an elaborate structure with blocks and ramps and then run different marbles through it to see which is the fastest.)*	**Domain 3: Element A – Scientific inquiry** 3. Observes and explores materials and natural phenomena **Domain 3: Element B – Conceptual knowledge of the natural & physical world** 1. Demonstrates content knowledge of the characteristics of living things 2. Demonstrates content knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials 3. Demonstrates content knowledge of Earth's environment
	Exploring the Social World	**Social conventions (Rules and expectations, authority and governance)**	• Show interest in caring for the classroom environment • Participate in developing classroom rules • Practice culturally appropriate social conventions *(E.g. Satori uses chopsticks when eating meals at home.)* • With guidance from adults, can engage in problem-solving to resolve difference in perspectives	**Domain 5: Element B – Self-concept, self-regulation and confidence** 5. Complies with three verbal directions 6. Follows simple classroom rules, routines, and transitions with occasional reminders 7. Cares properly for materials, equipment, and facilities
		Self, family, and community (Culture, ethical and human issues)	• Know basic personal information • Are aware of own family relationships and show curiosity about others' families • Notice similarities and differences in people, families, and social groups • Recognize some people, places, and occupations in their communities • Act out family roles and occupations in dramatic play • Show interest in issues of friendship and fairness	**Domain 3: Element C – Social studies: Self, family & community** 1. Demonstrates knowledge about self and others 2. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live 3. Shows emergent understanding of family, school, and community 4. Describes some peoples' jobs and what is required to perform them 5. Demonstrates awareness of citizenship (contributes to a classroom community) **Domain 3: Element D – Social studies: Geography, history, events** 1. Describes the location of things in the environment 2. Understands that people can take care of the environment through activities 3. Explores past and present change related to familiar people or places

Cognitive Development – Approaches to Learning

How Do Young Children Develop and Use Strategies to Learn?

Young children learn in many ways. From infancy, children encounter problems, invent solutions, and develop the skills they will need to be effective learners. Children are motivated by curiosity and interest to explore their environments. They delight in their discoveries. Through play, children can expand on their everyday experiences and try out ideas to deal with challenging situations. Children take pride in their accomplishments as they develop the ability to solve problems, regulate their own behavior, and do things for themselves. Preschoolers begin to develop the ability to work with others to identify and achieve a shared goal. Adults can support children's learning by providing them with interesting, appropriate, and satisfying play opportunities that allow children to practice, explore, and experiment.

The following six interconnected strands and constructs are important to consider when creating opportunities for children to engage in varied approaches to learning:

- **Inquiry and Exploration:** Curiosity and sensory exploration; and cause and effect
- **Reasoning and Problem Solving:** Theories about the world and how things work; reflection; critical thinking; and trial and error
- **Play:** Imitation; risk taking; experimentation; spontaneous learning; creativity; imagination; inventiveness; sense of delight and humor; and play with others
- **Executive Function:** Adaptability of thought processes; planning and intentionality; working memory; focus and attention; and motivation, initiative, and persistence
- **Symbolic Representation:** Representational process
- **Cooperative Learning**

Keep in mind that many of the constructs under Approaches to Learning are strongly culturally influenced and will be demonstrated in different ways depending on the child's cultural identity.

We highly recommend that those using the NH Early Learning Standards refer to the Cultural Influences on Development and Learning section on page 7.

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT						
		Approaches to Learning – How Do Young Children Develop and Use Strategies to Learn?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Inquiry and Exploration**	**Curiosity and sensory exploration**	Show awareness of occurrences in their surroundings and use their senses to explore people and objects	Explore objects using their senses and manipulate them in a variety of ways	Continue to investigate people and objects as tools	Seek information through observation, exploration, and use of simple tools *(E.g. Arthur pulls a chair up to the kitchen counter to see what his father is making for dinner.)*	Continue to seek information through observation, exploration, and asking questions	Persist in asking "Why?"
		Cause and effect	Understand that their actions can have an effect on people and objects in their environment and repeat actions to duplicate effects *(E.g. Colleen gently bounces 6-month-old Rory on her lap. When she stops, Rory moves his body up and down until Colleen resumes the bouncing.)*	May do things to get a response from familiar adults and children *(E.g. Luke drops peas and looks over to his caregiver as they fall from the table to the floor.)*	Experiment with cause and effect while investigating their environment	Repeat actions to create the same effect and add variations of those actions to see if the same thing happens	Anticipate and try to prevent another person's actions that will create undesirable effects	Use variations on previous actions in new environments and with different objects to create new and desired effects
	Reasoning and Problem Solving	**Theories about the world and how things work (Reflection, critical thinking, and trial and error)**	Seek to make sense of what happens in their environment	Act out ideas about how things work by repeating and changing their actions (trial and error)	Process and assimilate new information and experiences by comparing them to previous information and experiences to expand their understanding of the world *(E.g. Margaret sees a horse for the first time and says, "Big doggie!")*	Use multiple strategies to solve simple problems, but may become frustrated when their strategies don't work	Solve some problems without having to physically try out all possible solutions and may ask for help when needed	Remember strategies that have worked and apply them to new situations *(E.g. At home, Davis moves a stool to the sink so that he can reach for his toothbrush. At child care the next day, Davis struggles to reach a pencil on the counter so he picks up a chair and puts it near the counter.)*

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT						
		Approaches to Learning – How Do Young Children Develop and Use Strategies to Learn?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Play**	**Imitation, risk taking, and experimentation**	Engage in turn taking interactions with adults and explore a variety of materials including their own bodies, people, and objects	May initiate turn taking with a trusted adult *(E.g. Spencer gives a small toy to his grandmother and she gives another toy to him. They repeat this several times.)*	Enjoy using their whole bodies in active play	Try out new actions, roles, and words that they imitate from others	Take risks in big body play, expanding their physical abilities	Engage in pretend play that includes roles and experiences that they find challenging *(E.g. After a visit to the doctor, Brett gives her doll a shot.)*
		Creativity, imagination, and inventiveness	Infants this young do not demonstrate creativity, imagination, and inventiveness in ways that adults can easily interpret	May invent ways to attract adult attention and engage with them *(E.g. Gretta pretends to cough to gain her teacher's attention and repeats this when her teacher laughs.)*	Play with toys in ways of their own invention. *(E.g. Kai puts blocks and cars together in a single structure.)*	Begin to engage in simple pretend games	Engage in more extended pretend play	Invent stories and characters
		Sense of delight and humor* ***delight and humor are culturally influenced**	Show pleasure in simple sensory games *(E.g. AJ's mother tugs at the blanket in his hands and he tugs it back toward himself. They do this several times as AJ laughs.)*	Express delight in ways appropriate to their culture	Take delight in repetitive games and interactions *(E.g. Bodhi and his teacher pass a ball back and forth and each time the teacher pretends to stop, Bodhi says, "again" and laughs when the teacher starts again.)*	Are amused by incongruity *(E.g. Jonah laughs hysterically when his father pretends to put Jonah's shoes on his big feet.)*	Play exuberantly	Laugh at themselves when they do something silly

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT						
		Approaches to Learning – How Do Young Children Develop and Use Strategies to Learn?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Executive Function**	**Adaptability of thought processes, planning, and intentionality**	Can act intentionally to achieve a goal *(E.g. 8-month-old Oscar rolls across the floor to reach a toy.)*	Can carry out their own one-step plan *(E.g. Penthia puts a hat on her head.)*	Plan and implement a two-step dramatic play *(E.g. Ezra pretends to feed the baby doll and then puts it in the baby bed.)*	Can try to figure out what is getting in the way of their plan	Plan their own simple activities and organize the materials they need	Can adapt plans to incorporate new materials
		Working memory and focus and attention	Begin to maintain focus despite distractions during brief delays	Can have expectations of what will happen based on previous experiences *(E.g. Wilfred pulls his mother's hand to bring her to the refrigerator knowing she will offer juice to him.)*	Stay focused on simple stories or books for brief periods of time	Have increased attention spans for activities that interest them or that they initiate	Can maintain attention on their choice of activity until they have achieved their goal *(E.g. Cheng draws one more line on her picture and says, "All done.")*	Can play simple memory games such as matching pictures on cards
		Motivation, initiative, and persistence	Persist in pursuing objects of interest *(E.g. 9-month-old Jasper crawls after her family's cat.)*	Explore objects that interest them with focus and persistence	Initiate simple plans *(E.g. 20-month-old Abreeanna pulls on her teacher's hand and says, "out", as she walks to the door.)*	Persist in following their own curiosity even if adults try to deter them *(E.g. 24-month-old Sebastian keeps dropping his toy cars in the toilet bowl even though his mother tells him not to.)*	Demonstrate the motivation to master simple tasks	Show initiative in a variety of ways including offering to help
	Symbolic Representation	**Representational process**	Calm in the presence of their primary caregiver *(E.g. Gigi clings to her teacher when a stranger enters the classroom.)*	May draw comfort from objects that represent family members or primary caregivers *(E.g. Bertti keeps her mother's scarf in her cubby and clings to it when upset.)*	Use an object to represent something else	Use a variety of materials, media, and other forms of self-expression to represent their thinking *(E.g. Tessa makes up songs about herself.)*	Understand that some signs in the community represent familiar places	Are aware that some symbols represent words and numbers

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT		
		Approaches to Learning – How Do Young Children Develop and Use Strategies to Learn?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators** **Domain 2 – Cognition & General Knowledge (Logic & Reasoning, Mathematics)** **Domain 3 – Cognition & General Knowledge (Science & Social Studies)** **Domain 4 – Approaches to Learning**
STRANDS	**Inquiry and Exploration**	**Conjecture, scientific inquiry process, curiosity, and sensory exploration**	• Observe, wonder, and/or ask questions, make guesses, and explore hypotheses • Use senses and tools/technology to aid in investigation	**Domain 3: Element A – Scientific inquiry** 1. Expresses a sense of wonder and curiosity through questioning 2. Uses simple tools, equipment, and technology for investigation **Domain 2: Element A – Demonstrates curiosity in approaches to learning** 2. Uses technology skills
		Cause and effect	• Sometimes use magical thinking, showing misunderstanding of cause and effect *(E.g. Zeke puts his snow pants by the front door, believing that this will make it snow overnight.)* • Continue to experiment with cause and effect • Engage in repeated actions to make something happen *(E.g. Dannie notices that Marie buttons her own coat, so Dannie tries several methods before succeeding in buttoning her own coat.)*	
	Reasoning and Problem Solving	**Theories about the world and how things work, reflection, critical thinking, and trial and error**	• Talk about own ideas, predictions, and plans, building on prior experiences either self-initiated or guided by adults • Can figure out more than one solution to a problem if the first one doesn't work *(E.g. In trying to get a ball down from the tree, Marlow first throws a shoe to get it down and when that doesn't work, gets a rake to try to poke it down.)*	**Domain 2: Element A – Demonstrates curiosity in approaches to learning** 1. Attempts trial and error responses **Domain 2: Element B – Remembers and connects experiences** 1. Tells about experiences in sequence, provides details, and evaluates the experience based on applied knowledge from memory
	Cooperative Learning	**Cooperative learning**	• Work with others to plan or problem solve toward a shared goal and can describe the reasons for their shared decisions *(E.g. Aaron, Chuck, and Jill make a complex track for a train and discuss how sharp curves make trains derail.)*	**Domain 4: Element C – Cooperative Learning** 1. Establishes and sustains positive interactions with peers in small and large groups 2. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations, shares and takes turns

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT		
		Approaches to Learning – How Do Young Children Develop and Use Strategies to Learn?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 2 – Cognition & General Knowledge (Logic & Reasoning, Mathematics) Domain 4 – Approaches to Learning Domain 5 – Social & Emotional Development**
STRANDS	**Play**	**Imitation, risk taking, experimentation, spontaneous learning, and play with others**	• Co-create elaborate pretend play with other children, including scenarios with multiple roles, ideas, and co-negotiated rules • Engage in pretend play with others to explore and understand life experience and roles • Create sophisticated structures alone and with others, using various constructive materials, sometimes used in pretend play	**Domain 2: Element D – Uses symbols and images to represent something not present** 2. Interacts with two or more children during pretend play, assigning and/or assuming roles and discussing actions; sustains play scenario for up to 10 minutes
		Sense of delight and humor	• Show delight in all aspects of play from planning to describing the experience • May play with language including “bathroom” words • Begin to understand simple jokes • May share physical humor with one another	
		Creativity, imagination, and inventiveness	• Tell elaborate stories of their own invention or add details to stories • Create games that continue to evolve as they plan • Pretend to be characters from stories, books, television shows, movies, or their own invention	

		COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT		
		Approaches to Learning – How Do Young Children Develop and Use Strategies to Learn?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators** **Domain 2 – Cognition & General Knowledge (Logic & Reasoning, Mathematics)** **Domain 4 – Approaches to Learning** **Domain 5 – Social & Emotional Development**
STRANDS	**Executive Function**	**Adaptability of thought processes, planning, and intentionality**	• Begin to show ability to adapt their plans when they can't follow through with their original idea • Can adapt their plan to include other children with adult guidance • Can engage in increasingly complex planning *(E.g. The 4-year-olds create very complex rules for the game they are playing on the playground.)* • May ask for help on own or with teacher prompting or seek more information when needed	**Domain 5: Element B – Self-concept, self-regulation and confidence** 4. Solves problems without having to try every possibility **Domain 4: Element B – Approaches to learning** 2. Approaches activities with flexibility and inventiveness 3. Plans and pursues a variety of challenging tasks 4. Seeks guidance to continue learning
		Working memory and focus and attention	• Pay attention to and remember details • Keep track of more than one thing at a time • Stay focused for longer periods of time on activities that interest them and return to those activities	
		Motivation, initiative, and persistence	• Demonstrate a desire to please adults and may seek adult attention *(E.g. 4-year-old Zara yells "Watch me! Watch me!" as she walks across the balance beam.)* • Take the initiative carrying out their own plans and persist until the goal is achieved • May get frustrated if they cannot carry out their goals to the level of mastery they desire	**Domain 4: Element B – Approaches to learning** 1. Sustains work on age-appropriate, interesting topics of studies
	Symbolic Representation	**Representational process**	• Use objects to represent other objects in their pretend play *(E.g. Hadley and Kayla build an elaborate castle using couch cushions and blankets.)* • Understand that symbols on pictographs and bar graphs indicate quantity *(E.g. Chethan puts a sticker on the class graph to show that he has a cat at home and remarks, "More children have a dog at home than a cat.")*	**Domain 2: Element H – Compares and measures** 2. Creates pictograph for quantities up to 10

Physical Development and Health

How Do Young Children Use Their Bodies to Explore and Participate in Their World?

How Do Young Children Assess and Navigate Risks and Develop Healthy Behaviors?

From the time they are born, children use their bodies to explore and experience the world. Children gather information with their senses, gain strength and practice coordination of their bodies, and delight in their increasing ability to move and use their muscles. Adults need to provide daily opportunities for children to engage in sustained, moderate to vigorous physical activity, outdoors and indoors. During their first five years, children progress from having all of their health, safety, and nutrition needs met by adults to developing some independence in self-care. With appropriate guidance from adults, young children develop an understanding of the link between safe and healthy habits and their body's growth and development.

The following six interconnected strands and constructs are important to consider when creating opportunities to promote physical development and health:

- **Body Awareness and Control:** Spatial awareness; development of the senses; orientation to stimuli; sensory integration; physical state regulation; physical fitness; and knowledge for participation in physical education
- **Large Muscle Development and Coordination:** Gross motor skills
- **Small Muscle Development and Coordination:** Fine motor skills
- **Nutrition**
- **Basic Safety**
- **Self-care**

We highly recommend that those using the NH Early Learning Standards refer to the Cultural Influences on Development and Learning section on page 7.

Physical Development and Health – How Do Young Children Use Their Bodies to Explore and Participate in Their World? How Do Young Children Assess and Navigate Risks and Develop Healthy Behaviors?

STRANDS		Ages	Birth to Nine Months	Nine Months to Eighteen Months	Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months	Twenty-Four to Thirty Months	Thirty Months to Three Years	Three Years
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
	Body Awareness and Control	**Spatial awareness**	Use many repetitions to move various body parts and gain increasing control over movements	Become more aware of where their body is in relation to other objects and people in the environment	Can negotiate moving around objects and people without bumping into them	Show increased balance and coordination in play activities	Move their bodies through space with balance and control	Move with confidence and stability, coordinating movements to accomplish simple tasks *(E.g. Outside on the playground, a small group of children play a game of Duck, Duck, Goose.)*
	Body Awareness and Control	**Development of the senses, orientation to stimuli, and sensory integration**	Show awareness of and respond to sensory stimuli	Use senses to experience objects and the environment	Demonstrate sensory preferences *(E.g. After playing in the sand in the sensory table, Anne wipes her hands together and leaves when the teacher adds water to make mud.)*	Use the information received from their senses to change the way they interact with the environment	Begin to focus on important stimuli while ignoring extraneous stimuli	Develop the ability to use one sense to predict what they would perceive with another *(E.g. Jowanna reaches into the mystery bag and guesses that she is holding a teddy bear based on the way it feels.)*
	Body Awareness and Control	**Physical state regulation**	Begin to develop predictable patterns for sleeping, eating, and eliminating	By the end of this age range are eating three meals per day plus snacks	Can show tiredness or hunger through predictable behaviors	May resist sleeping or napping even when tired	May take initiative to make themselves more comfortable *(E.g. Remey takes off his socks and says, "Too hot.")*	May be able to identify the need to eliminate
	Large Muscle Development and Coordination	**Gross motor skills**	Develop head and trunk stability and ability to change positions	Become mobile, progressing from crawling to walking, and show strong interest in climbing	Move from one place to another by walking and running with basic control and coordination	Have more control with their arm and leg movements for walking, running, climbing, etc.	Purposefully explore with their whole body and use objects and equipment	Show increased confidence in their ability to coordinate large muscles and interest in new ways to use large muscles
	Small Muscle Development and Coordination	**Fine motor skills**	Move from awareness of hands to ability to reach and grasp objects of varying sizes	Coordinate eyes and hands while exploring or holding objects	Reach, grasp, and release objects with more control and experiment with using tools	Use tools purposefully to accomplish a goal *(E.g. Shelby uses a glue stick to glue paper onto a wall collage.)*	Use smaller manipulatives with ease	Show increased confidence in ability to coordinate small muscles and interest in new ways to use small muscles

		Physical Development and Health – How Do Young Children Use Their Bodies to Explore and Participate in Their World? How Do Young Children Assess and Navigate Risks and Develop Healthy Behaviors?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Nutrition**	**Nutrition**	Suck and swallow liquids and associate breast or bottle with being fed	Chew and bite and develop the ability to eat finger foods	Successfully chew and bite foods of varying textures	Demonstrate a willingness to try new foods if offered on multiple occasions	Show some awareness that some foods are more nutritious than others *(E.g. After Brian reads We Eat Food That's Fresh, Kara points to the fresh strawberries on her plate at snack time.)*	Try healthy foods from a variety of cultures when given the opportunity
	Basic Safety	**Basic safety**	Cry to indicate stress and to seek help	Seek physical contact with primary caregivers when faced with new or unfamiliar people or environments *Relates to social/emotional construct of relationships with primary caregivers*	Look to primary caregivers when faced with new or unfamiliar people or environments *Relates to social/emotional construct of relationships with unfamiliar adults*	May acknowledge potentially unsafe situations, but are not yet able to be responsible for their own safety *(E.g. Felipe climbs to the top of the toddler loft but needs a teacher's assistance to get down.)*	Show increasing awareness of health and safety practices	Can identify and explain familiar health and safety signs in the community
	Self-care	**Self-care**	Note: Infants at this age rely on adults to care for them *(E.g. Joey washes 8-month-old Dana's hands after a diaper change.)*	May be able to participate, with adult assistance, in self-care tasks such as dressing and undressing, and feeding themselves, if culturally appropriate	Show increasing interest in and sometimes insistence on doing things for themselves, if culturally appropriate *(E.g. Preda insists on putting the soap on her hands without help.)*	Are able to participate in and occasionally initiate simple health routines, if culturally appropriate	Are more likely to willingly participate in self-care routines, if culturally appropriate	Seek to accomplish self-care and house-keeping tasks with reminders, if culturally appropriate

		Physical Development and Health – How Do Young Children Use Their Bodies to Explore and Participate in Their World? How Do Young Children Assess and Navigate Risks and Develop Healthy Behaviors?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 6 – Physical Development and Health**
STRANDS	**Body Awareness and Control**	**Spatial awareness, development of the senses, orientation to stimuli, sensory integration, physical fitness, knowledge for participation in physical education**	• Participate in a variety of physical activities to enhance personal health and physical fitness • Continue to develop their ability to move their body in space and control their bodily movements *(E.g. Tanya maneuvers her wheelchair up a ramp and around a corner to join her friends.)* • Increasingly use eye-hand coordination to perform a variety of tasks	**Domain 6: Element B – Balance and control** 2. Coordinates movements to perform simple tasks
	Large Muscle Development and Coordination	**Gross motor skills**	• Continue to develop large muscle control and coordination to play more complex games and/or perform more controlled actions *(E.g. Juanita, 5 years old, tosses a stone on the hopscotch game, hops on one foot through two squares and then jumps on two feet to complete the game.)* • Increase their strength, balance, flexibility, and stamina • Use a variety of materials and equipment in gross motor activities	**Domain 6: Element B – Balance and control** 1. Demonstrates fundamental motor skills and body and spatial awareness
	Small Muscle Development and Coordination	**Fine motor skills**	• Continue to develop small muscle control and coordination *(E.g. 4-year-old Emily uses her index finger and her thumb to form the clay into animal like shapes.)* • Demonstrate greater dexterity with a variety of tools such as eating utensils, crayons, keyboards, paint brushes, and scissors	**Domain 6: Element C – Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination** 1. Uses small, precise finger and hand movements 2. Shows beginning control of writing, drawing and art tools

		Physical Development and Health – How Do Young Children Use Their Bodies to Explore and Participate in Their World? How Do Young Children Assess and Navigate Risks and Develop Healthy Behaviors?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 6 – Physical Development and Health**
STRANDS	**Nutrition**	**Nutrition**	• Recognize and eat a variety of nutritious foods • When asked, are able to name nutritious alternatives	
	Basic Safety	**Basic safety**	• Follow basic health and safety rules with some reminders and/or guidance from adults *(E.g. 5-year-old Miles stops at the curb while on a walk with his mother. He looks both ways, holds his mom's hand, and then crosses the street at the crosswalk.)*	**Domain 6: Element A – Health knowledge** 2. Follows basic health and safety rules
	Self-care	**Self-care**	• Demonstrate increasing independence with basic health care skills, if culturally appropriate *(E.g. 4-year-old Saygan blows his nose using a tissue and then goes to the sink to wash his hands with soap and water.)*	**Domain 6: Element A – Health knowledge** 1. Performs self-care tasks independently 3. Practices healthy personal hygiene habits

Creative Expression and Aesthetic Appreciation

How Do Young Children Express Creativity and Experience Beauty?

From infancy, children respond emotionally, cognitively, and with their whole bodies to the arts and the natural world. Children develop the ability to create and appreciate beauty in all its forms. The arts (music, dance, drama, visual arts) and other forms of creative expression foster children's ability to conceptualize and solve problems, develop their imagination, and experience and express powerful emotions. Through their experiences with the natural world, children develop the capacity for wonder and awe. Experiences with the arts and the natural world help children to integrate sensory, emotional, physical, and cognitive learning. Adults can support children's development through providing opportunities to encounter the arts and the natural world and encouraging exploration and creativity.

The following two interconnected strands and constructs are important to consider when creating opportunities to promote creative expression and aesthetic appreciation:

- **Exploration and Creation of Artistic Works:** Invention and imagination; curiosity and interest; and confidence
- **Appreciation of and Response to the Creations of Others and the Natural World:** Awareness and attention; and sense of joy and wonder

We highly recommend that those using the NH Early Learning Standards refer to the Cultural Influences on Development and Learning section on page 7.

		Creative Expression and Aesthetic Appreciation – How Do Young Children Express Creativity and Experience Beauty?						
		Ages	**Birth to Nine Months**	**Nine Months to Eighteen Months**	**Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months**	**Twenty-Four to Thirty Months**	**Thirty Months to Three Years**	**Three Years**
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers are Making Progress When They:**					
STRANDS	**Exploration and Creation of Artistic Works**	**Invention and imagination**	Produce sounds through own vocalizations or play with objects in the indoor and outdoor environment	Use tools to create sounds and marks with various objects, and media	Use tools with more intentionality and purpose	Create three dimensional structures, songs, rhymes, drama, and dances	Use and play with a variety of media and materials for exploration and creative expression	Create more elaborate three dimensional structures, songs, rhymes, and dances with a combination of materials
		Curiosity and interest	Experiment and repeat a variety of vocalizations and body movements *(E.g. Logan, 4 months old, begins to mimic his mother's facial expressions.)*	Explore the sounds that a variety of environmental objects can make and explore a variety of sensory media to create visual images (sand, finger paint, crayons)	Show an increasing range of curiosity about their environment, objects, and people	Show interest in combining objects or media *(E.g. Garrith glues yarn, paper, and packing peanuts onto a piece of construction paper.)*	Show interest in a variety of materials and activities related to creative expression	Ask how to produce a particular sound, visual image, or movement
		Confidence	Gain control over their ability to produce sounds and movement and show delight in positive reactions from others	Refine their actions to get closer to the desired effect in sound and movement	May request adult attention and approval for all of their artistic, dance, and musical efforts	Select and use artistic materials and tools more purposefully *(E.g. Cohen selects a paint brush from the box and blue paint from the row of paint cups and brings them over to the art easel.)*	Ask adults to save or take pictures or videos of their artistic creation	Show adults and peers what they can do or have created, including short individual performances or artistic creations
	Appreciation of and Response to the Creations of Others and the Natural World	**Awareness and attention**	Focus on sounds, patterns, and movements in the indoor and outdoor environment *(E.g. Colin, 8 months old, giggles when he feels the breeze on his face.)*	Show awareness of and preference for specific textures, smells, sounds, and visual images *(E.g. Kathryn uses her hands to pick up a piece of birthday cake and then repeatedly wipes her hands on her shirt saying, "No.")*	Begin to focus on and distinguish details in the indoor and outdoor environments	Show what they notice about the music, art, drama, dance, and natural phenomena they have witnessed	Try to reproduce aspects of music, art, drama, dance, and natural phenomena they have witnessed *(E.g. After watching a tap dancer, Reagan, Andrew, and Gabe recreate tap dancing.)*	Share opinions about likes and dislikes in art and creative expression
		Sense of joy and wonder	Enjoy and respond to sights, sounds, textures, tastes, and smells	Respond with delight to some experiences, environments, and specific sensations	Express joy in aesthetic experience	May participate actively in singing songs and dancing	Exclaim enthusiastically in response to experiencing beauty indoors or outdoors *(E.g. Ginny and her friends jump up and down shouting, "It's a rainbow," when they see a rainbow in the sprinkler.)*	Use descriptive words to express their response to an aesthetic experience *(E.g. Using his communication device, Mark tells Tory he really likes the colors in her painting.)*

		Creative Expression and Aesthetic Appreciation – How Do Young Children Express Creativity and Experience Beauty?		
		CONSTRUCTS	**We Know That Four- and Five-Year-Olds are Making Progress When They:**	**NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Domain 4 – Approaches to Learning**
STRANDS	**Exploration and Creation of Artistic Works**	**Invention and imagination**	• Act out elaborate pretend play scenarios with objects, create representational and abstract art, and play with musical instruments individually and with peers	**Domain 4: Element A – Creative art expression and music** 5. Uses a variety of art materials for tactile experience and exploration, and expression 6. Engages in dramatic play
		Curiosity and interest	• Show interest in learning new skills related to art, music, dance, and drama *(E.g. Doug asks his teacher to show him how to play more chords on the guitar.)* • Participate in experiences in art, music, creative movement, drama, and dance	**Domain 4: Element A – Creative art expression and music** 1. Explores and recognizes beat, rhythm, and a variety of musical genres 2. Participates in creative movement and singing
		Confidence	• Display or perform for others and/or talk about what they have made or done • Show an interest in participating in group performances, but may become anxious and choose not to participate	**Domain 4: Element A – Creative art expression and music** 2. Participates in creative movement and singing
	Appreciation of and Response to the Creations of Others and the Natural World	**Awareness and attention**	• Discuss and evaluate the music, art, drama, dance, and natural phenomena they have witnessed	**Domain 4: Element A – Creative art expression and music** 3. Explores principles and elements of art on its most basic level
		Sense of joy and wonder	• Show interest and respect for the creative work of self and others, and share experiences and ideas about art and creative expression	**Domain 4: Element A – Creative Art Expression and Music** 4. Responds to artistic creations or events

Differences in Development

Is there cause for concern?

Every child grows and develops at his or her own pace. You may notice a difference in a child's development and wonder whether there is cause for concern. The NH Early Learning Standards is a tool for working with families when you have a concern about a child's development. Before you talk with a family, use the Early Learning Standards to guide your observations of the child and keep written records of your observations.

Here are some general expectations by age group. This is not intended to be used as a checklist, but as a supplement to the NH Early Learning Standards. If you have noticed that a child hasn't reached a milestone by the expected age, then the first step is to talk about what you are noticing with the child's family and determine if they have similar concerns (see the section Partnering With Families When You Have a Concern About a Child's Development). Ask the family if they have discussed these concerns with the child's primary health care provider and if they haven't, suggest that they do so.

These age expectations are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Learn the Signs. Act Early. To find more information, please visit: *http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html*

By age 2 months, expect the infant to:

- Respond to loud sounds
- Watch things as they move
- Smile at people
- Bring hands to mouth
- Hold head up when pushing up, when on tummy

By age 4 months, expect the infant to:

- Watch things as they move
- Smile at people
- Hold head steady
- Coo or make sounds
- Bring things to mouth
- Push down with legs when feet are placed on a hard surface
- Move one or both eyes in all directions without difficulty

By age 6 months, expect the infant to:

- Try to get things that are in reach
- Show affection for caregivers
- Respond to sounds around him or her
- Get things to mouth without difficulty
- Make vowel sounds (such as "ah," "eh," "oh")
- Roll over in either direction
- Laugh or make squealing sounds
- Have some muscle control, rather than seeming "floppy" with limited muscle control
- Not seem very stiff, with tight muscles

By age 9 months, expect the infant to:

- Bear weight on legs with support
- Sit with help
- Babble ("mama," "baba," "dada")
- Play any games involving back and forth play
- Respond to own name
- Seem to recognize familiar people
- Look where you point
- Transfer toys from one hand to the other

By age 12 months, expect the infant to:

- Crawl
- Stand when supported
- Search for things that he or she sees you hide
- Point to things
- Learn gestures like waving or shaking head
- Say simple words like “mama” or “dada”
- Not lose skills he or she once had (some backsliding is normal)

By age 18 months, expect the toddler to:

- Point to show things to others
- Walk
- Know what familiar things are used for
- Copy others’ actions or words
- Have at least six words
- Gain new words
- Notice when a caregiver leaves or returns
- Not lose skills he or she once had (some backsliding is normal)

By age 2, expect the toddler to:

- Know what to do with common things, such as a brush, phone, fork or spoon
- Copy actions and words
- Follow simple instructions
- Use two-word phrases (for example “drink milk”)
- Walk steadily
- Not lose skills he or she once had (some backsliding is normal)

By age 3, expect the child to:

- Not fall down a lot or have trouble with stairs
- Have clearer speech and not drool
- Work simple toys such as peg boards, simple puzzles, turning a handle
- Understand simple instructions
- Speak in sentences
- Make eye contact when getting your attention (may vary by culture)
- Play pretend or make-believe
- Want to play with other children or with toys
- Not lose skills he or she once had

By age 4, expect the child to:

- Jump in place
- Scribble
- Show interest in interactive games or make-believe
- Notice other children and respond to people outside of the family
- Participate in dressing, sleeping, and using the toilet
- Understand “same” and “different”
- Use “me” and “you” correctly
- Follow three-part commands
- Retell a favorite story
- Speak clearly
- Not lose skills he or she once had

By age 5, expect the child to:

- Show a wide range of emotions
- Not be unusually withdrawn and inactive
- Focus on one activity for more than 5 minutes
- Respond to people
- Tell what’s real and what’s make believe
- Play a variety of games and activities
- Give first and last name
- Draw pictures
- Talk about daily activities or experiences
- Use plurals or past tense properly in home language
- Brush teeth, wash and dry hands, and get undressed without help
- Not lose skills he or she once had

Partnering with Families When You Have a Concern about a Child's Development

Every child grows and develops at his or her own pace, but it is not unusual to wonder whether a child's development is progressing typically or if it has become delayed or 'off track' for some reason. The NH Early Learning Standards is a tool for working with families when you have a concern about a child's development. Before you talk with a family, use the Early Learning Standards to guide your observations of the child and keep written records of your observations. You can also complete a developmental screening tool aligned with the Early Learning Standards. By observing the child using one of these tools, you will understand whether your concern might be justified.

Keep the Family Informed From the Beginning

At enrollment or the beginning of the year, tell the family about how your program/school uses the NH Early Learning Standards and about any policies that you have about developmental screening. Explain the purposes of the NH Early Learning Standards and developmental screening. Throughout the year, keep the family informed about the child's development.

Meet with the Family

- Make an appointment to meet with the family at a convenient time and in a private place.
- Bring the Early Learning Standards, information from the developmental screening, and your observations so your concerns will be clear.
- Start by thanking the family for coming and talk about the child's strengths and endearing qualities.
- Tell the family you have a concern and describe your observations. Be specific and objective. Don't use jargon and do not diagnose. Explain your concern based on your observations.
- Ask if the family has this concern. Be still and listen, don't interrupt.
- Ask if anyone else has concerns, such as a medical professional, relative, etc.
- Ask about the last well-child medical appointment and if there is one coming up. Recommend that the family share the concerns with their primary health care provider soon.
- Provide information about resources such as Family-Centered Early Supports and Services or Preschool Special Education. Provide a description of what connecting with these resources would do to help the child and family. Offer to support the family in connecting with these resources.
- Leave the door open for further conversations. Ask the family for the best way to communicate with them and encourage them to contact you with any questions.

Always Follow Up

Families need support when their child may have a developmental delay. Let the family know that you are willing to participate in meetings or write letters to help them in the process of learning about their child's development. Also, share strategies for helping their child by offering suggestions of things they can do at home.

Where to Get Help

Watch Me Grow

Watch Me Grow, New Hampshire's developmental screening, information, and referral system for families of young children from birth to six years, helps families track their children's growth and development. You may want to encourage families to participate in Watch Me Grow. It's easy and there is no cost to families. First, families get a copy of the screening questionnaire from a Watch Me Grow site or partner. Next, they complete the questionnaire on their own or with help from the organization that gave it to them. Finally, families return the completed questionnaire to the address listed on the form. Watch Me Grow shares results with families as soon as possible and offers tips, information and resources on helping their child grow and learn. For more information on Watch Me Grow, visit the web site: *www.watchmegrownh.org*

Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (Birth to 3rd Birthday)

Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (FCESS) is NH's early intervention system. FCESS serves children birth to age 3 who have a developmental delay, an established condition, or are at substantial risk for a developmental delay. The goal of FCESS is to support families in helping their children grow and develop. FCESS services are provided in a child's natural environment (typically the home or child care setting) by qualified professionals such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, and early childhood developmental specialists. The activities the child does and/or enjoys every day are used to help the child learn. Having fun and building relationships through play is an important part of the services and support that FCESS provides.

Overview of the Family-Centered Early Supports and Services Process

As an early childhood professional you know it's important to pay close attention to children's development. Talk with families about any concerns you are noticing and let them know that there may be supports for their child and family. Early childhood professionals or families can make referrals to FCESS. Here are some basic steps for making a referral:

1. Use the Intake coordinators by Regions and Towns/Cities list to find the town in which the child lives. It is listed next to the Region. Please find the name and contact information for the intake coordinator. Please visit the FCESS website at: *http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bds/earlysupport/refer.htm*
2. Call the intake coordinator to make the referral (ensure that you first have the family's permission)
   - When you call, you will be asked for the following:
   - Child's name;
     - Contact information for the parent/guardian; and
     - Whether the parent knows about the referral and your concerns.

You do not need to know whether the child is eligible for the program; FCESS will make that determination. To learn more about FCESS visit: *http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bds/earlysupport/index.htm* or call FCESS at (800) 852-3345, ext. 5034

Preschool Special Education Services (age 3 – 5)

Special Education is specifically designed instruction, which along with related services such as speech and occupational therapy, meets the unique needs of a child with a disability. The purpose of special education is to ensure that children with disabilities receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The goal of preschool special education is "to enable young children to be active and successful participants during the early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings — in their homes with their families, in child care, in preschool or school programs and in the community" (Early Childhood Outcomes Center, 2005, p.2). New Hampshire has a long history of providing a free, appropriate public education to children with disabilities, ages 3-5.

Overview of the Special Education Process

If a child is struggling academically, socially, emotionally, having behavioral problems or difficulty communicating, you may consider talking with the child's family about making a referral to special education (please see the section Partnering with Families When You Have a Concern About a Child's Development). Below is an overview of the special education process:

- A referral to special education is a request for the school district to consider the child for special education eligibility. If the child's parent agrees that a referral is desirable, it is recommended that you or the parent make the referral in writing and send it to the Preschool Special Education Contact for the school district. This school district contact can be found at *http://ptan.seresc.net/*. The referral letter should contain the reasons why you believe the child may have a disability and need special education.
- After the school receives the referral, they must hold a meeting called a Disposition of Referral, with the parent and other members of the Individual Education Program (IEP) Team, within 15 calendar days. This meeting is to discuss all available information about the child and to see if the IEP Team needs more information to determine if the child is eligible for special education.
- The IEP Team may decide that they need more information to determine if the child is eligible for special education. They may want to conduct an evaluation. A parent's written permission for any evaluation is required. The school has 45 calendar days from the date the parent signs permission to complete the testing and hold an IEP Team meeting to determine if the child is eligible for special education.
- Based on evaluations and any other information reviewed, the IEP Team determines if the child has a disability that impacts educational or functional performance and requires special education and/or related services and the area of disability that best describes the child's needs.
- Within 30 days of a child being found eligible for special education, the IEP Team must begin to develop the IEP. Sometimes this happens at the same meeting where eligibility is determined. The parent has 14 calendar days to sign the IEP and may choose to agree, agree with exceptions, disagree, or request another meeting.
- After the IEP is signed by the parent and the school district representative, the IEP Team determines the child's education placement to implement the IEP. Placement is decided on an individual basis and must be in the child's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

  For more information, please contact the Parent Information Center at (603) 224-7005 or visit the website at this link: *http://www.picnh.org/*

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- NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators, 2012
- Common Core State Standards
- NH College and Career Ready Standards
- Maryland Healthy Beginnings, 2010
- Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards, 2005
- Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Birth through 3rd Grade, 2012
- Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework
- California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations, 2009, and California Preschool Foundations, 2010
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- Louisiana Early Learning Guidelines, 2011

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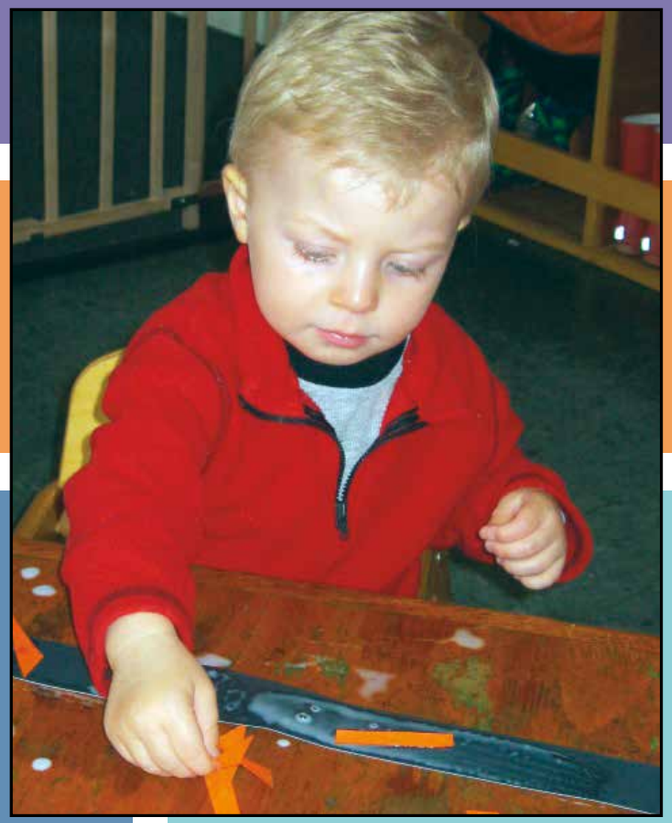

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