Providing guidance for leaders dedicated to high-quality early learning programming, Pre-K through 5th grade

Foundations for High-Quality Early Learning Programming

Early Learning Readiness (Pre-K – Kindergarten)

Developmentally Appropriate, Standards-Focused Curriculum

A holistic approach to early learning requires teachers to be knowledgeable about child development and skilled in providing experiences that meet students' needs. Social/emotional, cognitive, and physical development are interrelated domains which emphasize the development of positive dispositions to learning.

Best practices for a comprehensive approach to early learning instruction indicate appropriate and sufficient emphases in all content areas are provided. Developmentally appropriate integration of content is utilized to provide rigor based on students' prior experiences, knowledge and developmental levels.

Developmental Domains
Social/Emotional
Cognitive
Physical

Content Areas
English Language Arts
Mathematics
Music
Science
Social Studies
Visual Art
Wellness

The Early Learning Readiness grades (WV Universal Pre-K and kindergarten) provide opportunities for students to build solid foundations and positive dispositions to learning through a holistic approach to education.

The teacher's ability to integrate high-quality, developmentally appropriate experiences throughout the classroom provides a rich context for learning.

Critical Considerations to Help Assure a Developmentally Appropriate, Standards-Focused Curriculum:

- Students at this age learn best when they make connections to something with which they are familiar.
- Students at this age also require opportunities to engage in hands-on, child-centered, play-based experiences.
- Students' progress developmentally at varied levels and each child's development is significantly impacted by his/her previous experiences.
- Developing and sustaining positive relationships with peers and familiar adults provide a context that encourages a sense of safety and excitement for learning.
- A developmentally appropriate, standards-focused classroom environment becomes "the third teacher" and provides ample opportunities for children to engage in high quality learning experiences throughout the day (without isolation of subjects).
- Young students need large blocks of time to enter and engage in high-quality experiences, and then to transition into new experiences.

Implications

- Particularly during the early learning grades, establishing positive relationships and developing socially and emotionally are critical for later academic success. *Ask yourself: How are strong child-to-child and child-to-adult relationships encouraged in the classroom? How is the development of social competence taught in the classroom community?*

- Exposure to a meaningful, print-rich environment where vocabulary scaffolding occurs through various experiences throughout the day promotes learning and an eagerness to learn—a powerful combination! *Ask yourself: What can be done to increase opportunities for my students to engage in text, speaking and listening, and writing? What is being done to help close the literacy achievement gap?*

- Learning experiences, formal and informal, are designed to engage students as they develop an understanding of standards in each of the content areas. *Ask yourself: What can be done to ensure students are actively engaged in learning experiences? What materials are introduced to facilitate student learning (i.e., introducing architecture books into the block area)?*

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Selected Resources

Achieve. (n.d.). Online: http://www.achievethecore.org/.

Bredekamp, S. & Copple, C. (2009). Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8 (3rd ed.). NAEYC.

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc

Early Learning Standards Framework Professional Development System https://sites.google.com/a/wvde.k12.wv.us/elsf-professional-development-system/home

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/assessment/child%

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (n.d.). Developmentally Appropriate Practices Position Statement. Online: http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/dap .

Ready, Set, Go! WV: West Virginia's Comprehensive Framework for School Readiness. (2014). Online: www.readysetgowv.com.

WV College- and Career-Readiness Standards. (2016). Online: http://wvde.state.wv.us/wvccr/.

WV Teacher Resources for Educational Excellence (TREE). (2016). Online: https://wvde.state.wv.us/apps/tree/ .

Related Policies

Policy 2510	Assuring the Quality Of Education: Regulations For Education Programs
Policy 2525	West Virginia's Universal Access to an Early Education System
Policy 2520.15	Early Learning Standards Framework: Content Standards and Learning Criteria for West Virginia Pre-Kindergarten (WV Pre-k)
Policy 2520.14	21st Century Learning Skills and Technology Tools Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools
Policy 2315	Student Success Standards
Policy 2520.1a	West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards for English Language Arts
Policy 2520.2b	West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Mathematics
Policy 2520.3	Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools
Policy 2520.4	West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Social Studies
Policy 2520.10	21st Century Music Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools
Policy 2520.12	21st Century Visual Arts Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools
Policy 2520.55	21st Century Wellness PreK-4 Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools