

STATE *f* ALASKA

Early Learning Guidelines



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Department of Health and Social Services
Department of Education and Early Development

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Early Learning Guidelines

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TABLE *of* CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	2
Early Learning Guidelines Committee.....	3
Welcome	10

Domain 1

Physical Well-Being, Health, and Motor Development.....	28
---	----

Motor Development

Gross Motor Skills

1 Children demonstrate strength and coordination of large motor muscles.....	32
---	----

Fine Motor Skills

2 Children demonstrate strength and coordination of small motor muscles.....	34
---	----

Sensorimotor Skills

3 Children use their senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, to guide and integrate their interactions.....	36
---	----

Physical Development

Physical Fitness

4 Children demonstrate the stamina and energy to participate in daily activities	38
5 Children engage in a variety of physical activities	40

Health and Personal Care

Daily Living Skills

6 Children demonstrate personal health and hygiene skills.....	42
7 Children practice basic personal care routines.....	44

Nutrition

8 Children eat a variety of nutritious foods.....	46
--	----

Safety

Safe Practices

9 Children make safe choices, avoiding harmful objects and situations.....	48
---	----

Rules and Regulations

10 Children demonstrate awareness and understanding of safety rules.....	50
---	----

TABLE *of* CONTENTS

Domain 2

Social and Emotional Development.....	52
---------------------------------------	----

Social Development

Interactions with Adults

11 Children trust and interact comfortably with familiar adults.....	58
12 Children seek assistance from adults when needed	60

Interactions with Peers

13 Children develop friendships with peers.....	62
14 Children cooperate with peers	64
15 Children demonstrate positive negotiation skills.....	66

Adaptive Social Behavior

16 Children demonstrate awareness of behavior and its effects.....	68
17 Children participate positively in group activities.....	70
18 Children adapt to diverse settings.....	72
19 Children demonstrate empathy for others and the natural world.....	74

Appreciating Diversity

20 Children recognize, appreciate, and respect similarities and differences in people.....	76
---	----

Emotional Development

Self-Concept

21 Children perceive themselves as unique individuals	78
22 Children demonstrate awareness of their abilities, characteristics, and preferences.....	80

Self-Efficacy

23 Children demonstrate belief in their abilities.....	82
---	----

Self-Control

24 Children understand and follow rules and routines.....	84
25 Children regulate their feelings and impulses	86

Emotional Expression

26 Children express appropriately a range of emotions.....	88
---	----

TABLE *of* CONTENTS

Domain 3

Approaches to Learning..... 90

Learning Approaches

Curiosity and Interest

27 Children are curious about and interested in learning new things and having new experiences..... 94

Initiative

28 Children demonstrate initiative..... 96

Persistence and Attentiveness

29 Children sustain attention to tasks and persist when facing challenges..... 98

Creativity and Inventiveness

30 Children approach daily activities with creativity and inventiveness..... 100

Reflection and Interpretation

31 Children learn from their experiences..... 102

Domain 4

Cognition and General Knowledge..... 104

Reasoning

Causation

32 Children demonstrate awareness of cause and effect..... 108

Critical and Analytic Thinking

33 Children compare, contrast, examine, and evaluate experiences, tasks, and events..... 110

34 Children use past knowledge to build new knowledge..... 112

Problem-Solving

35 Children find multiple solutions to questions, tasks, problems, and challenges..... 114

Representational Thought

36 Children use symbols to represent objects..... 116

37 Children can distinguish between fantasy and reality..... 118

Mathematics and Numeracy

Number Sense and Operations

TABLE *f* CONTENTS

38	Children demonstrate knowledge of numbers and counting.....	120
Measurement		
39	Children demonstrate knowledge of size, volume, height, weight, and length.....	122
Properties of Ordering		
40	Children sort, classify, and organize objects.....	124
Science		
Scientific Thinking		
41	Children collect information through observation and manipulation.....	126
42	Children engage in exploring the natural world by manipulating objects, asking questions, making predictions, and developing generalizations.....	128
Scientific Knowledge		
43	Children observe and describe characteristics of living things.....	130
44	Children observe and describe characteristics of the earth.....	132
Social Studies		
History		
45	Children differentiate between events that happen in the past, present, and future.....	134
Geography		
46	Children demonstrate awareness of location and spatial relationships.....	136
47	Children demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between people, places, and regions.....	138
Economics		
48	Children demonstrate awareness of economic concepts.....	140
Ecology		
49	Children demonstrate awareness of the relationship between humans and the environment.....	142
Technology		
50	Children use technology appropriately.....	144
Family, Community, and Culture		
Family		
51	Children demonstrate awareness of family characteristics and functions.....	146

TABLE *of* CONTENTS

Community

- 52** Children demonstrate awareness of their community, human interdependence, and social roles..... 148
- 53** Children demonstrate civic responsibility..... 150

Culture

- 54** Children demonstrate awareness and appreciation of their own and others' cultures..... 152

Creative Arts

Expression and Representation

- 55** Children use creative arts to express and represent what they know, think, believe, or feel..... 154

Understanding and Appreciation

- 56** Children demonstrate understanding and appreciation of creative arts..... 156

Domain 5

- Communication, Language, and Literacy..... 158

Communication

Listening

- 57** Children demonstrate the meaning of language by listening..... 162

Oral and Written Communication

- 58** Children communicate effectively..... 164

Conventions of Social Communication

- 59** Children comprehend and use the conventions of social communication..... 166

Language

Vocabulary

- 60** Children use receptive communication skills..... 168
- 61** Children use expressive communication skills..... 170

Grammar and Syntax

- 62** Children demonstrate progression in grammar and syntax..... 172

Comprehension

- 63** Children demonstrate comprehension and meaning in language..... 174

TABLE *f* CONTENTS

Expressive/Oral Language

64 Children use language for a variety of purposes.....	176
--	-----

Literacy

Reading

65 Children demonstrate phonological awareness.....	178
66 Children demonstrate awareness of letters and symbols.....	180
67 Children demonstrate awareness of print concepts.....	182
68 Children demonstrate comprehension of printed material and oral stories.....	184
69 Children demonstrate awareness that written materials can be used for a variety of purposes.....	186
70 Children demonstrate appreciation and enjoyment of reading.....	188

Writing

71 Children demonstrate knowledge of letters and symbols (alphabet knowledge).....	190
72 Children use writing skills and demonstrate knowledge of writing conventions.....	192
73 Children use writing for a variety of purposes.....	194

English Language Learners

Dual Language Acquisition

74 Children demonstrate competency in home language while acquiring beginning proficiency in English.....	196
---	-----

References	198
-------------------------	------------



Welcome to Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines

For all of you who care for and teach young children, the Early Learning Guidelines are a resource that you can use to help guide children's development and learning. The Guidelines were adapted from the Washington State Guidelines and were revised by Alaskans to meet the unique concerns of children in our state. We wish to acknowledge the work of the Washington State Core Interagency Team and Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan and her team at Columbia University for providing the basis for the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines.

We hope you will find this document useful and will share it with others. The following section outlines the background, principles, and structure of the Guidelines. This information will help you understand why the Guidelines were created and how they can be used.



I. Background

Without a doubt, the early years, from birth to age five, are the most extraordinary period of growth and development in a child's lifetime. Infants begin life totally dependent on adults, and then develop into young children with abilities to walk, talk, write, express themselves, and communicate with the world around them. Human development is amazingly complex during these years; some have called this period the "magic years." While this rapid change once seemed mystifying, today we know much more about how children grow and develop.

We know that adults contribute greatly to children's growth; adults have the capacity to make a difference in children's development and learning. Clearly, parents are their children's first and most important teachers; however, they are not alone. Parents receive support in their role as nurturers from many family and community members, friends, medical professionals, and teachers. While parents are primarily responsible for nurturing and educating children, there are many people and resources that are available to help support parents during these critical early years. Throughout Alaska, communities provide a variety of programs that serve young children and their parents. In fact, many young children spend at least part of the day in the care of someone other than their parents.

The term "parent" is used here broadly to include birth parents, adoptive parents, and other significant adults who serve as the primary caregiver to young children. In many communities in Alaska, grandparents, aunts and uncles play an integral role in raising children and may also be included under the term "parent."

Grounded in Multiple Perspectives

There is no single, universally accepted theory of child development. Researchers and educators base their practice on different sets of research-based beliefs, or theories, about how young children grow and develop. The major theories include maturationist, behaviorist, psychoanalytic, cognitive-developmental, constructivist, socio-cultural, structural cognitive modifiability, and ecological systems. There are theories that emphasize genetics, while others stress children's experiences with their environment. Some theories emphasize emotional development and others stress intellectual development. Still other theories support firm and directive parenting and teaching, while other theories endorse parenting and teaching styles that provide indirect guidance and interactive learning to support child development. Beyond these diverse theoretical perspectives, families, communities and cultures hold different beliefs about how young children should experience and interact with the world around them.

Reflective of this, the Guidelines are not grounded in any single theoretical perspective or in any single cultural context; rather they are based on scientific research from various theoretical perspectives. In addition, these Guidelines represent goals for young children's development that reflect the perspectives, values, and recommended practices of a diverse range of people, institutions, and communities throughout Alaska. The Guidelines emphasize that young children's learning is multi-dimensional; that is, because young children grow physically, socially, emotionally, linguistically, and cognitively at the same time, all dimensions of learning are critical to healthy development and must be valued. While these Guidelines may not encompass all the hopes and expectations of all families, communities, or cultures, they are a comprehensive foundation for addressing the learning and

development of all young children. It is our hope that these guidelines can serve as a tool for discussion, dialogue, and sharing between parents, early childhood professionals, and community members.

Aligning with the K-12 System

Beyond the field of early childhood care and education, the standards-based reform taking place in K-12 education in the United States impacts how the development and learning of young children is viewed. In Alaska, the standards-based school reform process began in 1991. From 1996-2002 Alaska developed and implemented the Quality Schools Initiative (QSI). Under the QSI each Alaska public school is currently required to:

1. Complete a developmental profile for each child entering kindergarten or first grade
2. Adopt state-mandated academic standards
3. Administer Standards-Based Assessments (SBA) in grades 3 through 10 to assess student mastery of the Alaska Performance Standards
4. Report information on student progress to communities and the State of Alaska
5. Administer the Alaska High School Graduation Qualification Examination to all high school students seeking a diploma.



Federal Involvement

The Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 has added additional assessment and reporting requirements, as well as a system of interventions and consequences to the Alaska K-12 system. Concurrent to the No Child Left Behind Act was President Bush's early childhood initiative, "Good Start, Grow Smart," which called for each state to develop voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. In the spring of 2004 the Alaska System for Early Education Development (SEED) Council formed an Early Learning Guidelines Development Committee. This group began their work by reviewing other state's early learning guidelines in the hope of getting permission to use the selected state's guidelines as a basis for Alaska's guidelines. The group selected Washington State's Early Learning Standards and with permission from the State of Washington, began adapting their standards to serve as Alaska's Guidelines.

In 2005 the U.S. Education Department, Office of Special Education Programs, offered grants to assist states in developing outcomes for all children. Alaska was granted federal funds through the General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG) for the development of outcomes for children from birth to age eight. Later in that year, the SEED Early Learning Guidelines Committee and the GSEG group joined together to develop one core document for the state that would be aligned with the existing K-12 standards. These jointly produced Guidelines can assist all early childhood programs and K-12 schools to align the experiences children have before entering school with what they need to know and be able to do when they begin school.

II. Purpose and Goals of the Early Learning Guidelines

Many different people play a part in young children's development and learning; therefore, it is not surprising that there are varying expectations for children across the different settings in which they spend their day. Because of the importance of the early years, and because it is beneficial for children to experience consistency from the many adults who play a part in their development, the State of Alaska decided to

create a resource to develop a common understanding about what young children should know and be able to do at different stages in their lives. These expectations, often called Early Learning Guidelines or ELGs, provide essential information for those who love, care for, and educate young children. Increasingly, Early Learning Guidelines are used by families and local communities; by states; and internationally by countries in order to strengthen and coordinate early childhood practices, programs and policies.

Definition of Early Learning Guidelines

Broadly defined, the Guidelines are a set of statements that reflect expectations for children's knowledge and behavior. They are designed to support the growth and development of young children from birth to kindergarten entry, whether the children are in their own homes, others' homes, licensed child care, early intervention programs, Head Start, or in private, faith-based, or public preschools. The Guidelines serve as a source document, informing parents and caregivers in these settings about expectations for children's development and learning. This document represents our hopes for young children.

Specifically, the Guidelines spell out what young children should know and be able to do by the time they reach the end of each of four critical stages of development: 18 months, 36 months, 60 months, and entry to kindergarten. These age ranges are broad and encompass large spans of time during which children grow and develop dramatically. While defining more precise age ranges may sound ideal, narrower age ranges would actually defy two key factors in early childhood development: [a] young children's development is highly episodic; and [b] narrowly-defined age categories do not reflect the typical grouping of young children in most early childhood settings.

The age ranges used in the Guidelines are therefore flexible, allowing for variation within developmental ranges, while still providing helpful guidelines for parents and caregivers. Parents and caregivers can use the Guidelines as a way to better understand what they can expect to see as their children develop and to better support and enhance their children's development and learning. Educators can use the Guidelines as a framework for a learning continuum that will help ease children's transition from one stage of development to the next.

By specifying skills and competencies for children, the Guidelines have the potential to help reduce inequalities in achievement as children mature. The Guidelines can also be used as the

basis for curriculum development and for the professional development of people who work with young children.

In addition, the Guidelines aspire to:

- Serve as a common tool for discussion, dialogue, and sharing between parents, early childhood professionals and community members about reasonable expectations and practical strategies for all adults who care for and teach young children
- Contribute to a unified vision for the early care and education system in Alaska
- Create a continuum of learning that links early care and development to later success in school and in life by aligning the Guidelines with Alaska's K-12 academic standards and grade level expectations

As important as it is to understand what the Guidelines are, it is equally important to state what the Guidelines are NOT.

The Guidelines are:

- NOT an exhaustive guide to child development and should not be seen as a developmental checklist that provides the full scope, a fine breakdown, or an exact sequence of developmental indicators
- NOT a curriculum, although they can be adapted by teachers to supplement many different curricula or lay the groundwork for curriculum alignment
- NOT an assessment instrument to determine children's eligibility for various programs or services or to gauge children's functioning or skills for an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP);

- NOT an assessment tool that collects statewide information on the overall status of children in Alaska. If an assessment system is desired, the Guidelines can inform the content of, but not substitute for, a technically developed reliable and valid assessment

Any parent, or caregiver in partnership with the family, who has concerns about a child's behavior or development should seek medical or developmental expertise and not use the Guidelines to assess the child.

III. Process for Developing the Guidelines

The Guidelines were developed through a comprehensive and collaborative process involving many sources of information, expertise, and guidance. The Early Learning Guidelines core team guided the development process. The team was comprised of representatives from the: Departments of Education & Early Development and Health & Social Services, Head Start-State Collaboration Office, Special Education Office, Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, school districts and the University of Alaska. Approximately 30 additional key stakeholders, including teachers, parents and others, advised the development process. The individuals on the team represented many constituencies who were knowledgeable about early childhood development. Since the beginning of this process, the various groups collaborated to create and endorse a

set of principles to guide in the development of the Early Learning Guidelines. These guiding principles are presented in their entirety in the next section of this introduction.

The Early Learning Guidelines were developed through several processes. The first process involved a thorough review of other state's Early Learning Guidelines and selection of Washington State's to use as a basis for Alaska's Guidelines. The second step was getting permission from Washington to use their standards. Next, Washington's standards were reviewed, revised and adapted for Alaska. State, national and international experts in early childhood development were then asked to review the Guidelines and offer their edits. A final draft was put out for comment and review by stakeholders and for endorsement by the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development, which occurred in June 2006.



IV. Guiding Principles

One of the earliest efforts of the Early Learning Guidelines Committee was the development and endorsement of a set of seventeen (17) principles intended to guide the content, development, implementation, and use of the Guidelines. These principles established the foundation for the collaborative work on the Guidelines.

Principles 1-12 were adopted from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): Principles of Child Development and Learning that Inform Developmentally Appropriate Practice. Principles 13 and 14 were used by Illinois, Connecticut, and Louisiana in their Early Learning Guidelines. Principles 15, 16, and 17 were additional ideas expressed by the Early Learning Guidelines Committee in September of 2005. The principles are explained in detail on the following pages.



1. Domains of children’s development—physical, linguistic, social, emotional, and cognitive—are closely related. Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains
2. Development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired
3. Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child’s functioning
4. Early experiences have both cumulative and delayed effects on individual children’s development; optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning
5. Development proceeds in predictable directions toward greater complexity, organization, and internalization
6. Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts
7. Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them
8. Development and learning result from interaction of biological maturation and the environment, which includes both the physical and social worlds in which children live
9. Play is an important vehicle for children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development
10. Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as

well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery

11. Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know
12. Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically secure
13. Young children are capable and competent
14. Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children
15. Children learn best when communication and support for families is culturally appropriate and respectful
16. Children learn best in a safe, healthy, and intellectually challenging environment
17. Children learn best when caregivers are knowledgeable, have skills and dispositions to support their learning and the ability to observe development moving the child to the next step in the learning process

-
1. Domains of children’s development—physical, linguistic, social, emotional, and cognitive—are closely related. Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains

Development in one domain can limit or facilitate development in others (Sroufe, Cooper, & DeHart 1992; Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren 1993). For example, when babies begin to crawl or walk, their ability to explore the world expands,

and their mobility, in turn, affects their cognitive development. Likewise, children’s language skill affects their ability to establish social relationships with adults and other children, just as their skill in social interaction can support or inhibit their language development.

Because developmental domains are interrelated, educators should be aware of and use these interrelationships to organize children’s learning experiences in ways that help children develop optimally in all areas and that make meaningful connections across domains.

Recognition of the connections across developmental domains is also useful for curriculum planning with the various age groups represented in the early childhood period. Curriculum with infants and toddlers is driven by the need to support their healthy development in all domains. During the primary grades, the goal of curriculum planning is to help children develop conceptual understandings that apply across related subject-matter disciplines.

2. Development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired

Human development research indicates that relatively stable, predictable sequences of growth and change occur in children during the first nine years of life (Piaget 1952; Erikson 1963; Dyson & Genishi 1993; Gallahue 1993; Case & Okamoto 1996). Predictable changes occur in all domains of development—physical, emotional, social, language, and cognitive—although the ways that these changes are manifest and the meaning attached to them may vary in different cultural contexts. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span served by the program provides a general framework to guide how teachers prepare the learning environment and plan realistic curriculum goals and objectives and appropriate experiences.

3. Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child's functioning

Individual variation has at least two dimensions: the inevitable variability around the average or normative course of development and the uniqueness of each person as an individual (Sroufe, Cooper, & DeHart 1992). Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, temperament, learning style, and experiential and family background. All children have their own strengths, needs, and interests; for some children, special learning and developmental needs or abilities are identified. Given the enormous variation among children of the same chronological age, a child's age must be recognized as only an approximate index of developmental maturity.

Recognition that individual variation is not only to be expected but also valued requires that decisions about curriculum and adults' interactions with children be as individualized as possible. Emphasis on individual appropriateness is not the same as "individualism." Rather, this recognition requires that children be considered not solely as members of an age group, expected to perform to a predetermined norm and without adaptation to individual variation of any kind. It is important to have high expectations for all children, but rigid expectations of group norms do not reflect what we know about real differences in individual development and learning during the early years. Group-norm expectancy can be especially harmful for children with special learning and developmental needs (NEGP 1991; Mallory 1992; Wolery, Strain, & Bailey 1992).

4. Early experiences have both cumulative and delayed effects on individual children's development; optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning

Children's early learning experiences, either positive or negative, are cumulative; their experiences build on earlier experiences. If an experience occurs occasionally, it may have only minimal effects. If positive or negative experiences occur frequently, however, they can have powerful, lasting, even "snowballing," effects (Katz & Chard 1989; Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren 1993; Wieder & Greenspan 1993). For example, a child who has positive social experiences with other children in the preschool years will develop social skills and confidence that enable him to make friends in the early school years, and these experiences further enhance the child's social competence. Conversely, children who fail to develop minimal social competence and are neglected or rejected by peers are at significant risk to drop out of school, become delinquent, and experience mental health problems in adulthood (Asher, Hymel, & Renshaw 1984; Parker & Asher 1987).

Similar patterns can be observed in babies whose cries and other attempts at communication are regularly responded to, thus enhancing their own sense of efficacy and increasing communicative competence. In the same way, when children have or do not have early literacy experiences, such as being read to or told stories to regularly, their later success in learning to read is affected accordingly. A growing body of research demonstrates that social and sensorimotor experiences during the first three years directly affect neurological development of the brain, with important and lasting implications for children's capacity to learn (Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives 1996).

Early experiences can also have delayed effects, either positive or negative, on subsequent development. For instance, some evidence suggests that reliance on extrinsic rewards (such as candy or money) to shape children's behavior, a strategy that can be very effective in the short term, under certain circumstances lessens children's intrinsic motivation to engage in the rewarded behavior in the

long term (Dweck 1986; Kohn 1993). For example, paying children to read books may over time undermine their desire to read for their own enjoyment and edification.

At certain points in the life span, some kinds of learning and development occur most efficiently. For example, the first three years of life appear to be an optimal period for verbal language development (Kuhl 1994). Although delays in language development due to physical or environmental deficits can be corrected later on, such intervention usually requires considerable effort. Similarly, the preschool years appear to be optimum for fundamental motor development (that is, fundamental motor skills are more easily and efficiently acquired at this age) (Gallahue 1995). Children who have many opportunities and adult support to practice large-motor skills, such as running, jumping, hopping, skipping, during this period have the benefit of being better able to acquire more sophisticated, complex motor skills, such as balancing on a beam or riding a two-wheel bike, in subsequent years. On the other hand, children whose early motor experiences are severely limited may struggle to acquire physical competence and may also experience delayed effects when attempting to participate in sports or personal fitness activities later in life.

5. Development proceeds in predictable directions toward greater complexity, organization, and internalization

Learning during early childhood proceeds from behavioral knowledge to symbolic or representational knowledge (Bruner 1983). For example, children learn to navigate their homes and other familiar settings long before they can understand the words left and right or read a map of the house. Developmentally appropriate programs provide opportunities for children to broaden and deepen their behavioral knowledge by providing a variety of firsthand experiences and by

helping children acquire symbolic knowledge through representing their experiences in a variety of media, such as drawing, painting, construction of models, dramatic play, verbal and written descriptions (Katz 1995).

Even very young children are able to use various media to represent their understanding of concepts. Furthermore, through representation of their knowledge, the knowledge itself is enhanced (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman 1993; Malaguzzi 1993; Forman 1994).

Representational modes and media also vary with the age of the child. For instance, most learning for infants and toddlers is sensory and motoric, but by age 2 children use one object to stand for another in play, for example, using a block for a phone or a spoon for a guitar.

6. Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts

Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1989, 1993) provides an ecological model for understanding human development. He explains that children's development is best understood within the sociocultural context of the family, educational setting, community, and broader society. These various contexts are interrelated, and all have an impact on the developing child. For example, even a child in a loving, supportive family within a strong, healthy community is affected by the biases of the larger society, such as racism or sexism, and may show the effects of negative stereotyping and discrimination.

Definition of Culture

Culture is defined as the customary beliefs and patterns of and for behavior, both explicit and implicit, which are passed on to future generations by the society they live in and/or by a social, religious, or ethnic group within it. Because culture is often discussed in the context of diversity or multiculturalism, people fail to recognize the powerful role that culture plays in influencing the

development of all children. Every culture structures and interprets children's behavior and development (Edwards & Gandini 1989; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson 1989; Rogoff et al. 1993). As Bowman states, "Rules of development are the same for all children, but social contexts shape children's development into different configurations" (1994, 220). Early childhood teachers need to understand the influence of sociocultural contexts on learning, recognize children's developing competence, and accept a variety of ways for children to express their developmental achievements (Vygotsky 1978; Wertsch 1985; Forman, Minick, & Stone 1993; New 1993, 1994; Bowman & Stott 1994; Mallory & New 1994a; Phillips 1994; Bruner 1996; Wardle 1996).

Teachers should learn about the different cultures of the children they serve, especially those cultures that differ from their own. Recognizing that development and learning are influenced by social and cultural contexts sensitizes teachers to the need to acknowledge how their own cultural experience shapes their perspectives and biases. Multiple perspectives must be considered in decisions about children's development and learning. The more teachers learn about and incorporate the culture of the children into the curriculum, the more academically successful the children can be. In addition, when the children's language and culture is incorporated into the classroom, the children can develop greater self esteem and sense of identity.

Children are capable of learning to function in more than one cultural context simultaneously. However, if teachers set low expectations for children based on their home culture and language, children may not develop and learn optimally. Education should be an additive process and build on students' strengths. For example, children whose primary language is not English should be able to learn English without being forced to give up their home language (NAEYC 1996a). Likewise, children who speak only English benefit from





learning another language. The goal is that all children learn to function well in the society as a whole and move comfortably among groups of people who come from both similar and dissimilar backgrounds. Education should prepare children to be members of their local communities, and also to be global citizens in an increasingly interconnected world.

- 7.** Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them

Children contribute to their own development and learning as they strive to make meaning out of their daily experiences in the home, in early childhood programs, and in the community. Principles of developmentally appropriate practice are based on several prominent theories that view intellectual development from a constructivist, interactive perspective (Dewey 1916; Piaget 1952; Vygotsky 1978; DeVries & Kohlberg 1990; Rogoff 1990; Gardner 1991; Kamii & Ewing 1996).

From birth, children are actively engaged in constructing their own understandings from their experiences, and these understandings are mediated by and clearly linked to the sociocultural context. Young children actively learn from observing and participating with other children and adults, including parents and teachers. Children need to form their own hypotheses and keep trying them out through social interaction, physical manipulation, and their own thought processes—observing what happens, reflecting on their findings, asking questions, and formulating answers. When objects, events, and other people challenge the working model that the child has mentally constructed, the child is forced to adjust the model or alter the mental structures to account for the new information. Throughout early childhood, the child processes new experiences,

which continually reshapes, expands, and reorganizes their mental structures (Piaget 1952; Vygotsky 1978; Case & Okamoto 1996). When teachers and other adults use various strategies to encourage children to reflect on their experiences by planning beforehand and “revisiting” afterward, the knowledge and understanding gained from the experience is deepened (Copple, Sigel, & Saunders 1984; Edwards, Gandini, & Forman 1993; Stremmel & Fu 1993; Hohmann & Weikart 1995).

In the statement of this principle, the term “physical and social experience” is used in the broadest sense to include children’s exposure to physical knowledge, learned through firsthand experience of using objects. For example, a child learns directly from experience when he or she observes that a ball thrown in the air will fall down. Children also learn social knowledge, which includes the vast body of culturally acquired and transmitted knowledge that children need to function in the world. In this way, children progressively construct their own understanding of various symbols, but the symbols they use (such as the alphabet or numerical system) are specific to their culture and transmitted to them by adults.

In recent years, discussions of cognitive development have at times become polarized (see Seifert 1993). Piaget’s theory stressed that development of certain cognitive structures was a necessary prerequisite to learning (i.e., development precedes learning), while other research has demonstrated that instruction in specific concepts or strategies can facilitate development of more mature cognitive structures (learning precedes development) (Vygotsky 1978; Gelman & Baillargeon 1983). Current attempts to resolve this apparent dichotomy (Seifert 1993; Sameroff & McDonough 1994; Case & Okamoto 1996) acknowledge that essentially both theoretical perspectives are correct in explaining aspects

of cognitive development during early childhood. Strategic teaching, of course, can enhance children’s learning. Yet, direct instruction may be totally ineffective; it fails when it is not attuned to the cognitive capacities and knowledge of the child at that point in development.

- 8.** Development and learning result from interaction of biological maturation and the environment, which includes both the physical and social worlds in which children live

The simplest way to express this principle is that human beings are products of both heredity and environment and these forces are interrelated. Behaviorists focus on the environmental influences that determine learning, while maturationists emphasize the unfolding of predetermined, hereditary characteristics. Each perspective is true to some extent, and yet neither perspective is sufficient to explain learning or development. More often today, development is viewed as the result of an interactive, transactional process between the growing, changing individual and his or her experiences in the social and physical worlds (Scarr & McCartney 1983; Plomin 1994a, b). For example, a child’s genetic makeup may predict healthy growth, but inadequate nutrition in the early years of life may keep this potential from being fulfilled. Or a severe disability, whether inherited or environmentally caused, may be ameliorated through systematic, appropriate intervention. Likewise, a child’s inherited temperament—whether a predisposition to be wary or outgoing—shapes and is shaped by how other children and adults communicate with that child.

- 9.** Play is an important vehicle for children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development

Understanding that children are active constructors of knowledge and that development and learning are the result of interactive processes, early childhood teachers recognize that children's play is a highly supportive context for these developing processes (Piaget 1952; Fein 1981; Bergen 1988; Smilansky & Shefatya 1990; Fromberg 1992; Berk & Winsler 1995). Play gives children many opportunities to understand the world, interact with others in social ways, express and control emotions, and develop their symbolic capabilities. Children's play gives adults insights into children's development and opportunities to support the development of new strategies. Vygotsky (1978) believed that play leads development; with written language growing out of oral language through the vehicle of symbolic play that promotes the development of symbolic representation abilities. Play provides a context for children to practice newly acquired skills and also to function on the edge of their developing capacities to take on new social roles, attempt novel or challenging tasks, and solve complex problems that they would not (or could not) otherwise perform (Mallory & New 1994b).

Research demonstrates the importance of sociodramatic play as a tool for learning curriculum content with 3- through 6-year-old children. When teachers provide a thematic organization for play; offer appropriate props, space,

and time; and become involved in the play by extending and elaborating on children's ideas, children's language and literacy skills can be enhanced (Levy, Schaefer, & Phelps 1986; Schrader 1989, 1990; Morrow 1990; Pramling 1991; Levy, Wolfgang, & Koorland 1992).

In addition to supporting cognitive development, play serves important functions in children's physical, emotional, and social development (Herron & Sutton-Smith 1971). Children express and represent their ideas, thoughts, and feelings when engaged in symbolic play. During play a child can learn to deal with emotions, to interact with others, to resolve conflicts, and to gain a sense of competence—all in the safety that only play affords. Through play, children also can develop their imaginations and creativity. Therefore, child-initiated, teacher-supported play is an essential component of developmentally appropriate practice (Fein & Rivkin 1986).

- 10.** Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery

Research demonstrates that children need to be successful at learning tasks most of the time if they are to maintain motivation and persistence (Lary 1990; Brophy 1992). Confronted by repeated

failure, most children will simply stop trying. So most of the time, teachers should give young children tasks they can accomplish with effort and present them with content that is accessible at their level of understanding. At the same time, children continually gravitate to situations and stimuli that give them the chance to work at their "growing edge" (Berk & Winsler 1995; Bodrova & Leong 1996). Moreover, in a task just beyond the child's independent reach, the adult and more-competent peers contribute significantly to development by providing the supportive "scaffolding" that allows the child to take the next step.

Development and learning are dynamic processes requiring that adults understand the continuum, observe children closely to match curriculum and teaching to children's emerging competencies, needs, and interests, and then help children move forward by targeting educational experiences to the edge of children's changing capacities so as to challenge but not frustrate them. Human beings, especially children, are highly motivated to understand what they almost, but not quite, comprehend and to master what they can almost, but not quite, do (White 1965; Vygotsky 1978). This principle of learning is called scaffolding and emphasizes that children can do things first in a supportive context and then later independently and in a variety of contexts. Rogoff (1990) describes the process of adult-assisted learning as "guided participation" to emphasize that children actively collaborate with others who are more competent in order to move to more complex levels of understanding and skill.

- 11.** Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know

For some time, learning theorists and developmental psychologists have recognized that human beings come to understand the world in many ways and that individuals tend to have



preferred or stronger modes of learning. Studies of differences in learning modalities have contrasted visual, auditory, or tactile learners. Other work has identified learners as field-dependent or independent (Witkin 1962). Gardner (1983) expanded on this concept by theorizing that human beings possess at least seven “intelligences.” In addition to having the ones traditionally emphasized in schools, linguistic and logical-mathematical, individuals are more or less proficient in at least these other areas: musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal.

Malaguzzi (1993) used the metaphor of “100 languages” to describe the diverse modalities through which children come to understand the world and represent their knowledge. With the assistance of teachers, the processes of representing their understanding can help children deepen, improve, and expand their understanding (Copple, Sigel, & Saunders 1984; Forman 1994; Katz 1995). The principle of diverse modalities implies that teachers should provide opportunities for individual children to use their preferred modes of learning to capitalize on their strengths (Hale-Benson 1986). In addition, they should also provide opportunities to help children develop in the modes or intelligences in which they may not be as strong.

- 12.** Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically secure

Maslow (1954) conceptualized a hierarchy of needs in which learning was not considered possible unless physical and psychological needs for safety and security were first met. Because children’s physical health and safety are threatened too often today, programs for young children must not only provide adequate health, safety, and nutrition but may also need to ensure more comprehensive services, such as physical, dental, and mental health and social services (NASBE 1991; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services 1996). In addition, children’s development in all areas is influenced by their ability to establish and maintain a limited number of positive, consistent primary relationships with adults and other children (Bowlby 1969; Stern 1985; Garbarino et al. 1992). These primary relationships begin in the family and extend over time to include children’s teachers and members of the community; therefore, practices that are developmentally appropriate address children’s physical, social, and emotional needs as well as their intellectual development.

- 13.** Young children are capable and competent

Parents and caregivers should recognize that each child is unique and develops at his or her own rate with his or her own strengths and abilities. Parents should observe children and then follow their children’s lead. According to Gardner (1996), children in their early years are very competent individuals. They can skillfully use symbolic forms and have developed theories that serve them well to understand unfamiliar material and processes. Gardner explains that children as young as five are “capable of intensive and extensive involvement in cognitive activities, ranging from experimenting with fluids in the bathtub to building complex block structures, and mastering board games, card games, and sports.” In addition children exhibit a great deal of creativity and originality in their early childhood years.

- 14.** Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children

The term family reflects a diverse range of people. A family may range from a single parent and a child or it may include grandparents, aunts and uncles who play integral roles in raising children. No matter who makes up the family, the Early Learning Guidelines recognize that families are at the heart of caring for and teaching the young child. While many agencies are available to support families with young children, the responsibilities of raising a child lie first and foremost with the family. The family has the first and greatest influence on the child and is responsible for making the majority of decisions for the child.

- 15.** Children learn best when communication and support for families is culturally appropriate and respectful

Many studies have shown that the more that children’s culture is brought into their learning environment, the more success they will have in learning. Learning activities should be based on what children already know. Despite the relationship between prior knowledge and comprehension, educational researchers note the disparity between the experience of children, especially Native and minority children, and the literature often used in the classroom. “Obviously, the commercial reading materials traditionally used in schools do not reflect many students’ experience of the world” (McEachern, 1990). Culturally relevant oral literature can form a bridge between prior knowledge and comprehension of the text. “In order for Native students to succeed in their mastery of literacy activities, culturally relevant materials are essential” (Reyner, 1988).

Constantino and St. Charles (2000) note that teachers need to immerse themselves

in the culture of their students in order to learn more about their linguistic and cultural background as well as their strengths in learning styles. Instructional approaches need to be geared to the particular culture of the students. This is especially important when incorporating storytelling into the curriculum. Research conducted by Cleary and Peacock (1998) shows that schools that acknowledge, accept, and teach a child's cultural heritage, have significantly better success in educating students from diverse cultures. Much research has been done regarding Native American students and their preferred learning styles. Yet, even among students from the same Native American community, the range of learning styles varies greatly. Costantino and St. Charles have conducted studies in learning styles that indicate "variations among individual [Native American] students are as great as their commonalities" (p. 25). Therefore, they suggest that teachers of all students, especially Native students, should adapt their instructional methods to include strategies that encompass a broad range of students' learning styles.

16. Children learn best in a safe, healthy, and intellectually challenging environment

Caregivers should provide an environment that is both intellectually challenging and physically safe for children. If a child does not feel safe and secure in their environment, he or she may experience delays in learning. It is important for caregivers to establish routines and a stable environment for the child. Early routines help children feel secure in their environment and develop to their greatest potential.

17. Children learn best when caregivers are knowledgeable, have skills and dispositions to support children's learning, and have the ability to observe development moving children to the next step in the learning process

Caregivers should strive for continuous growth and learning about child development, personal growth, and observational and communication skills. It is important that caregivers are able to observe children, react to their cues, interact in developmentally appropriate ways, and serve as guides or coaches to them.



V. Valuing Diversity

Every child has unique characteristics, developing and learning in the context of their family, culture, and community. In this light, the Early Learning Guidelines acknowledge and embrace the tremendous diversity and variation that exists between young children. In building a resource to develop a common understanding, the Guidelines have used a broad definition of diversity that includes, but is not limited to socioeconomic, cultural, racial, linguistic, ethnic, gender, abilities, and regional variations. The Guidelines attempt to build upon and represent the rich cultural heritage and knowledge of children and families in Alaska. Efforts have been made to include the unique learning needs of children with disabilities. In addition, for children who have a home language other than English, the Guidelines recognize the importance of community decisions to foster the home language while acquiring English as a second language.

To this end, the goal statements are intended for all children, but the indicators and strategies attempt to incorporate modifications to reflect children's diversity. The ages indicated for achieving each of the indicators are broad guidelines; given the nature of children's diversity, we expect and treasure differences in when and how children achieve the indicators. Not all children will achieve all indicators in the time frame specified. Some children may achieve some of the indicators earlier than the age specified while other children may achieve them at a different rate, in a different order, or not at all. In all cases, the timelines offered are guidelines to inform, not to constrain, children's natural course of development.

The role of caring adults and communities is also reflected in the Guidelines. The document provides some simple play ideas, learning strategies, and interactive activities that adults can use to enhance children's development. It is critical to use the Early Learning Guidelines to accommodate different approaches toward learning. The intention is for parents and other caregivers to focus on the function of the goal, as opposed to the specific indica-

tors. For example, while it is important for young children to use their own name as an indicator of self-concept, some children may demonstrate this by speaking their name aloud while other children may use sign language or other gestures to identify themselves.

Although a worthy goal, this document does not and cannot fully account for the multiple ways in which children in Alaska communicate, learn, play, and interact with adults and peers. It is hoped, however, that every adult sees a little bit of his or her own unique life experience in the Early Learning Guidelines and uses this document as a basis for extending dialogue about the many contexts in which children grow and learn. Likewise, it is hoped that each child in Alaska is reflected in some way in these guidelines, and can be nurtured and cared for more effectively and respectfully. With the implementation of these Guidelines, there should be ongoing collective discussions among parents, caregivers, early learning professionals, teachers, and others. This will ensure that the Guidelines are used in ways that represent the values, aspirations, and effective practices of all cultures and communities in Alaska.

VI. Structure and Content of the Early Learning Guidelines

Because children learn and develop by experiencing the world as a whole, the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines cover five major domains - or areas - of development. These five domains represent a commonly held and research-based organization of the dimensions of children's overall development.

Though presented separately, the five domains of children's development are inextricably interrelated. Children develop holistically. Their growth and development in one area often influences and/or depends upon development in other areas. It is imperative to recognize the

interconnectedness of children's early development and learning and to realize that no single domain is more important than another.

The domains used to organize the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines are:

- **Physical Well-Being, Health, and Motor Development.** This domain encompasses children's physical health and ability to engage in daily activities
- **Social and Emotional Development.** This domain addresses the emotional competence and ability to form positive relationships that give meaning to children's experiences in the home, school and larger community
- **Approaches to Learning.** This domain refers to a child's disposition, rather than skill, for becoming involved in learning and acquiring knowledge
- **Cognition and General Knowledge.** This domain includes children's ability to understand and think about the physical and social worlds. In particular, this domain focuses on children's knowledge of objects in the world around them; their mathematical knowledge; their knowledge of agreed-upon social conventions such as numbers and colors; and their understanding and appreciation of the arts in their lives
- **Communication, Language, and Literacy.** This domain encompasses children's understanding and use of language, emerging reading and writing skills, and ability to communicate effectively

Each of the five domain sections includes an introduction that presents the rationale and definitions for the domain. Each introduction also addresses considerations for how individual differences and diversity can be supported as children learn and develop knowledge and skills. The domain introductions conclude with global strategies that all caregivers can use to help ensure every child receives learning experiences that meet his/her unique needs.

The Guidelines are structured as follows:

- **Domain:** A domain is defined as a broad category—or dimension—of children’s learning and development. The domains overlap and vary by the age of the child. This occurs because at different developmental stages, certain domains are more central. Each domain is represented by a different color combination.
- **Sub-Domain:** Each domain is broken into sub-domains that indicate one general facet of the domain. All sub-domains within a domain, taken together, represent the comprehensive conceptualization of the domain. Sub-domains are characterized by a number of domain components.
- **Domain Component:** Each domain component specifies one aspect of learning and development articulated within the sub-domain.
- **Goal Statement:** Each domain component is comprised of goal statements. Each goal, or overarching statement of expectation, is presented on two pages and is applicable to the full span of age ranges (e.g., in this document: birth to 18 months, 18 to 36 months, 36 to 60 months, and 60 months to kindergarten entry). Each goal statement expresses a specific expectation of what children should know and be able to do. All goal statements within a domain component, taken together, represent the comprehensive conceptualization of the domain component.
- **Age Group:** Each goal is accompanied by a specific set of indicators and strategies for each of the four age groups.
- **Indicators:** The indicators describe expected observable behaviors or skills of children. There are several indicators for each age group that demonstrate progress toward the attainment of a particular goal. It is important to note that each child may have unique ways of demonstrating his or her developmental progress. The indicators represent some of the ways that children may demonstrate progress towards attaining the Guidelines’ goals.
- **Strategies:** Each age-related set of indicators is accompanied by strategies, which are suggested learning activities that adults can engage in with children at home or in an early care and education setting that will foster children’s accomplishment of the indicators. These strategies represent some of the ways that adults can interact with children to nurture their learning and development.
- **Lines:** are provided at the bottom of each domain page to allow users of the document to personalize the list of strategies by adding their own.

A strategy listed in the birth-to-18-month age range may also be applicable to older children. For example, it is suggested that adults read and tell stories with their child daily in the birth-to-18-month age range; it is expected that adults will read and tell stories with their child daily for children entering kindergarten as well.

Definition of Caregiver

This document refers to caregivers, which includes parents, families, early childhood educators, child care providers, health care workers or others who nurture and support young children. In many families, grandparents, aunts, and uncles also play an integral role in raising children and are also considered to be included under the term caregiver.

Using Indicators and Strategies Within and Across Age Ranges

Because some aspects of learning and development are more predominant in one age range than another, the number of indicators and strategies provided for each age range varies for most goal statements. The indicators build upon one another across the age ranges. In other words, it is expected that a child entering kindergarten will demonstrate the indicators in the 60-month to kindergarten-entry age range, as well as the indicators in the 36-to-60-month age range, 18-to-36-month age range, and birth-to-18-month age range. Similarly, the strategies build upon one another across the age ranges.



Physical Well-Being, Health, and Motor Development

I. Introduction

Physical health begins before birth. Parents should plan pregnancy and be prepared for the birth of the child with all the responsibilities involved. Parents need to avoid harmful substances such as tobacco, alcohol and drugs when pregnant. Some physical conditions, such as fetal alcohol syndrome are determined before birth and have life-long implications for the physical well-being and health of the child. Reduced stress, moderate exercise, good nutrition, and regular prenatal care are all important elements in creating a healthy baby.

During the first few years of life, the human body changes continuously and dramatically. These changes are not simply

a matter of growing taller or gaining more weight; they also involve a complex series of changes in body composition, proportion and motor development. Children's physical well-being, health, and motor development have received significant attention in medical, educational and developmental literature and have been long acknowledged as cornerstones of early development and learning in addition to being key dimensions of school readiness.

II. Rationale

Physical well-being, health, and motor development are central to children's entire learning experience and are build-

ing blocks to a life-long active and healthy lifestyle. Physical well-being and movement are important contributors to young children's brain development. Good physical health gives children energy, stamina and endurance to participate actively in a variety of experiences crucial to the learning process. Motor development is closely linked with children's language development (e.g., babbling, pointing to objects); cognition (e.g., exploring new environments); social competencies (e.g., hugging, shaking hands); and emotional development (e.g., smiling, laughing). Despite the existence of the relatively predictable sequence of physical skills noted above, the development of young children's physical and motor skills is highly individualized and often uneven. Growth spurts in physical development influence children's ability and time to master certain gross and fine motor skills. For example, for typically developing children, it is not unusual for



one child to begin creeping and crawling seven or eight months earlier or later than another child.

It is important that we provide the best possible health care for all children. External factors such as access to and utilization of health care, and various social and environmental risks (e.g., firearms, animals, pesticides, inadequate or unhealthy water supplies, violent homes, hazardous materials, thin ice, water safety, air quality, sun protection, media, and neighborhoods) may have great influence on children. Physical symptoms or frequent medical appointments associated with poor health may impact children's participation in learning in school and in life. A family's connection to a medical home for children, in which they receive comprehensive healthcare, is critical. Similarly, when young children receive adequate nutrition and physical movement, their development is supported; lack of such experiences may delay mastery of some skills. Supporting young children's physical well-being, health, and motor development is vital to their learning and development.

As children mature and participate in more activities, physical and motor development occurs along a relatively predictable sequence from simple to more complex. Three general principles underlie the acquisition of motor skills:

- Most children develop from head to toe. For example, young children gain control of their neck muscles before they develop the skill to control their arm movements, which in turn, occurs before children learn to walk
- Children develop skills from the center of their bodies outward. For example, young children gain control of balance and their center of gravity before they develop the skills to catch and throw using their arms
- Children develop motor skills involving large portions of their body first and then progress to skills using specific body parts. For example, young children hold objects by grasping them between fingers and palm before using the thumb and index finger in a more sophisticated pincer grasp

The order in which these abilities are developed is virtually the same for most children around the world.

III. General Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the domain of Physical Well-Being, Health, and Motor Development has four categories: Motor Development, Physical Development, Health and Personal Care, and Safety.

Motor Development

Motor development has three distinct components: gross motor skills, fine motor skills, and sensorimotor skills. Gross motor skills are characterized by movements of the entire body or large portions of the body and include the abilities to roll over, walk, run, jump, hop, skip, and climb. Fine motor skills involve the ability to coordinate smaller muscles in the arms, hands, and fingers, and include grasping, cutting with scissors, or fastening buttons. Sensorimotor skills require the ability to use and to integrate the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) to guide motions. Two key aspects of sensorimotor development is eye-hand coordination and self-regulation. Taken together, these skills provide a foundation for behavior, learning, and overall development for young children.

Physical Development

Early childhood is the time children develop active, healthy lifestyles. Physical fitness allows children to participate in group activities and maintain attention to, and interest in, tasks necessary to the learning process. Applying stamina, energy, strength, and flexibility to a variety of physical activities are major elements of physical development and fitness. Children need access to free time, adequate space, and challenging materials to play and pursue their own physical needs.

Health and Personal Care

Essential aspects of physical health are good personal hygiene and basic personal care practices, including daily living skills such as healthy

sleep patterns, bathing, dressing, and dental hygiene. The easiest and most cost effective way to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria is through regular, thorough hand washing. Also included in health and personal care is support and encouragement for children to eat a variety of nutritious foods. Recognizing and appropriately addressing acute and chronic illness is also essential to promoting optimal health.

Safety

Safety is a critical aspect of physical well-being, which includes protecting children from exposure to harmful substances and situations. It also involves helping children learn to avoid harmful objects, environments, and circumstances. In order to develop these abilities, children and families need to learn about safety rules and regulations, know when and how to ask for help, and recognize the boundary between safety and danger. Life jackets, helmets, seat belts, and cold weather survival skills need to be consistently used in Alaska to care for and protect children as well as to establish healthy, life-long behaviors. In a state where cold water near-drowning occurs at a rate of 25 times the national average, parents need to pay special attention to protecting their children around the water. Other cold injuries parents need to watch out for include hypothermia and frostbite. Training in first aid and injury prevention should be a priority for parents and caregivers in Alaska, where, due to remote locations, rugged environment, and harsh weather conditions, long transport times can compound trauma that victims of accidents—especially children—may suffer.

In Alaska's unique geographical region, which has extremes in temperature and remoteness, it is essential that caregivers pay attention to both traditional indigenous knowledge of survival as well as to modern science and technology. For example, in many parts of the state parents carry their baby or toddler inside their parkas to keep them warm during intensely cold winters. Fur parkas and mukluks provide protection from cold injuries, while polar fleece can also provide added warmth to children and has the benefit of drying quickly. Before travel-

ing in the winter, traditional knowledge of the ice is important to heed, as well as the weather forecast from the radio or Internet.

IV. Supporting Individual Differences

Physical and motor development includes the process of maturing biologically that reflects genetics, nutrition, health, and the environment. Even though the development of physical skills and abilities follows a more or less predictable progression, individual rates of physical and motor development vary for a variety of reasons. Because motor development varies widely among individuals, cultures, and contexts, inappropriate and premature labeling of children must be avoided. Individual differences should be respected and valued.

Children's physical well-being, health, and motor development may be impacted by visual, hearing, neurological, or other disabilities. In general, young children who experience serious delays gain significant benefits from participation in early intervention programs that provide center-based or home-based education and family support. Early intervention positively reduces the effect of disabilities on children's perceptual and motor development. Children who have disabilities, developmental delays, or who are at risk for developmental delays may need assistive technology or equipment; changes in activities, space, or play objects; or other resources to support their participation in daily activities. Inclusive practices such as those mentioned above, provide benefits for all children, with and without disabilities, to learn, laugh, play, and grow together.

Movement styles, physical activity levels, and motor abilities vary across cultures. For example, parents of some cultures are more active and physical in their interactions with young chil-

dren; parents of other cultures are less so. Similarly, quietness and stillness are valued in some cultures, while exuberant, animated interactions are valued in other cultural groups. Caregivers who recognize, understand, and respect these personal and cultural differences will support the physical well-being, health, and motor development of all young children.

Native cultures throughout Alaska place a high value on physical health and endurance. Community events such as dances, sports (e.g., Native Youth Olympics), and subsistence activities like fishing or berry picking provide opportunities for both Native and non-Native people to gather and participate in activities that promote physical health as well as social development. In many villages and cities, people come together at these events to participate in games, dances, and to renew a sense of community.

V. Global Strategies

Families, parents, and child care professionals should make every effort to optimize each child's individual growth and development, providing high expectations for all children regardless of prenatal conditions; child, family and environmental characteristics; and socioeconomic or disability status.

Inappropriate use of media/screen time including television, videos, computer and video games, can negatively impact children's physical health and development by decreasing physical activity, increasing intake of non-nutritious foods, and decreasing socially interactive activities. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children younger than two not view TV and computers, but

engage in interactive activities that will promote brain development, such as playing, physical outdoor activities, talking, singing, and reading together. For older children, the AAP recommends that caregivers limit total media/screen time to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day of quality children's programming.

The following strategies should be used for all children to encourage their physical well-being, health, and motor development. These strategies will help to ensure that all children receive learning experiences that meet their unique needs:

- Ensure children's health and safety by providing adult supervision and guidance
- Make sure children have a medical home in which they receive comprehensive health care, including preventive medical and dental check-ups, immunizations, and care for acute and chronic health problems
- Seek advice from medical and developmental experts when concerned about children's physical well-being, health, and development
- Ensure that children receive nutritious foods that promote optimal health and development
- Provide children with daily opportunities to play actively, promoting health-related fitness and movement
- Provide safe and inviting environments for children, both indoors and outdoors, that facilitate physical activity, challenge development, and do not restrict movement for prolonged periods of time
- Make sure that all children have access to the materials, activities, and equipment that challenge and intrigue them to pursue tasks that promote physical development. All environments should offer challenges for children (e.g., height, size, location)
- Ensure that parents and other caregivers have discussed family expectations for children's learning of personal care skills and are in consensus on the goals for children's physical development and health that reflect cultural beliefs and traditions
- Incorporate song games, chants, drumming, dances, or other culturally specific large motor activities into children's daily routines
- Make sure that the environment is safe from cultural or other forms of bias
- Be open to discussions of physical characteristics, as well as individual preferences, as these are important aspects of self-identity and they inform children about others
- Use visual and physical cues, as well as verbal ones, to help children know what to do
- When appropriate, assign a similar-aged role model to a child to demonstrate actions and help with materials/equipment
- Become familiar with the risk factors and signs of child abuse and neglect and reporting requirements and processes for reporting
- Ensure children's awareness of local environmental and communal safety issues, including appropriate clothing for the conditions and type of activity
- Provide appropriate outdoor clothing protection to promote children's exploration of the environment outside the home

1

Motor Development: Gross Motor Skills

GOAL 1

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH AND COORDINATION OF LARGE MOTOR MUSCLES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Lifts head and chest while on tummy
- Gains control of arm and leg movements
- Rolls over
- Pounds on things with hands and kicks legs
- Reaches for feet and brings them to mouth
- Sits with support and later, sits without support
- Rocks back and forth on hands and knees and later, crawls
- Pulls self up to stand, holding on to something or someone
- Walks holding on to furniture, then later as the primary means of moving around
- Stoops over to explore things on the ground
- Tries to climb stairs, with assistance

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide periods of supervised “tummy time” when infant is awake
- Provide opportunities for child to move freely during waking hours
- Provide a variety of objects to be pulled, pushed, and held
- Play interactive games and sing songs from child’s home cultural background that involve child’s hands and feet
- Provide a safe environment and objects for child to be physically active

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Carries toys or objects while walking
- Walks and runs with skill, changing both speed and direction
- Walks backwards
- Climbs both in and out of bed or onto a steady adult chair
- Pounds object with intent and precision (e.g., hammers peg with accuracy)
- Kicks and throws a ball, but with little control of direction or speed
- Jumps in place
- Balances on one foot briefly
- Bends over easily at the waist, without falling
- Walks in a straight line
- Walks up and down stairs, not alternating feet, without assistance

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Play with child and encourage them to run, throw, jump, kick, and climb
- Provide a variety of materials and equipment (e.g., riding toys, low climbing structures)
- Engage child in physical activities that promote balance (e.g., rocking, swinging, rolling, spinning)
- Provide opportunities for child to try different body positions (e.g., bending, twisting)
- Modify activities to ensure participation of child with special needs (e.g., provide ramps or low steps to ensure access to climbing equipment)



Motor Development: Fine Motor Skills

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH AND COORDINATION OF SMALL MOTOR MUSCLES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Grasps caregivers' fingers
- Consistently reaches for toys, objects, and bottles with both hands
- Mimics hand clapping or a good-bye wave
- Transfers small objects from hand to hand
- Empties objects from containers
- Picks up object with thumb and forefinger
- Turns pages of large books, often turning multiple pages at the same time
- Makes marks on paper with large writing/drawing implements (e.g., thick pencil, crayon, marker)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to reach for objects
- Provide opportunities for child to grasp and hold a variety of objects
- Play hand games with child
- Give child appropriate finger foods to eat (e.g., dry cereal, cooked vegetables)
- Provide and encourage child to play with bath toys (e.g., scooping and pouring)
- Provide books for child to promote fine motor skills (e.g., turning pages, pointing)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Turns book pages one page at a time, most of the time
- Scribbles with crayons and begins to imitate marks (e.g., a circle)
- Uses a paintbrush
- Folds blanket, cloth diaper, or paper, with assistance
- Pours liquid from small pitcher or cup
- Makes attempts to stack objects
- Opens doors, with assistance, by turning and pulling doorknobs
- Uses some eating utensils appropriately
- Works simple "insert" puzzles (e.g., completes simple puzzle, uses shape sorter box)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Engage child in scribbling using crayons, chalk, and large pencils
- Provide experiences that support the use of hands in many different positions (e.g., painting at an upright easel)
- Engage child in activities that promote moving fingers individually (e.g., finger plays, typing on a toy keyboard, making music)
- Model uses of writing and drawing in everyday life
- Engage child in playing with and stacking blocks and/or small household objects
- Demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries about harmful objects and situations (e.g., always put child in a car safety seat when traveling in a vehicle)

DOMAIN ONE
Physical Well-Being, Health, and Motor Development

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Eats with utensils
- Uses various drawing and art materials (e.g., crayons, brushes, finger paint)
- Copies shapes and geometric designs
- Opens and closes blunt scissors with one hand
- Cuts a piece of paper on a straight line and on a curve. With blunt scissors, may not cut accurately
- Manipulates small objects with ease (e.g., strings beads, fits small objects into holes)
- Fastens large buttons
- Uses large zippers
- Uses stapler or hole punch
- Completes increasingly complex puzzles (e.g., single, cut-out figures to 10-piece puzzles)
- Writes some recognizable letters or numbers

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Engage child in activities that strengthen hand grasp (e.g., molding play dough, using a hand held hole punch)
- Encourage child to use pincer grasp of thumb/forefinger (e.g., gluing small pieces of paper, peeling/sticking stickers, picking up small objects with fingers)
- Provide opportunities for child to practice tying, buttoning, and beading
- Spend time with child using a variety of writing materials (e.g., crayons, pencils, markers, paints)
- Demonstrate and provide opportunities for child to use scissors safely
- Modify activities to ensure participation of child with special needs (e.g., attach rubber grips to pencils and pens)

Some Indicators for Children:

- Removes and replaces easy-to-open container lids
- Folds paper and makes paper objects (e.g., airplanes, origami), with assistance
- Cuts, draws, glues with materials provided
- Ties knots and shoe laces, with assistance
- Prints some letters in own name
- Buttons large buttons on clothing
- Tears tape off a dispenser without letting the tape get stuck to itself, most of the time
- Puts together and pulls apart manipulatives (e.g., Legos, beads for stringing and sewing, Lincoln Logs) appropriately

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Involve child in activities using fine motor skills (e.g., setting a table, preparing food, and sorting buttons)
- Play card games in which child must hold, pick up, and turn over cards (e.g., "Old Maid," "Go Fish")
- Provide daily opportunities for child to use art supplies that support fine motor skills (e.g., crayons, chalk, pencils, scissors, glue, stickers)
- Provide small materials to manipulate such as legos, hammer and nails, beads for stringing and sewing
- Play with child stacking blocks and making a variety of structures such as houses, castles, roads, etc.

3

Motor Development: Sensorimotor Skills

CHILDREN USE THEIR SENSES: SIGHT, HEARING, SMELL, TASTE, AND TOUCH, TO GUIDE AND INTEGRATE THEIR INTERACTIONS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS



Some Indicators for Children:

- Responds by turning toward sound, movement, and touch
- Focuses eyes on near and far objects
- Enjoys swinging and rocking
- Calms with caregiver assistance
- Explores the environment with mouth and hands
- Moves objects from one hand to the other
- Coordinates eye and hand movements (e.g., puts objects into large container)
- Explores and responds to different surface textures (e.g., hard top tables, soft cushions)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Make sure child receives routine vision and hearing screenings
 - Monitor child's environment for noise level (e.g., avoid putting electronic toys in crib, keep loud noises away from infant's ears)
 - Place a mobile near infant's crib, but safely out of reach to stimulate vision and other senses
 - Provide time daily for child to move freely on the floor in a safe environment
 - Gently rock and swing child using your body, rocking chairs, or play structures
 - Avoid prolonged periods in highchairs or devices that restrict movement (e.g., mechanical swings, baby carrier)
 - Provide materials and objects of various textures, shapes, colors, smells, and sounds
 - Talk with child about the colors, sounds, temperatures, tastes, and smells of things during daily activities
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- Explain when things are hot and too hot to touch safely; cold and too cold to touch safely
- Sing/play music and encourage movement to the beat of the music

18 TO 36 MONTHS



Some Indicators for Children:

- Performs basic creative movements, with adult guidance or alone (e.g., dances to music or rhythm)
- Demonstrates awareness of own body in space (e.g., walks around table without bumping into it)
- Eats food with a variety of textures
- Exhibits eye-hand coordination (e.g., builds with blocks, completes simple puzzles, strings large beads)
- Enjoys climbing, walking up inclines, sliding, and swinging
- Plays with materials of different textures (e.g., sand, water, leaves)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide physical experiences that integrate child's movements with all of the senses (e.g., shadow play, painting with feet, playground equipment)
 - Comment positively and specifically about what child is doing during play
 - Model movements and invite child to participate (e.g., dance or drum together)
 - Provide objects for catching and throwing (e.g., large, soft balls; beanbags)
 - Provide sensory materials such as water, snow, mud, or sand for children to explore
 - Avoid sensory confusion with scented items that are not made for the mouth (e.g., scented markers, scented play dough)
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4

Physical Development: Physical Fitness

GOAL 4

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE THE STAMINA AND ENERGY TO PARTICIPATE IN DAILY ACTIVITIES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Shows alertness during waking periods
- Lifts head, makes facial expressions
- Sustains physical activity for at least three to five minutes at a time (recognizing the unique capabilities of the child)
- Initiates active play, exploring and interacting with environment
- Sustains strength for increased periods of time as child ages

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide child with several hours of unstructured movement every day
- Model daily physical activities (e.g., walking, running, lifting)
- Provide child with regular nap and bedtime routines
- Play games together that require movement and physical activity
- Place young infant with tummy on the floor to strengthen muscles
- Stimulate child with sound and facial expression to solicit response

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Participates actively in games, outdoor play, and other forms of physical movement
- Runs spontaneously across the room or yard
- Engages in unstructured physical activities for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours each day
- Sustains physical (aerobic) activity for at least 15 minutes at a time, for at least 30 minutes each day
- Sleeps well, awakening rested and ready for daily activities

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide child with a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity throughout each day
- Provide a safe and inviting play area that encourages movement, balance, and climbing
- Provide common objects for structured physical activity (e.g., child-size equipment, musical instruments, active follow-along songs and basic rhythms)
- Provide child with daily calm and rest periods or nap times
- Limit child's screen time (watching TV and videos, playing computer games) to no more than two hours of quality children's programming in each 24-hour period
- Go on daily short walks with child

6

GOAL 6

Health and Personal Care: Daily Living Skills

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE PERSONAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE SKILLS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Relaxes during bathing routines
- Responds to vocalizations during diaper changing routines
- Washes and dries hands, with assistance
- Begins to brush gums and teeth with assistance
- Indicates needs and wants such as hunger or a dirty diaper

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Establish on-going and regular medical and dental homes for child and make sure child receives routine preventative care
- Make sure child receives all age-appropriate immunizations
- Talk with child about what you are doing when bathing, diapering, dressing, and cleaning
- Establish hygiene routines and model them (e.g., washing hands before eating, brushing teeth)
- Make bath time enjoyable (e.g., provide safe bath toys, sing songs, tell stories)
- Understand and recognize typical signs of illness or discomfort in child and respond appropriately, seeking assistance as needed (e.g., teething, earache, diaper rash, diarrhea)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses tissue to wipe nose, with assistance
- Indicates wet or soiled diaper by pointing, vocalizing, or pulling at diaper when prompted
- Shows interest in toilet training and can use toilet regularly by 36 months, with assistance
- Washes and dries hands at appropriate times, with minimal assistance (e.g., after diapering/toileting, before meals, after blowing nose)
- Communicates with caregiver when he/she is not feeling well
- Participates in bathroom routines
- Cooperates and assists caregiver with tooth brushing

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Model and practice proper hand washing and drying with child
- Support child's efforts in toileting, brushing teeth, bathing, and washing hands
- Show child how to clean up after self, acknowledging when he/she does clean up
- Talk with child about health rules (e.g., cover mouth when coughing, throw away soiled tissues in wastebasket)
- Model words to describe symptoms of illness (e.g., "I feel hot." "My tummy hurts.")
- Have a set of clean clothes always ready for child to change into

DOMAIN ONE
Physical Well-Being, Health, and Motor Development

36 TO 60 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses tissue to wipe own nose and throws tissue in wastebasket
- Takes care of own toileting needs
- Washes and dries hands before eating and after toileting, without assistance
- Cooperates and assists caregiver with tooth brushing
- Identifies health products (e.g., shampoo, toothpaste, soap)
- Covers mouth when coughing
- Recognizes and communicates when experiencing symptoms of illness
- Understands the need for and participates in care for acute and chronic illness

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to select personal hygiene items for self and others (e.g., select own toothbrush, washcloth)
- Make a place for child's personal grooming
- Provide child with enough time to take care of personal hygiene
- Provide opportunities for child to interact with health care workers (e.g., dentist, nurse, health aide, doctor)

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Brushes teeth and attempts flossing with supervision, and then allows assistance to complete process
- Washes face, without assistance
- Covers mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with elbow or tissue

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Encourage child to verbalize why personal hygiene is important
- Demonstrate and explain the importance of hygiene for good health
- Show child difference between candy and pills, food and non-food items (e.g., drug abuse concerns)

GOAL 7

CHILDREN PRACTICE BASIC PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Indicates anticipation of feeding on seeing breast, bottle, or food
- Assists caregiver with holding bottle, later grasps a cup, then eats with fingers
- Demonstrates increasing ability to self-soothe and fall asleep
- Removes loose clothing (e.g., socks, hats, mittens)
- Assists with undressing, dressing, and diapering

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Respond positively and promptly when child indicates need (e.g., need for food, diaper change, blanket)
- Model basic personal care routines
- Provide opportunities for older child to select safe foods and feed self
- Provide child-size eating utensils and cups with lids
- Transition to regular cup starting at 12 months of age
- Provide child with a safe and comfortable sleeping environment
- Provide older babies with a consistent bedtime routine and schedule
- Wash your hands and child's hands frequently to help prevent the spread of colds and viruses
- Provide oral health care (brushing teeth and gums)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Feeds self with spoon without assistance
- Washes hands with assistance
- Demonstrates interest in changing clothes when wet or muddy
- Participates in putting on shoes and socks
- Dresses and undresses completely, with assistance
- Uses personal care objects correctly and regularly, sometimes with assistance (e.g., drinks from open cup, brushes hair, brushes teeth)
- Participates in sleeping routines such as getting and arranging his/her bedtime comfort items

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to participate daily in personal care (e.g., choose clothes to wear, use tooth brush, get dressed)
- Provide opportunities for child to be responsible for personal belongings (e.g., hanging up own jacket)
- Provide easy on/off clothing to allow child chance to practice personal care
- Read with child and practice other calming routines at bedtime
- Be aware of culturally based personal care strategies used by families to promote interdependence

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Feeds self with fork and spoon, without assistance
- Washes hands independently with frequency
- Gets drink of water from appropriate tap, without assistance
- Dresses and undresses with minimal help
- Chooses own clothes to wear, when asked
- Puts shoes on, without assistance
- Decides, with few prompts, when to carry out self-help tasks (e.g., to wash hands when dirty and before meals)
- Chooses to rest when he/she is tired
- Participates in helping younger siblings with personal care routines

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Offer plenty of guidance and opportunities for child to take care of self (e.g., put on own coat, clean up after spills and messy projects)
- Give child enough time to take care of personal needs such as zipping and unzipping coat
- Help child recognize personal signs of fatigue and need for rest
- Provide opportunities for child to help younger siblings and other children with appropriate personal care routines
- Demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries about harmful objects and situations (e.g., always put child in car safety seat when traveling in a vehicle)
- Permit child to brush own teeth; caregiver brush after child

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses fork, spoon, and (sometimes) a blunt table knife
- Pours milk or juice easily and with minimal spills
- Dresses and undresses in easy pull-on clothes, without assistance
- Ties single knot in shoelaces, with assistance
- Brushes and combs hair, with assistance
- Helps select clothes appropriate for the weather

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Talk with child about positive personal care routines
- Provide opportunities for child to practice personal care (e.g., dressing, brushing hair, brushing teeth)
- Provide opportunities for child to take responsibility for own special personal care (e.g., eyeglasses, hearing aids)
- Provide opportunities to model care routines with dolls or other toys

8

GOAL 8

Health and Personal Care: Nutrition

CHILDREN EAT A VARIETY OF NUTRITIOUS FOODS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Breast-feeds, if appropriate for family preferences and circumstances (breast-feeding is recommended by American Academy of Pediatrics for a minimum of one year, when possible)
- Regulates the speed and intensity with which he/she eats
- Consumes a variety of nutritious foods from all food groups, after 6 months of age
- Explores food with fingers, after 6 months

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide an environment that is supportive of breast-feeding
- Plan feeding times and practices around the individual cultural and feeding needs of child (e.g., if breast-feeding, use of breast milk or if bottle feeding, use of formula)
- Follow child's cues for when he/she is full or hungry
- Eliminate soda pop, junk food, and other foods with excess sugar from child's diet
- Treat meal times as an opportunity to help child enjoy food and become independent in feeding
- Model nutritious eating habits
- Provide child with nutritious foods and snacks, including foods from various cultures
- Communicate with other caregivers about food allergies and provide a safe food environment for child
- Provide plenty of water rather than juice or sweetened drinks

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Begins to recognize and eat a variety of nutritious foods
- Distinguishes between food and non-food items
- Makes personal food choices among several nutritious options
- Tries new foods when offered
- Consumes age appropriate amounts of nutritious beverages (e.g., water, milk, occasional 100% juice)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Establish regular meal and snack times in daily schedule
- Prepare and provide a variety of nutritious snacks and meals from child's own cultural background and other cultures; avoid soda pop and junk food
- Talk with child about how food and water help us to be healthy
- When adding a food to the menu that is new to child, include other foods that are child's favorites
- Encourage child to drink plenty of water throughout the day
- If child has food allergies, talk with him/her about healthful food choices that fit his/her needs

9

Safety: Safe Practices

CHILDREN MAKE SAFE CHOICES, AVOIDING HARMFUL OBJECTS AND SITUATIONS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Responds to cues from caregivers about warnings of danger
- Shows recognition of the difference between primary caregivers and strangers
- Reacts when caregiver says “no” but may need assistance to stop unsafe behavior

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide constant close adult supervision and guidance
 - Dress child appropriately for the weather conditions
 - Put infant to sleep on his/her back
 - Provide a safe “child-proof” environment (e.g., keep choking hazards and poisons out of child’s reach, cover electrical outlets)
 - Demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries about harmful objects and situations (e.g., always use car safety seats, life jackets, and bicycle helmets when traveling)
 - Explain when things are hot and too hot to touch safely; cold and too cold to touch safely
 - Understand the risk factors and signs of child abuse and neglect and respond appropriately
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18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Begins to avoid dangers (e.g., hot stoves, sharp knives) but cannot be relied upon to keep self safe
- Knows to hold caregiver’s hand when walking in public places
- Identifies safe adults
- Wears appropriate clothing for the conditions
- Tells adult when someone hurts him/her or makes him/her feel bad

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide constant close adult supervision and guidance
- Teach child guns are not toys; they are for adults only
- Use poison symbols in classroom and at home and teach child what they mean
- Talk with child about harmful objects and substances
- Teach child to tell an adult if he/she is afraid, has been hurt by an adult or another child, or sees something that is not safe
- Keep guns unloaded, locked up and out of reach
- Introduce child to safety personnel and places (e.g., firefighters, fire stations, health clinics, health aides, Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs), doctors and hospitals)
- Teach child that he/she is strong and capable, and can count on you to keep him/her safe
- Demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries about harmful objects and situations (e.g., always put child in car safety seat when traveling in a vehicle)
- Assist child in dressing appropriately and keeping on appropriate dress for climate

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses safe behaviors indoors and outdoors
- Communicates to peers and adults when sees dangerous behaviors (e.g., throwing rocks on the playground)
- Uses helmets when riding toys
- Carries scissors and pencils with points down to avoid accidents
- Looks both ways before crossing street or road, and knows to cross with adult assistance
- Recognizes danger and poison symbols and avoids those objects or areas
- Does not touch or take medicine without adult assistance but knows that medicine can improve health when used properly
- Understands the difference between “safe touch” and “unsafe touch”
- Identifies appropriate clothing and skin protectant for various weather conditions

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide constant close adult supervision and guidance
- Participate in discussions with firefighters about fires and safety precautions
- Read stories in which children face harmful situations and discuss how they deal with them
- Provide puppets, role-play materials and songs/rhymes that help child focus on who and what can be trusted
- Be vigilant about appropriate clothing and skin protection
- Provide role-playing situations for child to practice personal safety
- Demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries about harmful objects and situations (e.g., always put child in car safety seat when traveling in a vehicle)
- Keep guns away from child
- Become familiar with the risk factors and signs of child abuse and neglect

Some Indicators for Children:

- Does not accept rides, food, or money from strangers
- Understands that some practices may be personally dangerous (e.g., smoking, drinking alcohol, playing with matches, contact with germs and blood)
- Identifies local hazards (e.g., thin ice, wildlife, dogs, moving water, guns)
- Identifies adults who can assist in dangerous situations (e.g., parent, teacher, police officer)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide constant close adult supervision and guidance
- Participate with child in community health and safety programs (e.g., local and tribal clinics, dentist, doctor, veterinarian, firefighter, police officer)
- Discuss safety practice with child (e.g., crossing streets, medicine is not candy, guns are for adults, avoiding strange dogs and wild animals)
- Teach child to recognize lures that predators may use to neutralize a child’s “personal alarm system” in order to harm the child (e.g., affection, authority, bribery)
- Take neighborhood walks with child, look for and discuss potentially dangerous situations

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Understands and anticipates the consequences of not following rules
- Identifies safety signs posted around the classroom and home
- Follows emergency drill instruction (e.g., fire, earthquake, tsunami, bomb, lockdown)
- Follows basic safety rules, with assistance (e.g., bus, bicycle, boats, planes, playground, crossing the street, stranger awareness, using sidewalk, boardwalk, dock)
- Initiates getting buckled into age- and weight appropriate car safety seat in vehicles
- Puts on or asks for helmet before riding a bicycle or other wheeled toy

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Discuss safety rules with child (e.g., holding hands in crowds, around small aircraft, wearing a personal flotation device, wearing a bike helmet)
- Talk with child about fire safety (e.g., “Give matches and lighters to an adult.”)
- Provide opportunities for child to practice appropriate emergency drills (e.g., fire, earthquake, bomb)
- Provide basic safety equipment for all of child’s activities
- Provide opportunities for child to learn and practice water safety
- Discuss safety rules regarding wilderness and animal safety (e.g., guns, motor craft, matches, propane, and water safety)
- Model safe practices (e.g., personal flotation, helmets, fire safety)

Some Indicators for Children:

- Consistently follows safety rules
- Understands why emergency drills are important
- Explains how to get help in emergency situations (e.g., calling 911, finding a police officer or responsible adult)
- Demonstrates safety rules as engages in dramatic play (e.g., “Tell your doll to keep his fingers away from the hot stove so he does not get hurt.”)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to observe traffic safety rules as he/she travels in motor vehicles and public transportation
- Show and tell child how to call 911 in an emergency situation
- Practice a fire/emergency exit plan for your home; teach the child where to meet the family after exiting the home
- Identify different people child can ask for help in an emergency situation (e.g., police officer, health aid, EMT, librarian, bus driver)

Social and Emotional Development

I. Introduction

By nature, human beings are social creatures. Throughout all phases of life, people interact with one another. Learning how to be around others is essential for children because they construct knowledge about their world through social interaction. Healthy children in all cultures form early attachments with significant adults. These relationships form the foundation for later emotional, social, linguistic, and cognitive development. For families and cultural communities, the concept of being well educated includes social and emotional development, since it is a key to learning.

Even though emotions are a universal human phenomenon and social behavior is observed constantly in the world around us, social and emotional development is difficult to define and measure. The challenges stem from: (a) the broad range of behaviors and concepts included within social and emotional development; (b) the difficulty of assessing processes that are primarily internal and, therefore, not always visible; and (c) social and emotional variability according to cultural and situational context. Nonetheless, there is agreement that social and emotional development serve as the foundation for relationships and interactions that give meaning to children's experiences in the home, at school, and in the larger community. Brain research consistently supports the importance of the first five years as the critical years for developing the necessary social and emotional skills.

II. Rationale

Social and emotional development is correlated with children's overall success in school and in life. During the early years, children primarily interact with their parents, guardians, other family members, primary caregivers, and a limited number of peers. These relationships play a central role in fostering children's social and emotional well-being, providing a sense of stability and belonging, and allowing children to make the most of learning opportunities. Successful social and emotional development requires secure, consistent, responsive, as well as physically and emotionally nurturing relationships. With guidance and through playful interactions, children develop skills to cooperate, negotiate, lead and follow, be a friend, and express their feelings in a socially and culturally acceptable manner. These skills also include the ability to read body language, to communicate non-verbally, and to be sensitive to others' feelings. Young children can also begin to have experiences that assist them with looking at situations through another person's perspective.

Forming warm, responsive bonds and intimacy with others has been found to protect children emotionally from negative effects associated with poverty, violence in the home or the community, parental depression, and other stressors that endanger mental health and social adjustment.

III. General Definitions

Children's social and emotional development is defined as their ability and desire to interact effectively with adults and other children. Social development and emotional development are closely interrelated; skills in each are acquired in a relatively predictable sequence. For example, children establish warm and responsive interactions with adults before they develop skills such as self-concept and self-control. These skills typically precede the development of relationships with peers and groups.

Social Development

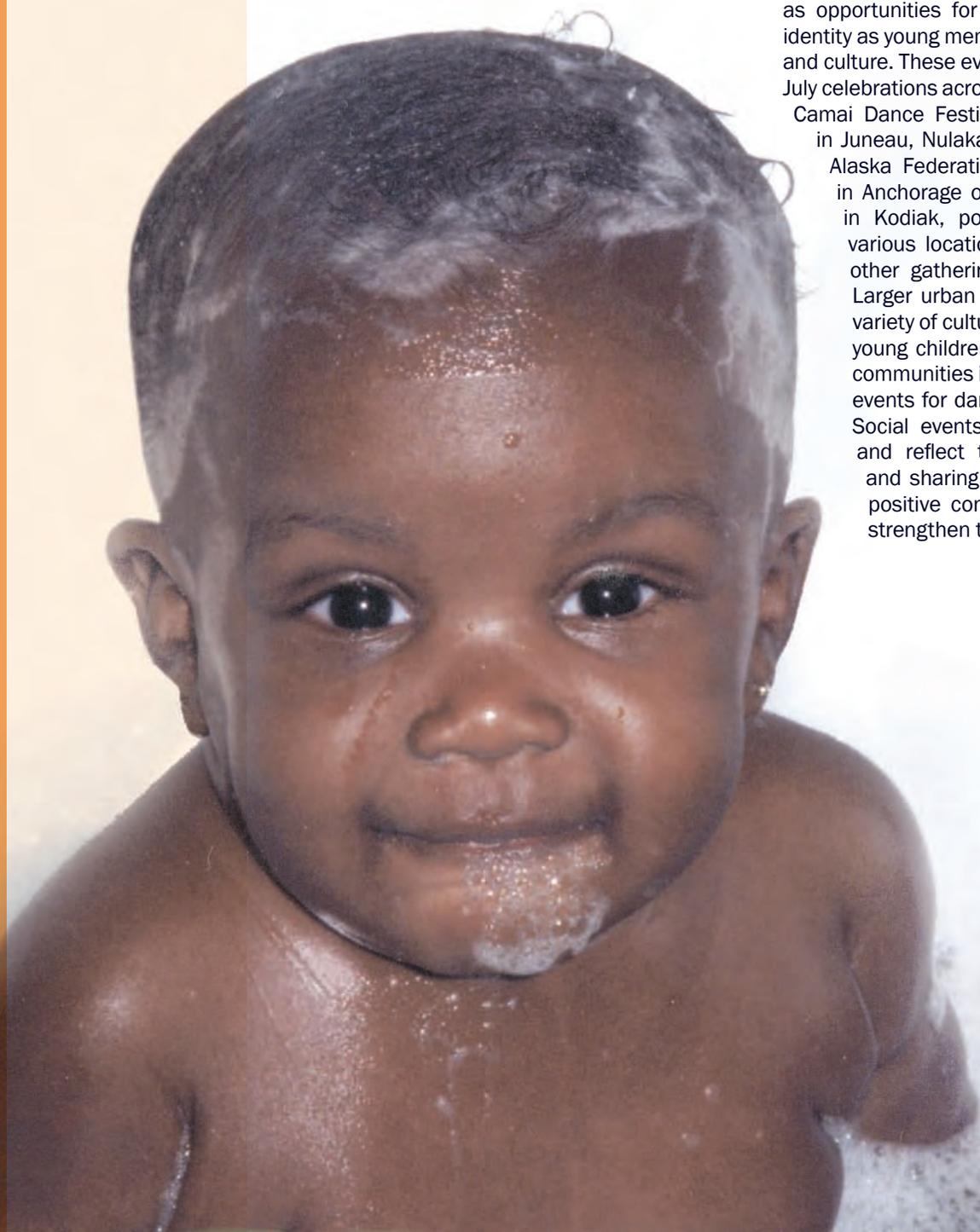
Young children's ability to form and sustain social relationships with adults and other children is at the heart of their social development. Children's social relationships with adults can be understood in terms of children's ability to trust and interact easily with adults, as well as their ability to recognize adult roles. Children look to adults for guidance, cues, and information on how to act, think, and feel.

As children grow, their ability to establish relationships with their peers also influences how children view themselves and the world. As children build positive friendships, they learn to cooperate, to form and maintain relationships, and to negotiate in a consistent and positive manner. Meaningful play experiences offer children key opportunities to practice their social skills of cooperation, compromising, taking turns, etc. Cooperation with peers implies an understanding of other children's rights and the ability to balance one's own needs with those of others.

Children can develop successful social relationships as they recognize and appreciate similarities and differences in other people, as well as learn to interact comfortably with children and adults who may have different characteristics, cultures, and life experiences. Positive social relationships are formed and maintained when children develop adaptive social behavior – when they understand the effects of different behaviors, when they are able to adapt to diverse settings, and when they participate positively in

group activities. Finally, social competence is demonstrated when children show empathy by understanding, respecting, and showing sensitivity towards children who have similarities and differences in comparison to themselves.

It is important to bring children to events in the community so they can learn about social interactions in the crucial early years of development. Many communities throughout Alaska hold annual social events that celebrate community and culture. These events provide opportunities for social and emotional development, as well as opportunities for children to develop their identity as young members of their communities and culture. These events may include Fourth of July celebrations across the state, the State Fair, Camai Dance Festival in Bethel, Celebration in Juneau, Nulakataq and Kivgiq in Barrow, Alaska Federation of Natives Convention in Anchorage or Fairbanks, Crab Festival in Kodiak, pow-wows or potlatches in various locations, as well as numerous other gatherings throughout the state. Larger urban areas of the state offer a variety of cultural and social activities for young children and their families. Many communities in the rural areas hold local events for dances and potlucks as well. Social events and gatherings promote and reflect the values of community and sharing, which help children form positive connections with others and strengthen their identity.



Emotional Development

Important emotional skills for children include their ability to recognize and express their own feelings and to understand and respond to the emotions of others. Central to the understanding of emotional development is the construct of self-concept, or children's overall perception of self, including traits, habits, abilities, motives, and social roles. As children acquire self-concept, they are beginning to answer the question, "Who am I?" Another aspect of emotional development is self-efficacy, which is the belief that one can succeed in accomplishing what one sets out to do. Self-efficacy creates feelings of self-confidence and positive emotions that children need to be successful in learning tasks at home and at school.

Emotional development includes understanding emotions and the ability to manage or regulate them in both personal and social contexts. Emotional well-being includes children's ability to understand their emotions and effectively and appropriately express their attitudes, and their feelings. Emotional expression includes expressing primary emotions (e.g., joy, anger, fear), emotions linked to sensory stimulation (e.g., disgust, delight, horror), and self-appraisal emotions (e.g., pride, shame, guilt).

IV. Supporting Individual Differences

All children develop within their own family, social, and cultural experiences, which makes them unique. The wealth of cultures in Alaska has contributed to the great diversity in our state, therefore children should learn to function in and appreciate other cultures in addition to their own. Today's children must develop respect and appreciation for people with ideas and experiences that are both similar to and different from their own. Differences include a

variety of abilities and unique characteristics that should be respected.

One's identity is shaped by many factors including gender, race, cultural and family background, language, religion, abilities, life experiences, and circumstances. Young children need to develop a positive sense of their own identity as well as a respect for others' identities. The more families can value and honor their culture the better their children will be able to develop positive identities. Family and cultural stories help children build strong and positive identities, especially if their culture is different from the predominant culture in their region. Early childhood educators should also include all children's cultures as much as possible in the learning environment to help foster positive identities, which leads to academic success.

Temperament styles also impact children's social and emotional skills and the strategies early childhood educators use to help them gain appropriate social skills. For more information about temperaments and learning dispositions see the "Approaches to Learning" domain pg. 90.

Children who have disabilities, developmental delays, or who are at risk for developmental delays or behavioral health challenges may require special attention to promote their social and emotional development. For example, some





children with special social and emotional needs may face particular challenges in developing successful peer relationships. Children with even mild delays tend to participate less in sustained play, spend more time alone when other children are playing, express more sadness when playing (or not being allowed to play) with other children, get angry more, and use less effective conflict resolution strategies. Since positive social interactions and emotional expression are vital, some children may need direct (or extra) assistance in building these skills. Diagnosis and intervention for developmental delays are critical. Young children's social and emotional behavior can be enhanced by early intervention efforts that provide center-based or home-based social and mental health services and family support.

Early childhood educators need to appreciate and respect children's unique characteristics and the diverse contexts in which children develop. The values and practices of each child's family, community, and culture shape the feelings, knowledge, and expectations that influence social and emotional development. As a consequence, children's social interactions, communication patterns, and play interests vary. Social and emotional development is dependent upon the match between children's feelings, expressive behaviors, and the expectations of the social situation in which they find themselves. Therefore, environments for young children should provide diverse, non-stereotyping atmospheres in which cultural, ethnic, racial, linguistic, age, gender, and ability differences are embraced and respected. Caregivers can also help children identify negative stereotypes when they cannot be avoided, for example in the media and advertisements.

V. Global Strategies

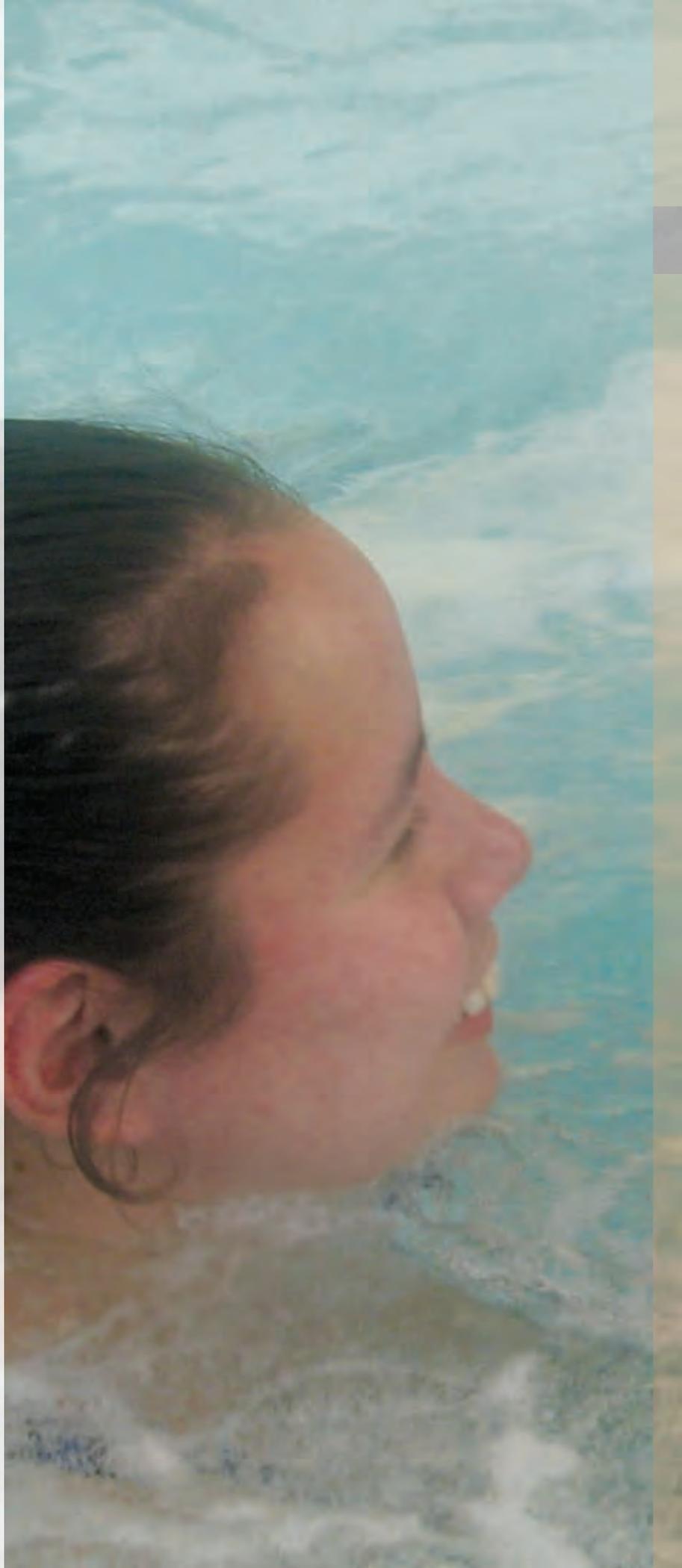
Because children's social and emotional development are linked to the environments, cultures, and relationships in which they grow and learn, parents and caregivers play the primary role in shaping children's positive social and emotional development.

Inappropriate use of media/screen time (e.g., TV, videos, computer and video games) can negatively impact children's social and emotional development by contributing to aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, and fear of being harmed. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends discouraging screen time for children younger than

2 and encouraging interactive activities that will promote brain development (e.g., playing, talking, singing, telling stories, and reading together). For older children, the AAP recommends that caregivers limit children's total media and screen time (computer games, TV, videos, etc.) to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day of quality children's programming.

The following strategies should be used for all children from birth to school entry to encourage positive social and emotional development. The following examples of strategies will help to ensure that all children receive learning experiences that meet their unique needs:

- Be sensitive, responsive, and playful as well as physically and emotionally available to children
- Promote trust, security, and exploration through nurturing relationships and safe, consistent, and stimulating environments
- Help children learn to accept, understand, and manage their emotions
- Offer an assortment of culturally appropriate activities, experiences, and materials that represent diversity
- Encourage acceptance and appreciation of family culture
- Build strong relationships with families in order to support children
- Consider the most appropriate means of communicating with parents including personal contact, phone, letters, radio (CB or VHF), or community gatherings such as potlucks
- Strive for an environment that respects all people and is free of bias
- Engage children in playing and interacting successfully with peers and adults
- Build on what children know and can do well
- Model and teach appropriate conflict resolution and problem-solving skills
- Seek advice from medical and developmental experts when concerned about children's development and behavior
- Become familiar with the risk and reporting factors and signs of child abuse and neglect





11

Social Development: Interactions with Adults

GOAL 11 CHILDREN TRUST AND INTERACT COMFORTABLY WITH FAMILIAR ADULTS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Quiets when comforted
- Shows preference for primary caregivers
- Establishes and maintains interactions with caregivers
- Imitates familiar adults' gestures and sounds
- Shows affection for adults through facial expressions and gestures
- Uses body movements to initiate social interactions (e.g., pats adult's face)
- Explores environment with guidance
- Distinguishes between familiar and unfamiliar adults (e.g., prefers comfort from familiar adult)
- Exhibits separation anxiety by crying when caregiver is not in sight or clinging to caregiver in the presence of strangers (separation anxiety increases over time and then diminishes)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Hold, cuddle, hug, smile, and laugh with child
- Consistently and promptly respond to child's needs for comfort and reassurance
- Respond to child's cues and movements
- Talk with and sing to child frequently, especially during feeding and diaper changes
- Tell stories, read, and look at books with child in ways that foster feelings of trust and security
- Give child sense of security when around unfamiliar adults
- Model open and trusting interactions
- Show respect for child and everyone in his/her environment
- Provide environment with trustworthy adults

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Establishes an attachment or bond with a consistent adult other than the primary caregiver
- Demonstrates feeling safe with significant adults by seeking them in uncomfortable or dangerous situations
- Imitates adult activities (e.g., pretends to fish or cook, "reads" next to adult who is reading)
- Initiates interactions and play with adults
- Responds appropriately to adults' verbal greetings
- Communicates with adults about recent activities

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Respond to child's emotional and physical needs, as well as their verbal and non-verbal communications
- Show empathy and understanding to child
- Listen carefully and with interest to what child says and expand on the message
- Help child manage feelings of distress
- Provide opportunities for child to interact with familiar and trustworthy adults

12

Social Development: Interactions with Adults

GOAL 12 CHILDREN SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM ADULTS WHEN NEEDED

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Cries, makes sounds, or uses body movements to signal caregiver for assistance, attention, or need for comfort
- Looks for caregivers' response in uncertain situations
- Tests caregiver responses to his/her behavior (e.g., reaches for a forbidden object and looks at caregiver to check response)
- Looks to adult for indication of appropriate and inappropriate behavior

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Nurture child with kind words, hugs, and cuddles
- Respond to child consistently
- Provide help and comfort when child is distressed
- Observe and stay close to child to be ready to offer support
- Respond to child's needs and reinforce small accomplishments
- Recognize that responses to child's calls for assistance are important opportunities to develop trust
- Show respect for child and everyone in his/her environment

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Seeks adult assistance with challenges
- Periodically checks with caregiver for help or reassurance when playing by self or with peers
- Responds positively to guidance most of the time
- Starts activity after a caregiver makes suggestions, sometimes (e.g., uses adult's suggestions to find missing pieces to a toy or items needed for an art activity)
- Follows basic safety guidelines and requirements (e.g., "Hot – don't touch.")

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Respond positively to child's questions and calls for assistance
- Set appropriate and consistent limits
- Acknowledge and describe child's appropriate behavior (e.g., "You remembered to hang up your coat.")
- Follow child's cues and offer guidance when appropriate

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Shows enjoyment in playing with other children
- Initiates an activity with another child
- Separates willingly from adults to play with friends, most of the time
- Makes and maintains a friendship with at least one other child
- Initiates conversations with other children; asks questions and responds

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Engage in conversations with child so he/she can practice listening and talking with others
- Provide opportunities for child to engage in a variety of play activities with other children (e.g., dramatic play, art projects, free play outside, dance class)
- Balance opportunities for culturally consistent and cross-cultural skill development
- Help child join other children in ongoing play
- Support the English Language Learner by giving him/her key words for play in English (e.g., doll, block)
- Support child's play with peers by staying nearby, offering props, and assisting with conflict resolution
- Support nonverbal child with sign language, photos, and other visual supports for communication
- Engage child in conversations with other children

Some Indicators for Children:

- Gives social support to others (e.g., offers to help a peer who cannot find his/her toy)
- Shows loyalty to friends
- Follows suggestions given by a friend about how to proceed in their play
- Has friends in different settings (e.g., neighborhood, school, extended family)
- Maintains friendships with two or more peers
- Carries on conversations with peers

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to play in small groups in which each child has a specific role and responsibility
- Encourage child to rely on and help other children
- Provide opportunities for child to be part of group activities (e.g., games, cultural events)
- Actively address bullying behavior or child's attempt to exclude others

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Understands concept of “mine” and “his/hers”
- Approaches other children positively
- Uses different turn-taking strategies (e.g., bartering, trading, beginning to share)
- Uses simple strategies to solve problems appropriately, either individually or in a group (e.g., seeks assistance from an adult)
- Negotiates with other children to solve a problem, with assistance
- States a position with reasons (e.g., “I do not want to play right now because I am tired.”)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Give suggestions to child for solving problems (e.g., “If we take turns then everyone gets to play.”)
- Demonstrate and explain how child’s behavior affects others
- Provide activities that allow child to negotiate social conflicts (e.g., dramatic play, blocks, multicultural dress-up clothes)
- Model strategies to work out conflicts and compromise with others
- Give child ample time to solve own problems before intervening
- Read stories or invent puppet plays in which characters solve conflicts constructively
- Be sensitive with child who may need additional assistance with negotiation (e.g., child with language delay)
- Find out how other adults in child’s life negotiate and resolve disputes and share strategies

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses multiple strategies to resolve conflicts (e.g., attempts to communicate and then seeks assistance)
- Attempts to settle disputes or solve problems with another child through negotiation, addressing own rights as well as the other child’s needs, with assistance (e.g., “I’ll use the paste for these two pieces of paper and then give it to you.”)
- Uses and accepts compromise with assistance
- Demonstrates beginning understanding of others’ intentions or motives

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Guide child through conflict resolution by modeling appropriate responses
- Talk with child about how he/she handled a challenging situation
- Support child’s attempts to problem-solve and manage conflicts (e.g., by asking “What should we do to solve this problem?”)
- Discuss alternatives to situations
- Encourage child to compromise when one or more of his/her playmates want to play with the same toy

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Explores objects and materials and interacts with others in a variety of group settings
- Makes smooth transitions from one activity/setting to the next during the day, with guidance
- Adjusts behavior to different settings (e.g., home, playground)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide child with reminders when changes in schedule are planned
- Demonstrate and explain appropriate behavior for different settings
- Involve child in signaling transitions (e.g., ringing bell, singing particular song)
- Read books about transitions
- Demonstrate and explain to child how to stand up for self and others in the face of unfair treatment

Some Indicators for Children:

- Expresses anticipation of special events in different settings
- Accommodates a variety of settings throughout the day
- Anticipates diverse settings and what will be needed in them, with assistance (e.g., "We're going to the park, so I'll bring a ball." "We're going to the lake, so I'll need my swim suit.")

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Prepare child for transitions to kindergarten through a variety of activities (e.g., visit a kindergarten classroom, practice taking a school bus)
- Encourage child to think about and be prepared for diverse cultural settings
- Ask child to describe or draw pictures of different places, including places from his/her cultural background
- Provide activities related to a variety of transitions (e.g., moving, traveling)
- Discuss significance of cultural activities in different settings (e.g., community dances, songs, feasts)

19

Social Development: Adaptive Social Behavior

GOAL 19

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY FOR OTHERS AND THE NATURAL WORLD

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Watches and observes adults and children
- Smiles when sees a smiling face
- Reacts when someone is crying or upset
- Explores plants, flowers, and other living things with multiple senses

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Respond quickly to child's sounds, cries, and moods in a gentle and reassuring way
- Support and stay with child during stressful situations
- Provide mirrors and opportunities for child to see faces and emotions
- Name emotions
- Be aware and respectful of cultural differences in expression of emotions
- Model empathetic behavior with adults, children, and animals
- Provide child with regular opportunities for play outdoors
- Provide opportunities for child to observe animals in a safe environment

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Notices other children who are happy or sad
- Demonstrates awareness of feelings during pretend play (e.g., soothes a crying doll)
- Names emotions of self and others (e.g., happy, sad)
- Expresses how another child might feel (e.g., "Because Tanya is crying, I think she must be sad.")
- Expresses interest and excitement about animals and other living things

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Demonstrate and explain responses to loss, injury, or pain
- Encourage child to develop an understanding of the feelings, ideas, and actions of others
- Accept that we all naturally have feelings
- Help child understand and name feelings
- Provide opportunities to identify emotions by the use of pictures, posters, and mirrors
- Provide opportunities for dramatic play with simple themes and props, including plays, themes, and props from own and different cultures
- Share the wonders of the natural world with child (e.g., by playing outside together, reading books and telling stories about the natural world)

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Notices and shows concern for peers' feelings
- Comforts peers when they are hurt or upset, with adult assistance
- Adopts a variety of roles and feelings during pretend play
- Communicates appropriate feelings for characters in stories
- Cares for and does not destroy plants, flowers, and other living things, with guidance
- Acts kindly and gently with safe, child-friendly animals

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Model a friendly, positive, and respectful manner when listening and responding to child's comments and suggestions
- Tell stories and read books with child and elicit responses to characters, including stories from diverse cultures and family structures (e.g., single parent, same sex parents)
- Name and discuss feelings (e.g., "I see that you're sad because...")
- Imagine aloud together how animals and plants might feel
- Provide opportunities for child to play with friendly and gentle animals, with close supervision
- Demonstrate empathy for both children involved in a conflict
- Play with other children to promote understanding of others' intentions and feelings

Some Indicators for Children:

- Communicates others' feelings
- Comforts family members or friends who are not feeling well or are upset
- Expresses excitement about special events and accomplishments of others within cultural context and expectations
- Volunteers to assist and comfort peers by using words and actions
- Adjusts plans in consideration of others' wants and needs, at times
- Expresses emotion in response to hurt person or animal
- Treats the earth and living things with respect

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to share and discuss feelings
- Help child to assist others and take others' perspectives into consideration
- Encourage child to draw a picture of a time a friend felt happy, sad, lonely, etc.
- Discuss why a character reacts as he/she did in a story, taking cultural differences into consideration
- Set an example for child by respecting the natural world and discussing why it is important (e.g., not littering)

20

Social Development: Appreciating Diversity

GOAL 20 CHILDREN RECOGNIZE, APPRECIATE, AND RESPECT SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN PEOPLE

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Observes body parts and self in mirror
- Focuses attention on others
- Notices others' physical characteristics (e.g., pats others' hair)
- Distinguishes primary caregivers from others
- Interacts with others who are of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, of a different gender, who speak other languages, or have special needs

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Share and explore own culture with child (e.g., attend cultural events)
- Model appreciation for diversity with other adults and children
- Tell stories and read books to child that explore people with diverse abilities and cultures
- Introduce child to a second language if you are bilingual
- Learn and practice caregiving strategies that match those at home for child
- Learn phrases in and use child's home language, including sign language

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Plays in the presence of other children
- Asks simple questions about other children (e.g., "Where's Rafael?")
- Identifies gender and other basic similarities and differences between self and others

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to interact with children of diverse abilities, cultures, and ethnicities
- Provide child with a variety of dramatic play materials reflecting cultures of families in community
- Introduce child to people, experiences, interactions, and social settings that are diverse through books, songs, and people
- Talk to child in home language, which will help build a strong cultural identity
- Encourage child to develop a sense of fairness for self and for others
- Infuse child's environment with multicultural objects, music, art, and language
- Model appreciation and interest in diversity
- Actively support the ongoing use of home language as the English Language Learner acquires English

21

Emotional Development: Self-Concept

GOAL 21 CHILDREN PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Signals caregivers for assistance, attention, or need for comfort
- Explores own body (e.g., observes hands, reaches for toes)
- Explores the face and other body parts of others (e.g., touches caregivers' ears, hair, hands)
- Responds with gestures or vocalizations when name is spoken
- Shows awareness of self in voice, mirror image, and body
- Attempts to complete basic daily living tasks (e.g., eating, getting dressed)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Cuddle, physically nurture, and be responsive to child to foster trust and attachment
- Make time to be alone and fully engaged with child
- Use child's name during interactions
- Provide unbreakable mirrors for child to look at self
- Help child learn to calm self (e.g., model calming behavior, offer soothing objects)
- Give child time to remain engaged in activities
- Recognize that many families value interdependence and some children will show varying levels of independence and stronger bonds with family and community
- Tell stories and sing songs from child's home culture

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Tests limits and strives for independence
- Recognizes and calls attention to self when looking in the mirror or at photographs
- Identifies self and uses own name when asked (e.g., "I am a boy." "My name is Rueben.")
- Shows awareness of being seen by others (e.g., exaggerates or repeats behavior when notices someone is watching)
- Occupies self appropriately for brief periods of time (e.g., 10 to 15 minutes)
- Identifies objects as belonging to him or her

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Give child appropriate and varied choices
- Give child limits and allow him/her to test them
- Provide opportunities for child to talk about self and others, including cultural and linguistic characteristics
- Allow child to occupy him/herself without your interaction, at times
- Be aware and respectful of cultural differences in valuing independence
- Be available to child when he/she asks for assistance
- Expect child to protest as he/she expresses individuality
- Avoid harshly reprimanding child
- Tell family stories and read books from child's home culture



Emotional Development: Self-Concept

GOAL 22

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS OF THEIR ABILITIES, CHARACTERISTICS, AND PREFERENCES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Shows preference for primary caregivers
- Identifies familiar objects (e.g., bottle, blanket)
- Smiles at self in mirror
- Notices and explores hands, eventually becoming aware that they are attached and that they can be controlled to do things
- Points or moves toward desired people or objects
- Plays with one object more often than others
- Repeats a motion or noise to replicate a result
- Makes choices about what toys to play with
- Protests when does not want to do something (e.g., arches back when doesn't want to sit in high chair)
- Responds to requests for action (e.g., claps for the song)
- Points to at least two body parts, when asked

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Respond to child's individual needs
- Play with child, making eye-contact, talking, and gesturing
- Involve child in family traditions, rituals, and activities
- Provide child with choices of activities and objects to play with
- Follow child's lead during play and exploration
- Talk with child about body parts and body functions (e.g., "We use our teeth to chew.")
- Watch for and support child's nonverbal cues that indicate his/her preferences
- Narrate what child sees, does, and hears

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Points to and names some of own body parts
- Shows preference for familiar adults and peers
- Makes choices when given 2-3 options to choose between (e.g., what clothes to wear)
- Shows preference for favorite books, toys, and activities
- Indicates preferences and intentions by answering yes/no questions (e.g., "Are you done with that?" "Are you still using it?" "Can José use it now?")

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to make appropriate and varied choices
- Share enthusiasm and describe child's abilities and preferences (e.g., "You really like to draw with those crayons, don't you?" "You are walking carefully over tree roots.")
- Provide safe environments for active exploration
- Delight with child over accomplishments and explorations
- Explain family traditions, rituals, and activities
- Invite others to share their culture and traditions with child

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Describes own basic physical characteristics
- Exerts will and preferences
- Experiments with own abilities by trying new activities and testing limits
- Develops awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of own gender and cultural identity
- Identifies feelings, likes and dislikes, and begins to be able to explain why he/she has them

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide child with a variety of materials and experiences that help child to discover preferences and abilities
- Support child's developing understanding of own characteristics and culture (e.g., "You have freckles just like your Grandma.")
- Provide opportunities for child to make choices
- Provide dress-up and pretend play materials from child's daily life and cultural background
- Compare, contrast, and celebrate physical similarities and differences in children (e.g., hair, skin, eye color, size of hands)

Some Indicators for Children:

- Describes self using several physical and behavioral characteristics (e.g., "I am tall and I can reach up high.")
- Describes own skills and abilities in certain areas (e.g., "I like to paint.")
- Suggests games and activities that demonstrate own preferences and abilities (e.g., sets up a game of catch)
- Differentiates between preferences for self and others (e.g., "I like to play with dolls and she likes to play with toy animals.")

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to pursue his/her preferred activities
- Engage child in conversations about his/her preferences and abilities by asking who, what, where, when, why questions (e.g., "What do you like to do?" "Where do you like to go best?")

25

Emotional Development: Self-Control

GOAL 25 CHILDREN REGULATE THEIR FEELINGS AND IMPULSES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Signals needs with sounds or motions (e.g., cries when hungry or reaches for wanted object of comfort)
- Relaxes or stops crying when comforted (e.g., when swaddled or spoken to softly)
- Comforts self by clutching, sucking, or stroking when tired or stressed (e.g., calms while stroking or holding soft blanket)
- Communicates need for support or help from adults (e.g., holds out arms when tired)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Snuggle, cuddle, and physically nurture child in ways appropriate to their specific sensory needs
- Respond to child's signals for attention
- Provide child with calming materials (e.g., soft blanket or toy)
- Stay with child during stressful situations to help him/her regulate emotions
- Check environment for appropriate levels of noise, temperature, light, and other stimuli
- Model managing own emotions and impulses
- Name own emotions when interacting with child
- Accept child's expression of a full range of emotions (e.g., display understanding when child shows anger)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Names some emotions (e.g., happy, excited, sad, mad, tired, angry, scared)
- Seeks caregiver support and attention when feeling strong emotions
- Begins to control impulses (e.g., says "No" when reaching for forbidden object; restrains self from stepping on a book on the floor)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Recognize and name child's feelings and behaviors (e.g., "You seem happy today.")
- Help child explore safe and appropriate ways to manage and express feelings and impulses (e.g., redirecting to appropriate activity when necessary)
- Intervene sensitively when child is having difficulty regulating impulses (offer choices, model negotiation skills: e.g., when two children are fighting over a toy, help them to problem-solve)
- Read books, tell stories, sing songs, play games, and use multisensory materials with child that focus on emotions and emotional regulation
- Model turn-taking by saying "I can wait," when two or more people want to do the same activity

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Expresses strong emotions constructively, at times with assistance
- Expresses ownership of feelings and desire to control self, with assistance
- Calms self after having strong emotions, with guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area or requests favorite book to be read when upset)
- Waits for turn and shows patience during group activities, sometimes
- Sticks with difficult tasks without becoming overly frustrated

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Engage with child to provide support when he/she is having difficulty
- Provide guidance when child needs assistance regulating emotions
- Acknowledge child for expressing and regulating intense feelings
- Discuss upsets when they are over and child has become calm
- Encourage child to say "I can wait," when taking turns

Some Indicators for Children:

- Expresses self in safe and appropriate ways (e.g., expresses anger or sadness without fights)
- Shows ability to control destructive impulses, with guidance
- Seeks peaceful resolution to conflict
- Modifies behavior and expression of emotions for different environments
- Stops and listens to instructions before jumping into activity, with guidance

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Discuss and model how different ways to express impulses are appropriate in different environments
- Work with child to establish procedures for taking turns
- Encourage child to settle disputes with other children independently, but monitor to ensure children's safety
- Guide group discussions about problem solving and conflict management
- Engage child in discussions about accepting different ways of expressing emotion and communicating (e.g., set rules that prohibit children from making fun of each others' differences)
- Role-play and act out social situations where child can practice skills in negotiating and problem solving

GOAL 26 CHILDREN EXPRESS APPROPRIATELY A RANGE OF EMOTIONS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Cries, uses other vocalizations, facial expressions, or body language to express emotions and to get needs met
- Responds to emotional cues and social situations (e.g., crying when other babies cry)
- Smiles, waves, or laughs in response to positive adult interaction
- Frowns in response to discomfort or inability to do something

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Be aware that young children cry to express a range of feelings, and respond appropriately
- Comfort a child quickly when he/she cries; this helps him/her feel safe
- Be aware of environmental factors that might cause distress (e.g., noise, light)
- Model facial expressions to express emotions
- Respond to child's displays of distress by staying with child and sensitively helping child with difficult feelings
- Nurture child with kind words, hugs, and cuddles being sensitive to individual sensory needs
- Respond to child's displays of pleasure by matching child's emotions with facial expressions, tone, and words

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Recognizes and expresses emotions towards familiar persons, pets, or possessions with appropriate facial expressions, words, gestures, signs, or other means
- Names emotions (e.g., happy, excited, sad, mad, tired, scared)
- Learns about own feelings and that it is okay to feel silly, sad, angry, and all other emotions

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Listen carefully and with interest to what child says, expanding on the message
- Provide opportunities for child to experience a range of emotions
- Use words to teach child to associate feelings with their proper names
- Support and comfort child if he/she develops fears
- Model a range of appropriate ways to express different feelings
- Talk with child about feelings both positive and negative
- Understand that child may need assistance in discussing and expressing feelings
- Recognize that some children may not express emotions verbally (e.g., invite child to draw pictures, use signs or gestures, or go for a walk to express emotions)
- Consider the values of families and cultural groups regarding emotional expression (e.g., do not force or deny child's emotional expression)

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Names and talks about own emotions
- Uses pretend play to understand and respond to emotions
- Associates emotions with words and facial expressions

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to understand and discuss own and others' feelings
- Model appropriate expression of emotions and talk about how you feel (e.g., singing when you are happy, sighing when you are frustrated)
- Discuss how the characters in a book might feel while reading books with child
- Be aware of cultural and gender differences in expressing feelings
- Avoid stereotyping child's expression of emotion (e.g., validate boys when they cry, girls when they get angry)
- Incorporate books on feelings that reflect the language and cultural background of child
- Engage child in pretend play with other children using realistic props that encourage children to act out real-life situations and feeling in response to situations

Some Indicators for Children:

- Expresses feelings through play
- Shares own excitement with peers, caregivers, and adults
- Acknowledges sadness about loss (e.g., change in caregiver, divorce, or death)
- Does not inhibit emotional expression (e.g., cries when feels sad)
- Names some levels of emotion (e.g., frustrated, angry)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to share and talk about feelings with adults and peers
- Positively acknowledge child for expressing emotions appropriately
- Help child express his/her feelings as he/she plays with others, pretends with toys, and listens to stories

Approaches to Learning

I. Introduction

The Approaches to Learning domain covers the inclinations, dispositions, attitudes, habits, and styles that reflect the diverse ways that children involve themselves in learning. This domain is not about what skills children acquire, but how children orient themselves to learning a wide range of skills. Families, communities, early childhood caregivers, researchers, and policy makers regard Approaches to Learning as a critical domain for children's learning and school readiness. The widespread acknowledgment of the importance of this domain is prompting researchers and scientists to pursue studies to gain understanding in this dimension of development.

The manner in which children approach learning is influenced by characteristics with which they are born, such as gender and temperament, and by attitudes, inclinations, and expectations fostered early in life through family, community, and cultural patterns and values. Approaches to learning are at the core of social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive interactions.

II. Rationale

Approaches to learning frame the child's entire being and are interrelated with all other aspects of development. They are the platform on which learning takes place and include a skill set that predisposes children toward success in school and in life. The possession of a skill does not necessarily mean that it will be used. Children must be intrinsically motivated and inclined to use their knowl-

edge and skills for lifelong learning. For example, children may have the capacity to hear, but may not have the disposition to be listeners. A narrow focus on skills and knowledge as the end product of education may undermine children's capacity to apply their skills. By nurturing and supporting children's unique approaches to learning, adults help children use their current knowledge and understanding of their world as a basis for creating meaningful new experiences and ideas.

III. General Definitions

Children's approaches to learning include their motivation, attitudes, habits, and cognitive styles that are demonstrated as they engage in learning and respond to different situations. Even though the ways in which children express their approaches to learning may vary according to their temperament or cultural contexts, the following goals are essential for children's success in school and in life. For the purposes of the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines, the Approaches to Learning domain includes:

- Curiosity and interest, indicating children's sense of inquisitiveness, interest in pursuing new information, eagerness for new knowledge, and desire to learn
- Initiative, indicating children's willingness to take on tasks, volunteer to participate in learning activities, and take reasonable risks in learning new information
- Persistence and attentiveness, indicating children's ability to stay with and concentrate attention to complete a task without being easily distracted or overly frustrated

- Creativity and invention, indicating children's ability to extend existing knowledge, using imagination and moving beyond conventional thinking into forms and images not present within the current context
- Reflection and interpretation, indicating children's ability to absorb, think about, compare, question, and understand knowledge and information to inform future actions and learning

IV. Supporting Individual Differences

A discussion about approaches to learning acknowledges that children learn and express themselves in different ways. Early care and education environments that embrace a broad variation and diversity in approach are preferred over exclusively mainstream, Euro-centric, or middle class approaches to learning. Skilled caregivers appreciate and value the diversity of children, families and cultures, and strive to observe, understand, and support each child as an individual. Parents and caregivers should create supportive environments in which all children are allowed to take risks and in which creative processes of learning and expressing self are nurtured and valued. Caregivers should identify children's current knowledge and understanding of their world in order to build on that knowledge as a basis for helping children create meaning from new experiences, ideas, and concepts.

Children with disabilities, developmental delays, or who are at risk for

developmental delays, may require special attention and adaptations to foster their engagement in learning. Some young children have specific learning disabilities which make it challenging for them to control their behavior and/or pay attention (e.g., Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)). In order to achieve their full potential, young children who experience delays or have disabilities gain significant benefits from participation in early intervention programs that provide center-based or home-based education, guidance, and family support. In an optimal learning environment, parents and caregivers should employ principles of inclusion and classroom management techniques that enable children of differing dispositions, abilities, and experiences to learn together. Inclusion benefits children who are developing in a typical manner, as well as those with atypical traits.

Cultural diversity in Alaska contributes to the diverse approaches to learning. For example, many Native cultures have developed around subsistence activities, which involve more hands-on and kinesthetic learning. Subsistence cultures also value communal effort to accomplish a goal. Kinesthetic learning, building relationships, value of teamwork, and communal effort may characterize optimal learning environments for children from these cultures. Cultures based on oral traditions value storytelling as a way of transmitting knowledge. For people who are raised in an oral tradition, skills in speaking, listening, and understanding body language and gestures are important. The focus in storytelling is on the relationship between the teller and the listeners as well as their shared knowledge of their own community and culture. It is important to keep diverse learning styles and values in mind when designing learning environments for young children. Learning styles vary among individuals in cultural groups and caregivers should keep in mind to provide a variety of activities so that children with different learning styles can all be successful.

Children are exposed to varying cultural patterns and values in their immediate context of family as well as in the neighborhood, community, and environment at large. At the family level, differences in child-rearing practices, including parental behaviors of instruction, modeling, and responses to children's initiatives, influence children's learning approaches. Culture may influence children's work

styles, the way they approach and interpret experiences, and their orientation to action or reflection. Some cultures encourage children to be obedient and respectful of adult opinions while other cultures encourage children to question and engage in dialogue with adults. Cultural patterns may also influence the way children learn. For example, some cultural settings promote learning through hands-on manipulation of materials, while others focus on visual representation, and still others focus on linguistic or more structured interactions. Whatever the cultural influence on children's predispositions, all learning styles should be embraced as equal, valued, and respected approaches

V. Global Strategies

In order to value all learning styles and to embrace children's rich diversity of predispositions, attitudes, habits, and cultural patterns, the following strategies should be used for all children from birth to school entry. These examples of strategies will help ensure that all children receive learning opportunities and experiences that support their unique needs:

- Interact and play with children each day
- Support and encourage children's exploration
- Support and encourage children's creative processes
- Learn about children's everyday experiences at home and in their community. Incorporate traditional (or long-standing) effective strategies used by children's home cultures to support learning and development
- Make sure that children are provided with caregivers who interact in consistent ways, as much as possible
- Provide multiple ways of teaching and learning, involving all of the senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste)

- Engage children in open-ended activities for learning, such as dramatic play, artistic creations, and sensory play
- Provide the same range of experiences to all children, even though their responses may differ and some children may need adaptations
- Use appropriate verbal, visual, and physical cues in interactions and activities
- Observe, recognize, and support children's unique ways of approaching new information and expressing themselves, taking into consideration their temperaments, inclinations, and attitudes
- Ensure that the environment is safe from cultural and/or other forms of bias
- Use vocabulary and phrases in children's home language when introducing new ideas or concepts
- Provide continued acknowledgements in ways that reflect children's cultural beliefs and traditions, so all children feel valued
- Seek medical or developmental expertise if concerned about child's learning and development
- Respond to children by describing their actions and asking questions to promote intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation. In this way, provide encouragement and specific feedback rather than praise



GOAL 27

CHILDREN ARE CURIOUS ABOUT AND INTERESTED IN LEARNING NEW THINGS AND HAVING NEW EXPERIENCES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Shows interest in people by changing behavior
- Reacts to new voices or sounds by turning in the direction of sound, becoming more quiet or active, or changing facial expressions
- Shows interest, explores, manipulates, or stares at new objects in the environment
- Uses all senses to explore the environment (e.g., reaching out to touch rain)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Play with child individually every day
- Create a safe, secure, and stimulating environment for child to explore
- Observe child to understand his/her temperament, learning styles, and unique ways of showing curiosity
- Show interest in introducing child to new people, places, and experiences
- Provide support for child who is hesitant about new objects and experiences
- Play with child using objects with different textures, sounds, and shapes
- Describe new places and the roles and activities of people when out in the community
- Read a variety of books and tell stories to child every day

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Explores the immediate environment (e.g., asks about a new object he/she finds, actively searches through collection of toys)
- Shows interest in new and others' activities
- Asks simple "wh" questions (e.g., why, what, where)
- Asks about people in own environment

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Make child's surroundings safe and inviting to encourage child to explore
- Provide child with a variety of safe and interesting objects that increase interest
- Interact with child by asking simple questions and responding to his/her questions
- Wonder aloud with child about why things happen
- Read and tell diverse stories that introduce child to many people, places, and cultures
- Understand that a child with a shy temperament may not demonstrate curiosity in the same ways as other children

28

Learning Approaches: Initiative

GOAL 28 CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE INITIATIVE

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Engages in and actively explores new and familiar surroundings
- Engages familiar adults and children in interactions (e.g., smiling, approaching, not withdrawing)
- Expresses desire to feed self
- Selects a book, toy, or item from several options
- Shows likes and dislikes for activities, experiences, and interactions

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Play with child individually every day
- Follow child's lead and/or choices in daily activities
- Provide opportunities for child to choose toys to play with and books to read
- Provide opportunities for child to take reasonable and safe risks (e.g., to stretch for an object beyond reach)
- Provide many opportunities for active exploration; discourage watching television or videos

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Tries new ways of doing things and begins to take some risks
- Initiates play with others
- Chooses one activity over another and pursues it for a brief period of time
- Proposes an idea for how to spend time
- Shows interest in wanting to take care of self (e.g., dressing)
- Initiates activities at caregivers' suggestions
- Seeks and takes pleasure in both new and repeated skills and experiences
- Pretends to be in new and familiar places with new and familiar roles

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide child with many opportunities to play by self and with other children
- Try new tasks with child and describe them
- Support child's choices during daily activities (e.g., selecting books to read together)
- Provide opportunities and time for child to make choices
- Provide consistency in the environment and the routine so child develops confidence and a sense of mastery
- Help child feel safe and capable of trying something new or taking reasonable risks in a variety of settings
- Demonstrate and discuss how adults take initiative

30

Learning Approaches: Creativity and Inventiveness

GOAL 30 CHILDREN APPROACH DAILY ACTIVITIES WITH CREATIVITY AND INVENTIVENESS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Inspects own hands and feet (e.g., by mouthing)
- Mouths, shakes, bangs, drops, or throws objects
- Imitates action observed in another situation (e.g., tries to stack blocks after watching another child stack blocks, bangs on surface after watching drumming at a cultural event)
- Uses items differently and creatively (e.g., a bucket is turned upside down to build a tower base or to be a pedestal)
- Plays with dolls, stuffed animals, puppets

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Play with child individually every day
- Provide toys and experiences with a variety of colors, textures, sounds, shapes, and smells
- Change the materials, toys, and objects in child's environment regularly
- Provide child time and opportunities to be spontaneous, silly, and messy
- Play with child in creative ways (e.g., using soft toys to create a puppet show, tell imaginative stories using familiar characters and the local environment)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Invents new uses for everyday materials (e.g., bangs on pots and pans)
- Approaches tasks experimentally, adapting as the activity evolves
- Displays understanding of how objects work together (e.g., gets the dustpan when adult is sweeping the floor)
- Enjoys opportunities for pretend play and creating things
- Pretends and uses imagination during play
- Uses creative language to describe events
- Builds with blocks and other manipulatives
- Plays with dolls, costumes and acts out animal roles

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Model use of a variety of familiar and new learning materials and activities
- Provide child with art materials and a place to use them without adult created models or specific instructions
- Allow child to mix toys or materials
- Provide opportunities for child to remain absorbed in play
- Engage child in creating and completing projects using different media (e.g., clay, collage, paint, music, dance, chalk, box construction, etc.)
- Encourage child to talk about and revisit his/her creative work
- Use open-ended questions and descriptive language when interacting with child
- Make sure child has props from own culture to support pretend play
- Encourage child to pretend, make-believe, and use his/her imagination
- Engage child in narrating or dictating a story about a picture he/she drew

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Invents new activities or games
- Uses imagination to create a variety of ideas
- Creates acceptable rules for group activities
- Makes up words, songs, or stories
- Expresses ideas through art, construction, movement, or music
- Engages in extensive pretend play that includes role play (e.g., plays “house” or “explorers”)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Create an environment where child is encouraged to experiment and use his/her imagination
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage creative thinking
- Provide tasks where the goal is trying different strategies rather than right or wrong answers
- Ask child how a story may have ended differently (e.g., “What if...”)
- Provide opportunities for child to create and complete projects in own way
- Demonstrate and explain how to be flexible about changes in routines and plans (provide more structure for children with special needs)
- Provide child with access to artists and artwork from their own and other cultures
- Maintain file of creative work for child to periodically revisit and comment on
- Display a variety of children’s creative work instead of mass-produced or teacher-created display
- Engage child in drawing a series of pictures that represent or illustrate experience or a story he/she made up

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses dramatic or symbolic play to pretend
- Combines activities, materials, and equipment in new ways (e.g., builds tent by using sheet or blanket around table)
- Completes projects differently from other children (e.g., uses a unique approach in block structures and paintings)
- Makes changes to a familiar story by adding actions or characters
- Represents reality in a variety of ways (e.g., pretend play, drawing)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Play make-believe games with child, including games that introduce the child to diverse people, places, and cultures (e.g., ask child, “If you were a frog, what would you think about the rain outside?”)
- Ask open-ended questions that create an interaction and dialogue with child (e.g., “What do you think about...?”)
- Provide a variety of creative outlets for child (e.g., opportunities to dance, paint, build, make music, invent stories and act them out)

31

Learning Approaches: Reflection and Interpretation

GOAL 31 CHILDREN LEARN FROM THEIR EXPERIENCES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Tracks people and objects by moving his/her head as adult or object moves
- Behaves in consistent ways to elicit desired response (e.g., kicks a mobile)
- Plays games with primary caregiver that involve repetition (e.g., peek-a-boo)
- Experiments to see if similar objects will cause similar responses (e.g., shakes stuffed animal in the same way as a rattle to hear noise)
- Displays recognition and excitement about game or toys from previous day
- Applies knowledge to new situations (e.g., bangs on bucket instead of drum)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Play with child individually every day
- Interact with child in consistent and predictable ways
- Provide child with toys and objects that react to specific actions
- Provide opportunities for child to try same action on different objects (e.g., shake a rattle, shake a stuffed animal, shake a ball)
- Comment when child applies knowledge to new situations, using descriptive language

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Substitutes similar objects (e.g., stacks boxes like blocks)
- Realizes that behaviors can precede events (e.g., “If mom puts the pot on the stove, she is going to cook something to eat.”)
- Alters behavior based on a past event and builds on it (e.g., “I did this and it didn’t work, so I will do this instead.”)
- Relates an experience today to one that happened in the past (e.g., hand-washing prior to mealtime)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Think “out loud” and talk about ideas with child using descriptive language (e.g., “You remembered where the puzzle piece fits.”)
- Invite child to share thoughts and ideas about the world around him/her
- Provide materials that are similar but produce different results (e.g., crayons, markers, paint)
- Narrate child’s play to him/her by describing what you see and hear
- Demonstrate, explain, and provide opportunities for child to think about and avoid negative or dangerous behavior (e.g., “The stove and iron are hot.”)

Cognition and General Knowledge

I. Introduction

During the first few years of life, remarkable changes occur in children's cognitive abilities. Children gain greater knowledge and understanding of their physical and social worlds and they develop skills in logic, reasoning, observation, imagination, and problem-solving. Children also learn social conventions, the kinds of knowledge that could not be reinvented by every generation of learners (e.g., that the words one, two, three - or atauciq, malruk, pingayun - or uno, dos, tres - correspond with the numerals 1, 2, and 3 and represent specific sets of quantity). Cognitive development is comprehensive and complex, yet it is often associated with a defined body of knowledge (e.g., knowledge of colors and numbers) that children must acquire before entering school. Such a narrow definition of cognition limits a full understanding of the complexity of this domain and can limit the range of children's learning. The Cognition and General Knowledge domain includes how children think, develop cognitive functions for gathering information, elaborate on that information and report about that process, and develop concepts as tools for thinking, as well as what children know.

II. Rationale

Cognitive development is essential for daily functioning and success across a range of educational and social contexts. Cognitive development refers to the process through which children develop their abilities to think, assimilate, and use information. Cognitive development occurs through both internal and external pathways. First, children use their natural ability to think about their own actions and experiences in the physical and social worlds to construct understanding from these experiences. Here, children discover and mentally construct new concepts

just by being in and interacting with their environment; this may be regarded as discovered knowledge. Second, and in contrast, children gain information directly from adults and other children to acquire knowledge that they would not otherwise learn. This learned knowledge originates in the family, community, and culture through adult and peer interactive learning experiences, guidance, and direct instruction.

Within the two broad pathways of discovery and learned knowledge, there are multiple ways in which children acquire cognitive skills and general knowledge. For example, children learn through language, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, musical and creative thinking, and the use of the body to solve problems or to make things. It is important for parents, caregivers, and educators to understand and nurture all of the different modes through which children gain knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Because both discovered and learned knowledge are fundamental to daily life in any family, community, or culture, supporting cognitive development is vital to young children's overall learning and development.

III. General Definitions

For the purposes of the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines the domain of Cognition and General Knowledge is divided into six categories: reasoning; mathematics and numeracy; science; social studies; family, community, and culture; and creative arts.

Throughout the diverse cultures in Alaska, people value different ways of knowing and have different world views. In these guidelines, all cultural ways of knowing are of equal value. A child's culture can be incorporated into each of these areas

to make learning more relevant and build on their own individual strengths. When parents and caregivers incorporate the child's culture, they can provide experiences that build on the child's prior knowledge. In addition children may be able to connect learning experiences with their own life and see the relevance of the new knowledge.

Reasoning

Reasoning consists of specific sets of skills that enable children to create and analyze general relationships (e.g., similarities, differences, associations) between objects, events, or people. Competencies that develop with reasoning are causation, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, and representational thought. These skills are considered by many to be the most complex kind of knowledge, making them the most difficult to describe and assess.

Math and Numeracy

Mathematics and numeracy skills consist of the ability to understand and use numbers, mathematical operations, measurement, and properties of ordering. These skills are essential for children to be able to navigate mathematical situations that arise in everyday life settings.

Science

Scientific thinking and knowledge skills include the ability to understand the natural world and to make predictions. It is the development of scientific thinking that helps children apply and test their knowledge through methodical inquiry and verification. By acquiring scientific knowledge, children gain an understanding of, and information about, the earth and living things.

Social Studies

Developing knowledge of social studies allows children to understand how people interact with and relate to the world around them in the past, present, and future. Here,

social studies include learning history and historical reasoning, geography, economics, ecology, technology, and other concepts that relate to how and where we live.

Family, Community, and Culture

Developing knowledge of one's own family, community, and culture enables children to make sense of the various relationship structures they interact with in their daily activities. This aspect of cognitive development involves understanding human interdependence at multiple levels – family functions, community roles, and cultural appreciation. Early experiences and interactions in family, community, and culture set the foundation for a child's ability to learn how to learn.

Creative Arts

Children's ability to express and represent themselves through dance, music, theater, and visual arts is a central aspect of cognition. Related to the ability to express and represent oneself through the arts is an understanding and appreciation of the arts. For some children, this includes learning the cultural arts traditions of their community or cultural group.

also how children perceive events and actions. For example, family and parental attitudes, beliefs, and care giving practices impact children's cognitive development by determining children's exposure to certain tasks, contexts, and knowledge. Given that children's cognitive abilities and understanding are context-dependent, it is imperative to provide learning opportunities that are culturally sensitive and adapt to children's varying patterns in learning, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities.

Children not only differ in their rates of acquiring general knowledge, but also in the ways in which they learn, remember, and understand. Differences in children's cognitive development are not, and should not be viewed as, deficits. We should engage children in activities and interactions that strengthen their abilities in all forms and ways of knowing, learning, remembering, and understanding.

Children who have disabilities, developmental delays, or who are at risk for developmental delays, may need adaptations to support their learning. To support the learning and development of all children, it is important for children of all abilities to play and learn together. To facilitate this, caregivers and parents may need to provide more direct guidance and materials of varying degrees of difficulty to children with cognitive challenges. Young children who experience delays gain significant benefits from participation in early intervention programs that provide center-based or home-based education, guidance, and family support.

IV. Supporting Individual Differences

Knowledge and cognitive skills are complex and intertwined with children's social and cultural context. Culture influences not only the knowledge that is valued and transmitted to children, but

V. Global Strategies

Each child gains general knowledge about their physical and social worlds at different rates and in different ways. The following strategies should be used for all children from birth to school entry to encourage their cognitive development. These sample strategies will help to ensure that all children receive learning experiences that meet their unique needs:

- Take time to learn about each child's everyday experiences at home and in his/her own community
- Incorporate teaching and learning strategies from children's cultural background (e.g., use culturally and linguistically appropriate songs, stories, games, chants, music, dance, movement, and culturally specific knowledge in coordination with cognitive development)
- Ensure that the environment is safe from cultural bias, discrimination, and all other forms of racism
- If children need extra support, simplify complicated tasks by breaking them into smaller parts or reducing the number of steps
- Mediate the use of specific cognitive functions (e.g., systematic exploration, orientation in space, restrained impulsivity, coordination of two sources of information, comparative behavior, planning behavior, summative behavior, clear and precise language)
- Engage children in a variety of activities and routines throughout the day
- Provide hands-on and sensory experiences (e.g., touching, holding, exploring, seeing, tasting, smelling, and manipulating) for all learning activities
- Individualize experiences, activities, interactions, and instruction to meet the needs of all children



32

Reasoning: Causation

GOAL 32 CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Looks for or orients toward a dropped object
- Uses sounds, gestures, and movements to impact the environment and interactions
- Acts on an object to make a pleasing sight, sound, or motion (e.g., kicks or swats mobile, continues to bat at object to repeat sound)
- Repeats actions many times to cause desired effect

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide a safe and stimulating environment for child to explore
- Provide child with consistent responses, environments, and routines
- Play turn-taking games with child (e.g., peek-a-boo)
- Demonstrate and explain the relationships between things (e.g., “If you throw your toy out of the crib, you can’t reach it.”)
- Provide child with experiences and materials that demonstrate cause and effect relationships (e.g., place object on blanket, demonstrate to child how to pull blanket toward self to get the object)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Experiments with effect of own actions on objects and people
- Observes others’ actions to see the effect they will have on objects and people
- Knows playing with certain desirable or forbidden objects will get adults’ attention
- Expresses beginning understanding of cause and effect (e.g., “It’s quiet because you turned off the radio.”)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide explicit explanations for cause and effect (e.g., when child tries to touch something hot, say “You can’t touch that burner because it is hot and it will hurt you.”)
- Play with and manipulate different materials so child can see changes (e.g., mixing flour and water makes dough)
- Provide opportunities for child to experiment with objects to see outcomes (e.g., turning lights on and off)
- Describe how objects change when acted upon (e.g., “The batter turns into cake.” “The water turns into ice.”)

36 TO 60 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Names some numerals
- Recognizes that a single object is “one” regardless of size, shape, or other attributes
- Understands that numbers represent quantity (e.g., gets three apples out of the box)
- Applies numbers and counting concepts to daily life (e.g., counts number of children who have raised their hand)
- Differentiates some letters from numerals
- Recognizes, names, and writes some numerals
- Names the numbers in order to ten or more from memory
- Counts at least five objects in one-to-one correspondence, without assistance
- Understands that the last count represents the quantity of what has been counted
- Understands the quantity is not affected by the order of counting
- Groups objects and counts the number of groups
- Applies counting to new situations (e.g., counting objects, counting groups)
- Uses numbers to predict and make realistic guesses (e.g., “I think there are about twenty marbles in that jar.”)
- Tells what number comes before or after a given number up to five

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Talk aloud while doing simple math computations (e.g., number of snacks for the number of children)
- Play card or board or other culturally appropriate games that use counting with the child
- Engage child in counting objects during daily routines
- Demonstrate to child that numbers have meaning (e.g., speed limits, temperature, prices)
- Provide a variety of objects for child to handle and manipulate (e.g., buttons, stones, pine cones)

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Counts to at least 20 from memory
- Understands that when counting items they must be counted only once and none should be left out
- Uses math manipulatives, games, toys, and coins in daily activities
- Uses basic numbers and counting operations (e.g., “I gave Chua one of my blocks. Now she has two blocks.”)
- Tells what number comes before or after a given number to 20, with assistance
- Explains the difference between addition and subtraction, with assistance

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Estimate how many objects you have or will see and then count out loud
- Pose math questions that apply to daily life (e.g., “How many days until we have school again, or the next steam-bath or sauna?”)
- Model writing simple math equations that are relevant to daily life (e.g., “How many jars of jam are left?”)
- Engage child in activities and interactions that use numbers and counting (e.g., play grocery store, engage child in recording inventories of canned goods or fish)
- Have child divide objects equally among a group of people by assigning one for each person in turn and checking that the quantities are the same (e.g., each person gets three strips of dry fish or five different color crayons)

41

Science: Scientific Thinking

GOAL 41

CHILDREN COLLECT INFORMATION THROUGH OBSERVATION AND MANIPULATION

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Turns head toward sounds or voices
- Gathers information through the senses (e.g., mouthing, grasping, reaching)
- Uses more than one sense at one time (e.g., uses sight, touch, and hearing by examining and shaking a toy)
- Observes objects in the environment for a brief period of time
- Uses another object or person as a tool (e.g., expresses the desire to be picked up to reach something, uses block to push buttons on a toy)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Follow child's lead as he/she explores the environment
- Provide opportunities for safe observation and exploration (e.g., padded surfaces)
- Show child self in the mirror
- Demonstrate and explain how things can be manipulated to make them different and/or more useful
- Provide objects that invite exploration with multiple senses (e.g., rattle with bright colors and different textures)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses all five senses to examine different objects with attention to detail
- Identifies similarities or differences in objects
- Systematically explores natural phenomena through one or more of the five senses (e.g., notices different types of insects)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to explore natural objects and events
- Explore the environment with child and show interest in objects found and observed
- Provide materials for a variety of sensory experiences
- Provide opportunities for child to examine things in detail by asking open-ended questions

46

Social Studies: Geography

GOAL 46 CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS OF LOCATION AND SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Explores environment in the presence of caregiver
- Explores spatial relationships (e.g., attempts to fit own body in boxes or tunnels)
- Develops awareness of own body and how much space it takes up

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide a safe “child-proof” environment (e.g., cover electrical outlets, keep poisons and items that child may choke on out of child’s reach)
- Provide many opportunities for child to explore the environment
- Explain objects that child sees and discovers in the environment
- Provide child with opportunities to experience different physical positions (e.g., floor time, carrying time)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Distinguishes between near and far
- Experiments with physical relationships (e.g., on/under, inside/outside)
- Shows interest in investigating geography tools (e.g., map, compass, globe, navigational charts)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Use position words in a conscious way (e.g., suggest child puts magazine under the book that is on the table)
- Play with child, creating situations related to travel (e.g., take “trips” on a bus or plane, use road maps and pictures of different places he/she has been)

DOMAIN FOUR
Cognition
and General
Knowledge

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Communicates with family members or other familiar people using telephone or other communication device, with assistance
- Identifies some materials as natural or as human-made and explains how he/she knows the difference
- Describes stories, images, or sounds experienced with technology (e.g., music on CD player, program on television, story heard on tape)
- Uses accurate vocabulary to identify technology (e.g., camera, computer, printer, television)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Demonstrate, explain, and provide opportunities for child to feel and use a variety of natural materials (e.g., wood, cotton, fur, wool, stone, leather) and human-made materials (e.g., plastic, Styrofoam, paper) to learn their characteristics and capabilities
- Invent and construct simple objects or structures that can be used to assist in a task, using common tools and materials in a safe manner (e.g., a stick of wood with play dough on the tip to use to pick up pieces of paper without stooping over)
- Actively participate with child when watching television or using the computer
- Monitor the quality and limit the quantity of child's computer use

Some Indicators for Children:

- Identifies ways in which technology helps people accomplish specific tasks (e.g., "The wheelchair helps Alfonso get from one place to another." "E-mail lets you communicate with your friend Qavvik who lives far away.")
- Identifies alternate ways of doing things with and without technology (e.g., can use hands or dishwasher to clean dishes, can travel by foot or by car)
- Considers, with adult guidance, what it must have been like to live without technology in an earlier time
- Uses computer for simple 'point and click' operations on child-appropriate Web sites or software

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Engage child in activities and interactions that call for thinking about and discussing the use of technology in daily life
- Model using technology constructively and responsibly in daily living (e.g., use the computer to check the weather forecast)
- Talk about the values of Native technology as well as western technology (e.g., skin boats are lighter than boats made of aluminum or wood, dried fish does not have to be refrigerated)

51

GOAL 51

Family, Community, and Culture: Family

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS OF FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND FUNCTIONS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Kicks legs and squeals when familiar adult appears
- Initiates contact with caregivers
- Shows affection (e.g., hugs and kisses) to familiar adults
- Develops and maintains trusting relationships with primary caregiver
- Addresses at least two family members by name
- Recognizes immediate family members in photographs

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Involve child in family traditions, rituals, and activities
- Help child identify and name family members and their relationships and roles
- Spend warm, nurturing time with child
- Provide opportunities for child to spend time together with family
- Create a baby-proof family album that child can explore
- Bring child along to family subsistence activities as appropriate (e.g., carry child on back during berry picking, let child watch family cutting up fish from a safe place)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Recognizes family members by voice
- Knows own first and last name
- Recognizes roles within own home (e.g., "Daddy cooks supper and mommy washes the dishes.")
- Pretends to nurture a doll by feeding and talking to it
- Gives names to toys and dolls that reflect family and circle of friends
- Identifies boys and girls
- Recognizes that family members hunting will provide food for family

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for family members to talk with child about family history and culture
- Provide props and dress-up clothes for child to play different family roles (both male and female)
- Read aloud books that show people in a variety of roles
- Display photos of child and his/her family at child's eye level
- Encourage child to participate in subsistence activities (e.g., picking berries, setting up camp)

55

GOAL 55

Creative Arts: Expression and Representation

CHILDREN USE CREATIVE ARTS TO EXPRESS AND REPRESENT WHAT THEY KNOW, THINK, BELIEVE, OR FEEL

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Gazes at pictures, photographs, and mirror images
- Enjoys repetition
- Experiments with a variety of sound sources (e.g., rattles, bells)
- Exhibits an increased variety of movements to express self using different body parts
- Imitates sounds, facial expressions, and gestures of another person
- Imitates sounds or actions of an animal or object
- Experiments with a variety of art materials (e.g., paint, markers, crayons, pencils)
- Shows preferences for certain colors

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Actively describe to child what you see
- Imitate and respond appropriately to child's sounds
- Engage child in experiments with safe art materials and create simple art projects
- Sing songs to and with child (e.g., while working around the house or waiting for the bus)
- Provide visual and tactile textures for child to see and touch

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses a variety of materials for tactile experience and exploration (e.g., paint, glue, 3-dimensional materials, musical instruments)
- Engages in the artistic process with enthusiasm
- Explores various ways of moving with or without music
- Explores simple songs using voice and/or instruments
- Engages in pretend play

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Express a sense of awe and appreciation of works of art, those that the child creates and those that others create
- Exhibit child's artwork in places it can be viewed and admired easily
- View art materials as meaningful and provide a space for their use
- Introduce child to a variety of art materials and allow open-ended exploration
- Engage child in the use of simple musical instruments (e.g., rhythm sticks, drums, tambourine)
- Display local and classic art forms from child's cultural background
- Expose child to a variety of live and recorded music

56

GOAL 56

Creative Arts: Understanding and Appreciation

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF CREATIVE ARTS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Shows interest in sounds, tones, voices, music, colors, and shapes
- Enjoys rhythms and songs
- Prefers repetition of familiar songs and rhythmic patterns
- Interacts with others through touch and motion
- Enjoys looking at children’s books of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Expose child to a range of voice sounds (e.g., singing, speaking, humming)
- Expose child to music from a variety of cultures and styles (e.g., jazz, rock, world beat, Latin, classical)
- Show an enjoyment of music and participate in musical activities around child (e.g., sing aloud)
- Sing songs with child
- Take walks with child and explore shapes in the immediate environment
- Comment aloud when you see interesting colors, pictures, or a nice view

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Observes and responds to artwork produced by other individuals and/or cultures
- Imitates movement after participating in or watching others perform games or songs
- Exhibits interest when watching musical, dance, or theatre performances by other individuals
- Identifies favorite storybook characters

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Engage child in daily musical activities, games, instruments, singing, and books
- Display the work of artists through prints, posters, paintings, and books from child’s own and other cultural backgrounds
- Provide multiple opportunities for child to listen to music of all cultures and styles

Communication, Language and Literacy

I. Introduction

Communication, language, and literacy are essential for individuals to function in all societies. The acquisition of language and literacy is a complex process that begins when a child is born. In the first few years of life, children rapidly learn the meaning and structure of words, how to use words to convey meaning, and how to make meaning of printed materials. In acquiring language, children gain the ability to articulate ideas and feelings, share them with others, and respond to ideas and actions of other people. Language plays a central role in children's abilities to build relationships by sharing meaning with others.

As with the other domains, Communication, Language, and Literacy are closely interrelated with other domains of early development, such as cognitive, physical, and social and emotional. The complexity of this domain is amplified with the linguistic diversity found in Alaska where children come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. Over twenty Native languages and over eighty other world languages in addition to English are spoken in Alaska. There is also a great wealth of diversity in how people make and share meaning with others, such as storytelling, dance, song, drama, carving, painting, and weaving. It is essential that children in Alaska be taught literacy in a way that honors their diverse heritage, language, and culture. In order to build on their strengths as literacy learners, parents and caregivers can create opportunities for children that build on their prior knowledge and so they can explore and strengthen their sense of cultural identity.

II. Rationale

The process of acquiring language gives children command of an incredibly complex and powerful means of communication. Language plays a vital role in the development of cognition, logic, and reasoning by providing symbols that represent concepts. To participate in a broad range of daily activities, children need the ability to communicate effectively through oral language, the written word, creative expression, and a variety of other means. Listening skills include receiving, comprehending, and interpreting symbols in order to effectively communicate with other people. Effective communication includes developing an awareness of others, the current activity or concepts, and the social setting. Children are developing socially and emotionally as they learn to listen to others express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas, as well as learning to reciprocate by articulating their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

Communication, language, and literacy are essential for success in school and life. Therefore, children need a high priority placed on supporting these attributes, which are vital to their learning and development. Children acquire language in the

context of specific activities. In acquiring a language, whether it is Iñupiaq, Yup'ik, Athabascan, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Unanagan, Spanish, English, Tagalog, or American Sign Language, the vital role of children's environments cannot be neglected. Language is fundamentally embedded in children's relationships and experiences. Parents and caregivers play a critical role in facilitating young children's language and literacy development by engaging them in language activities, creating print-rich environments, and participating in social interactions with them. It is especially important that these activities include the local environment and culture.

III. General Definitions

The Alaska Early Learning Guidelines define communication, language, and literacy as separate components in order to highlight the essential aspects of each; however, these three components are highly interrelated. The development of oral language forms the foundation for early literacy development, just as the ability to communicate early in life impacts the development of vocabulary.

Communication

Communication is both making meaning of what is being communicated by others and communicating meaning effectively to others. Communication is the process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, gestures, or behavior. Children communicate before mastering symbolic language. A child's ability to communicate is dependent upon a complex set of skills including, but not limited to: awareness of the appropriate social



practices of language usage, the ability to listen, to make meaning of, and to follow verbal conversation. As children develop communication skills, they begin to differentiate between the different social situations where the communication occurs. Children should be aware of the purpose of the interaction, as well as their own and others' emotions involved in the communication. Children learn a variety of styles of communication and ways of expressing emotions, which are determined by the specific social setting, whether it is in the home, at preschool, on the playground, a cultural event, or at a store.

Language

Language is a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having meaning that is comprehended in a similar manner by a group of people. Language development is the acquisition of communication skills, which include the social rules and customs for expressing and interpreting thoughts, feelings, and ideas. This knowledge of language has three key aspects:

- **Content, which includes vocabulary and meaning**
- **Form, which is the grammatical structure or syntax of a language**
- **Use, or the function of language**

As children learn the sound system, the meaning of words, and the rules of form and grammar, they begin to use language constructively in social situations. Through the use of language, children can build and enhance their relationships with others.

Literacy

Literacy involves the ability to use language, symbols, and images in a variety of forms to read, write, listen, speak, represent, observe, and think critically about ideas. This process includes first and second languages and the cultural base of

those languages, which enables the person to communicate effectively using language appropriate to different social settings. Literacy encompasses creative expression, analytic skills, and comprehension of the environment. Emergent literacy, acquired during the early years of life, refers to skills and behaviors that children use to create meaning. These include visual expression, oral language, emergent reading, print awareness, and writing processes.

IV. Supporting Individual Differences

Children learn words and forms of language to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas; and also to meet personal and social objectives. Language, communication, and literacy are closely linked to social and cultural contexts. Parents, educators, and professionals need to be aware that the manner in which children use language to communicate varies widely.

Public education has made a dramatic change in its attitude toward inclusion of Alaska Native traditional knowledge and indigenous languages over the last 20 years. In the past, Alaska Native children were forced to speak English in schools. Today, however, education has progressed to include immersion and bilingual programs where the language of instruction is an Alaskan Native language.

It is essential that parents, educators, and other professionals value and support linguistic diversity in children. It is also crucial to understand the unique history that has influenced where we are today in education. Throughout Alaska, there is an ongoing need to increase efforts to reinvigorate the indigenous languages of

Alaska to promote healthy identities of Alaska Native peoples and increase the awareness of diversity of world languages. The Alaskan Native languages, as well as every language in the world, are of great value and educators should make efforts to preserve these languages so that each unique way of communicating meaning and looking at the world may be passed on to Alaskan children.

Home Language

The home language is the first language learned and the primary language used at home. Research shows that children who are strong in their home language will be able to develop fluency in speaking and reading a second language such as English. Children benefit cognitively from learning two or more languages. Second language learners are more sophisticated learners in that they already have acquired some, if not most, of the components of one language. The ability to communicate in more than one language supports children's cognitive flexibility and an awareness of their own cognitive processes.

Bilingualism

Bilingualism is the ability to communicate in two or more languages and includes a command of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the ability to communicate meaning. Mackey (1962) defines bilingualism as the alternate use of two languages by an individual. A bilingual child has almost equal competence in both languages. Baker (1996) explains that while the four basic language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are important in first language development, "a language taught without its attendant culture is like presenting a body without a heart. Language and culture are entwined in the healthy functioning of a body. Therefore, developing heritage cultural awareness and multiculturalism alongside first language teaching is an important element in language acquisition." There are many

dimensions of being able to communicate in a language and to define them would go beyond the scope of this document. It is important, however, to understand the concept of bilingualism and the process of acquiring languages when considering the language development of young children.

Children learn multiple languages in diverse ways. Some learn by acquiring two or more languages at the same time, while others learn by learning a second language after mastering the home language. Children who learn two languages from birth operate with two separate language systems and it is typical that they may mix words from the two languages in the same sentence for a short time. For children who follow the latter path to dual language learning (i.e., sequential learning of more than one language), it is essential that children continue to receive instruction in their home language while they are learning a second language. Some children go through a “silent period” when learning a second or third language. Parents, educators, and caregivers need to continue to talk to children and give them time to speak in the second language when they are ready. If their home language is actively supported and valued, children will learn a second language faster.

Bilingual Education

In bilingual programs children receive instruction in their home language, as well as in English. Dual language instruction benefits children in several ways. The instruction in the home language is important for children to understand the instruction in English. According to Freeman and Freeman (2004), in bilingual education, children receive some instruction in their home language to preview a lesson, followed by instruction in the second language. The review is once again in the children’s first language. This technique is called “Preview, View, Review,” and is used by many teachers in bilingual settings. In addition, the instruction in the children’s first language helps them build the necessary background knowledge to gain proficiency in the second language.

Approximately fifteen percent of young children in the state of Alaska speak a language other than English in the home. It is essential

that parents and caregivers recognize that children need to be strong in their home language first, before learning a second language. The home language of children largely governs how children progress from simple to more complex speech. The guidelines for the Communication, Language, and Literacy domain include indicators and strategies to support the development of children’s home language while helping children acquire beginning proficiency in English.

Children’s acquisition of communication, language, and literacy may be impacted by visual, hearing, neurological, or other disabilities. While it may take some children several months to acquire various aspects of language, it may take other children considerably longer. Delays in language development may indicate that a child has a hearing loss or developmental delay or disorder. Early diagnosis and intervention for language delays are critically important.

V. Global Strategies

Fundamentally, every child needs nurturing and support in developing his or her communication, language, and literacy abilities. The following strategies should be used for all children from birth to school entry. These strategies will help to ensure that all children receive learning experiences that meet their needs:

- Actively support and value children’s home language by encouraging children to use it at home and across early learning settings
- Build on children’s strengths as literacy learners by including their family and culture in daily activities as much as possible
- Bring children to a variety of social and community activities and participate with them in the social and verbal interactions as much as possible
- Sing songs slowly so that children can hear the words and sing along

- Speak clearly and articulate individual words when speaking to children; this will help them develop their oral language
- Speak to children in a level that is at or slightly beyond their level of language ability, so that they are still able to understand you and learn more language at the same time
- Engage children in activities that combine oral language and creative expression, such as finger painting, pretend play, dramatizing stories, singing, etc.
- Write down children's stories as they draw pictures and/or dictate their stories
- Combine language activities with physical movement and music as much as possible; teach children finger plays, songs and poems that have hand motions, and games that involve movement and oral language
- Immerse children in language- and print-rich environments
- Build and expand on what children say
- Provide culturally and linguistically diverse models of communication, which could include voice, touch, gesture, and facial expression
- Provide special or assistive devices, when necessary, to increase children's level of communication and/or participation
- Encourage communication and/or participation by using culturally appropriate objects and activities from children's home environments
- Ensure that the home and learning environment is safe from cultural or other forms of bias
- Consistently and regularly encourage development in communication, language, and literacy while being sensitive to the cultural integrity of language and spoken communication

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Selects specific details in a story and repeats them
- Listens to others in a group discussion for a short period
- Responds to questions with appropriate answers
- Gains information through listening

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide child with pictures or other materials including familial objects to stimulate talking and discussion
- Increase the length and complexity of books read and stories told to child
- Talk with child about pictures and accompanying stories in books, magazines, and catalogs
- Facilitate listening skills as children talk with each other (e.g., "Let's listen to Susie tell about her new cat.")
- Play games with child that require listening and understanding (e.g., Simon Says, Red Light Green Light)
- Provide English Language Learners (ELL) or any second language learner with many opportunities to participate in, and understand, a second language without translation (e.g., use gestures, props, demonstration so he/she can understand without translation)
- Provide tape-recorded stories from child's home culture and home language

Some Indicators for Children:

- Attends to book reading/storytelling for at least five minutes
- Listens to others and responds in group conversations and discussions
- Notices different tones and cadences (e.g., recognizes the difference between humorous and serious voice inflection)
- Enjoys listening to stories from different sources (e.g., in person, on the radio)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to be heard, promote listening skills during group conversations (e.g., child must listen when other children speak)
- Create times when groups of children come together to listen to information (e.g., elder tells story during circle time, carver explains significance of totem pole characters)
- Listen to an audio story or a story on the radio or musical selection with child and help him/her to interpret the story (e.g., through words, art forms, dance, acting)

GOAL 58 CHILDREN COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Vocalizes/uses sounds, words and/or gestures to solicit attention
- Communicates needs through facial expression, words, or actions (e.g., points to desired object)
- Changes volume and pitch to convey meaning
- Imitates words and/or beginning sign (e.g., simple greetings, sign for more) and gestures.

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Introduce “baby sign” along with spoken word
- Recognize and include oral styles of speaking that are familiar to child
- Interpret and give meaning to what child says (e.g., “You are saying ‘baba.’ Do you want some water?”)
- Repeat child’s sounds
- Use different types of voice with child
- “Tune in” to the different ways child attempts to communicate with appropriate response (e.g., facial expressions, verbal response, gesture)
- Assist child with communication difficulties to use nonverbal ways to express self so he/she feels that attempts to communicate are valued

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Changes intonation and tone to communicate meaning
- Uses non-verbal gestures and body language to express needs and feelings (e.g., gives spontaneous hug)
- Addresses listener appropriately to get attention (e.g., when speaking to another child, uses child’s name)
- Uses jargon with regular words in conversation
- Uses descriptors to describe a thing or event (e.g., “big toy,” “fun ride,” “beautiful sunset”)
- Uses sound effects in play
- Dictates a story for adult to put in print
- Draws simple pictures or scribbles word-like marks to communicate a message or an idea

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Listen to child and give him/her time to respond
- Model effective communication skills (e.g., speaking clearly)
- Encourage child with communication difficulties to use nonverbal ways to express self so he/she feels that attempts to communicate are valued
- Provide opportunities for child to communicate with other children
- Provide play opportunities for child to engage in practicing emerging written/picture communication with appropriate materials (e.g., paper, writing implements, envelopes, markers)
- Provide opportunities for child to observe adult writing lists or notes

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Speaks clearly enough to be understood by most listeners
- States point of view, likes/dislikes, and opinions using words, signs or picture boards
- Uses multiple word sentences to communicate needs, ideas, actions, and/or feelings
- Relays a simple message (e.g., from grandparent to parent)
- Repeats words or ideas to be sure information is communicated
- Uses pre-writing (also known as “print approximations”) in play with other children when pretending to communicate
- Begins to draw representational figures

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Ask open-ended questions that can be answered by child in his or her own way, eliminating the need for right or wrong answers
- Accept child’s response to open-ended questions
- Invent creative games where child retells a message in a group (e.g., “message relay”)
- Play mime games that use the body to tell a story or express an idea
- Provide play opportunities for child to “practice” pre-writing skills, sharing information, sending messages
- Encourage use of traditional communication during play such as dance, music, drumming, singing, and other art forms
- Allow child to watch adult make lists and notes for other people while explaining why they are being written
- Pair child with another child who speaks their home language
- Provide opportunities for child to hear a new word pronounced correctly (e.g., in conversations, books, poems, songs)

Some Indicators for Children:

- Initiates conversation by making statements or asking questions
- Expresses an idea in more than one way
- Adjusts communication style to listener (e.g., when talking to a younger child uses simple words)
- Uses character voices when retelling a story or event
- Understands the concept of writing to communicate information or messages (e.g., attempts to write a short phrase or greeting)
- Draws pictures with objects and people to communicate an idea or event, with assistance
- Makes a simple story book using pictures, personal experience or culture and some words, with assistance

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Engage child in conversation about a child selected photograph or object
- Provide opportunities for child to speak publicly for a small group and acknowledge him/her in the effort
- Reduce a complicated story (e.g., *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *How Crane got Blue Eyes*) to seven or eight action sentences and act out movements with child, especially in support of English Language Learner
- Provide play opportunities that include materials for child to practice oral and written communication skills (e.g., tape recorders, writing implements, paper, story props, telephone)
- Recognize and encourage alternate forms of communication (e.g., dance, drumming, sign, storytelling)
- Encourage child to write notes and lists. Child can use print approximations and/or pictures
- Have older child play and socialize in home language with a younger child

GOAL 60

CHILDREN USE RECEPTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Responds to sounds in the environment (e.g., startles or cries if there is an unexpected sound)
- Recognizes familiar voice by turning towards speaker
- Responds appropriately to familiar words and songs (e.g., “Clap,” child claps)
- Responds appropriately to familiar “signs” (e.g., “more,” nursing/bottle, or “all done,” “Mama/dada.”)
- Points to familiar person/s when requested (e.g., “Where is mommy?”)
- Points to objects when named (e.g., “Where is your blanket?”)
- Has a receptive vocabulary of over fifty words in home language

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Describe everyday objects found in the home using correct vocabulary (e.g., bed, door, drum, fish)
- Confirm child’s intentions and extend topic, adding new vocabulary words when replying to child’s attempts to communicate
- Introduce new words in the context of daily life activities by narrating what child sees, hears, smells, touches, and tastes
- Provide opportunities for child to point to familiar objects and actions for which he/she knows the names
- Play labeling games with child (e.g., “Where is your nose?”)
- Sing songs and play rhyming games with child
- Read picture books daily with child including poetry rich with a variety of sound and word patterns, nursery rhymes, and “baby books”

- Provide child with developmentally appropriate books (e.g., board and/or cloth books that he/she can touch and manipulate)
- Use a combination of “baby sign” and gestures from child’s experience and words when talking with child
- Provide child with language-rich and culturally-rich environment, through conversation, books, family stories, music, and early inclusion in traditional community activities

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Demonstrates understanding of familiar words by responding appropriately
- Identifies at least three body parts, when requested
- Identifies some people, objects, and actions by name
- Responds to directions that include verbs (e.g., run, jump, reach, open)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Continue to include child in family and community traditional activities and ceremonies; explain words, symbols, and meanings
- Use as diverse of a vocabulary as possible when talking with child
- Name new materials and objects when introducing them to child
- Make up games in a new environment like “What do you see?” and label aloud what you see around you (e.g., animals in the environment, name them aloud)
- Read daily with child and explain new vocabulary
- Provide child with wordbooks

36 TO 60 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Recognizes and responds to some family and traditional stories and their meanings
- Responds appropriately to a request (e.g., “Bring me the green towel.”)
- Understands a receptive vocabulary of several hundred words in home language
- Distinguishes between real and made-up words

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Use increasingly complex words, in context, and explain their meaning when talking with child
- Provide opportunities for child to view art from their culture (and other cultures) and explain the related stories (e.g., totem poles and/or masks)
- Provide opportunities for child to listen for new words in the environment and identify them when heard
- Invite family members and community leaders to tell traditional stories rich with cultural language and images
- Include child in family and community activities that include traditional songs, stories, and dances
- Make photo “books” for child to identify people, places, animals, etc. of personal interest
- Play “placement games” with child to show understanding of prepositions (e.g., “Put the ball under/on top of/beside the table.”)
- Engage in on-going conversations with child about what he/she is doing, listening to, and seeing
- Facilitate and encourage peer language interactions in activities, pretend play, and outings

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Demonstrates understanding of an increasing number of technical and specialized words (e.g., pediatrician is a child’s doctor, elder is an honored person in the child’s family or community)
- Understands words that mean the same thing (synonyms) and some words that mean the opposite thing (antonyms)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Engage child in hands-on learning and play that builds upon conceptual meaning of words including art, music, and traditions of child’s family and culture
- Positively acknowledge child when he/she demonstrates understanding of new words
- Build and expand on what child says by using more complex vocabulary
- View, with child, quality children’s television programs that teach, extend the learning by reading books on the topics, and do activities that enhance the learning and meaning of the words and concepts (if watching TV is a choice)

61

Language: Vocabulary

GOAL 61

CHILDREN USE EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS



Some Indicators for Children:

- Makes facial expressions, gestures and changes tones
- Coos, making the vowel sounds of the language and then progresses to babbling
- Babbles using two-lip sounds such as: “p,” “b,” and, “m” followed by a vowel sound (e.g., “Ba ba ba da da da...”)
- Makes sounds or gestures that let others know that he/she is experiencing pleasure or pain or to express needs (e.g., coos and squeals when content)
- Uses consistent sound combinations to indicate specific object or person (e.g., “dada” for daddy)
- Combines words and gestures (e.g., waves when saying goodbye)
- Uses eight to ten understandable words (e.g., “Daddy,” “bottle,” “up”) and/or “baby signs” (“more,” “nursing/bottle,” “all done”)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Collaborate with parents/family to learn words, signs, gestures familiar to child
 - Recognize and appreciate child’s efforts to use new words or emergent sign language
 - Assume child has something important to say and listen carefully when he/she is attempting to communicate
 - Recognize that a child with certain learning disabilities might take longer to learn new words because he/she might find it harder to make sense of the meaning of sounds
 - Expand upon child’s attempts to use words (e.g., child says “Baba,” you say, “Yes, here is the bottle.” or “Your bottle is empty.” and combine words with “signs”)
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- Respond to child’s use of gestures and “signs” by using the word (e.g., “I see you want ‘more.’”)
- Expose child to language by talking and reading with him/her
- Try to understand the meaning of what child is trying to say before responding

18 TO 36 MONTHS



Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses new vocabulary in everyday experiences
- Demonstrates use of an expressive vocabulary of more than one hundred words, or a combination of words and signs, or alternative communication, in home language
- Uses mostly two- and some three-syllable words
- Asks others to label unfamiliar objects
- Uses adjectives in speech (e.g., “red ball”)
- Imitates simple two-word phrase/sentence

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Continue to involve family so that words representing child’s personal experience are acknowledged and encouraged
 - Assume child has something important to say and listen carefully and try to understand what the child is saying when he/she is attempting to communicate
 - Engage in rich and meaningful conversation about life in child’s home language
 - Learn and use key words in English Language Learner’s home language including “signs” if appropriate
 - Confirm child’s intentions, and extend the topic when replying to attempts to communicate; encourage child to do so as well
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- Provide opportunities for child to experiment with new words by providing a sentence starter and asking child to complete the sentence
- Explain meanings of words to child during conversations
- Provide opportunities for child to distinguish between real and nonsense words in home language (e.g., sing songs that play on words)
- Try to understand the meaning of what child is trying to say before responding
- Select and phrase your end of the conversation with a child so that your vocabulary and sentences are at the level of or a little bit beyond the level of child
- Support ELL or any second language learner in acquiring a second language by avoiding translating everything for child and by using props, gestures, role-plays, physical movements, and demonstrations
- Encourage traditional play and have child explain unfamiliar words and concepts.
- Engage child in play for using a varied vocabulary to describe emotions (e.g., frustrated, discouraged, thrilled, confused, etc.)
- Explain how household tools and objects are used when using them (e.g., explain “I am using a can opener to open a can of corn.”)

36 TO 60 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses new vocabulary in spontaneous speech
- Asks the meaning of unfamiliar words and then experiments with using them
- Uses words to further describe actions or adjectives (e.g., “running fast” or “playing well”)
- Uses multiple words to explain ideas (e.g., when talking about primary caregiver says “mother/father” and/or “parent”)
- Uses words to express emotions (e.g., happy, sad, tired, scared)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Model for child how to use and expand language (e.g., jokes, rhymes, songs)
- Encourage child to repeat rhymes, short poems, expressions of courtesy (e.g., “I like the dinner, thank you”), etc.
- Model use of appropriate words to describe objects and events in the environment
- Interact with child by talking about books, laughing at his/her jokes

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Expresses most feelings and emotions
- Names some non-present objects using appropriate words
- Correctly uses words to indicate understanding
- Defines words, with assistance (e.g., “Firefighters put out fires.”)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Play word games with child that encourage the use of new words
- Engage child in making up rhymes
- Ask questions that encourage child to use vocabulary to express complex or abstract ideas (e.g., “What would this look like if...?”)
- Demonstrate, explain, and provide opportunities for child to understand how a word with the same sound can mean two different things (e.g., here and hear)
- Describe and explain the benefits of learning two or more languages and compare words and concepts between the languages with child
- Engage child in conversations that use culture-specific language in play and learning activities (e.g., “smoking fish,” “regalia,” “umiak,” traditions from the home country, names, etc.)
- Model vocabulary in context (e.g., when pointing to object instead of saying “thing,” name the object with specific words)



GOAL 62

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE PROGRESSION IN GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses single word speech (e.g., one word to communicate message, child says “Up.” when wanting to be carried by adult) or beginning sign language and symbols (e.g., “More,” “Nurse/bottle, “All done.”)
- Uses some pronouns (e.g., “Mine.”)
- Says short telegraphic sentences (e.g., “Me go,” or “There Mama.”)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Communicate with family to learn words, gestures, “signs,” and “baby games” familiar to child that reflect his/her personal experience
- Acknowledge child’s efforts when he/she uses words and/or beginning “baby sign” to communicate
- Speak in simple sentences using a combination of words and “baby signs” during play and daily routines when communicating with child
- Use language in daily routines, talk with child, associate words with actions (e.g., “First, we wash our hands, and then we dry them. Next, we open the refrigerator, then we take out the milk. Next, we pour it in a glass.”)
- Make conversations enjoyable and fun for child
- Use finger plays, lullabies, and songs from child’s home and other languages

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses three- to four-word sentences with noun and verb
- Describes a self-made drawing
- Uses simple questions in speech, but may not use correct grammar
- Uses plural forms for nouns, sometimes
- Uses negatives (e.g., “I don’t want it.”) in English or home language
- Uses adjectives in phrases (e.g., big bag, green bear)
- Begins to use complete sentences in conversation with peers during play

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Recognize and validate conversation styles that may be different and rooted in child’s culture or personal experience
- Speak with child in complete sentences using correct grammar in home language
- Engage child in conversations that require more than a single word response
- Read books from child’s home language and in other languages, if possible
- Make sure to wait long enough for child to answer, when asking a question, as some children need more time to understand questions and put words together
- Recognize that ELL may mix words from different languages in the same sentence; repeat what child said using all words in the same language
- Provide play opportunities that encourage children to engage in conversation with each other and to tell family stories
- Facilitate and model conversation using complete sentences while sitting with child during meals or snacks
- Engage child in a game using a small stuffed animal to demonstrate prepositions while saying, “The teddy bear is in the box.” or “The teddy bear is next to the chair.”

64

GOAL 64

Language: Expressive/Oral Language

CHILDREN USE LANGUAGE FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Vocalizes to get attention
- Uses a variety of inflections and sounds to express intent (e.g., coos to express happiness)
- Enjoys listening to oral stories in home language
- Says single words to express thoughts and ideas (e.g., when child sees the sun, he/she says “sun”)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Respond to child’s vocalizations
- Tell stories to child
- Describe events to child or comment about what is happening
- Provide opportunities for child to contribute with single words as you make up a story
- Talk and interact with child throughout the day
- Ask “wh” questions (e.g., why, who, what, where, when)
- Immerse child in a language-rich environment

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Recounts an event, with assistance
- Begins to recall parts of a previously heard story
- Requests to hear familiar stories, songs and rhymes
- Begins to follow the sequence of events in a narrated story
- Uses a tape player or CD player to listen to a recorded story, with assistance

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Tell child stories about his/her family, community and culture
- Incorporate songs, rhymes into stories you tell, so child can participate in storytelling
- Ask five “wh” and one “h” question (e.g., why, who, what, where, when and how) to encourage child to describe an event or occurrence
- Set aside time daily to engage in storytelling, singing, and talking with child
- Discuss and explain importance of child’s home language

65

Literacy: Reading

GOAL 65 CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Shows beginning sound awareness by reacting differently to different sounds
- Imitates vocalizations and sounds
- Vocalizes familiar words when read to
- Recites last word of familiar rhymes, with assistance

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Engage in familiar sound play with child (e.g., tap drums at different tempos)
- Practice and play with words with child
- Read books with rhymes, songs, and repetitive language with child
- Clap, stomp, dance, or finger tap to songs familiar to child as they are sung
- Provide play materials that include toys and objects that make different sounds (e.g., bells, drums, pots and pans, wooden spoons, simple musical instruments)
- Read books with alliteration and rhyme (e.g., books with words that have many words beginning with the same letter such as *Jamberry* by Bruce Degen)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Recites phrases from familiar rhymes
- Completes a familiar rhyme by providing the last word
- Participates in rhyming games and songs with other children
- Imitates tempo and speed of sound (e.g., clapping hands fast and clapping hands slowly, speaking fast and speaking slowly)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Make up rhyming songs with varied tempos using familiar names
- Talk during everyday activities about words and sounds (e.g., at the grocery store, identify fruits with the same beginning sound, peach and pear)
- Use books that focus on sounds to interact with child

67

GOAL 67

Literacy: Reading

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS OF PRINT CONCEPTS

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Explores physical features of books (e.g., chews on cloth books)
- Pays attention to pictures in books
- Shows increasing ability to handle books, without assistance
- Knows how to turn pages
- Uses interactive books, with assistance
- Attempts to position pictures in book right side up

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Read and tell stories with child daily
- Model holding a book correctly and turning pages
- Read with child one-on-one, so that child observes and handles books often
- Engage child in playing with board books, cloth and plastic books that can be manipulated and explored with assistance
- Explore a variety of printed materials with child (e.g., photo albums, magazines, song books)
- Acknowledge when child is using printed matter appropriately

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Knows the right side up of a book
- Turns pages, usually a single page at a time

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Incorporate looking at the cover, reading the title and author's name, when reading with child
- Provide child with a variety of books from home culture and in home language
- Run finger along text while reading with child to demonstrate text progression, occasionally
- Read big books at story time so child can see the printed word on the page and encourage child to follow the printed words on the page
- Encourage child to point to the title of a book

68

GOAL 68

Literacy: Reading

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPREHENSION OF PRINTED MATERIAL AND ORAL STORIES

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Points or makes sounds when looking at picture books
- Points to familiar pictures, characters, and objects in books
- Identifies familiar people and objects in photographs
- Focuses attention on simple picture books

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Introduce books from diverse cultures
- Read books with a predictable story line and sequence of events with child
- Point to pictures while reading and encourage child to do so as well
- Make books with pictures from child's life, cultural background, and home language
- Label environment in two or more languages differentiated by color (e.g., Labels in Yup'ik or Spanish are blue and in English are red)

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses words for pictures
- Uses pictures to describe actions (e.g., picture of person running, child says "run")
- Recites familiar words in a book when read to
- Recalls specific characters or actions from familiar stories
- Produces a multiple-word response to printed materials
- Anticipates what comes next in known stories, with assistance (e.g., anticipates the next animal in an animal concept book)

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Make a name block for child with his/her name on one side and child's picture on the other
- Use cards with pictures and corresponding words in activities with child
- Have child help decorate labels for objects in child's environment (e.g., bookshelf, clothes closet, and shelf)
- Read books with child from child's own and other cultural backgrounds

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses pictures to predict a story
- Matches pictures with spoken word in home language
- Recognizes own name when spelled out in letters
- Recites some words in familiar books from memory
- Fills in missing information in a familiar story
- Identifies major characters in story
- Begins to understand the sequence of a story (e.g., beginning, middle, and end)
- Makes up an ending for a story
- Pretends to read a familiar book

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Show the cover of a book and ask child to predict what happens in the story
- Provide opportunities after reading for child to act out a story like a play
- Change roles when reading or telling stories with child; have child become the storyteller and “read” to you
- Pause before an often repeated word and give child the opportunity to say the word when reading a favorite story
- Have child draw his/her favorite part of a story
- Engage child in retelling a recently read or listened to story
- Assist child in illustrating verses from popular children’s songs
- Engage child in looking at wordless picture books, tell the story in your own words, and then encourage child to tell his/her version of the story based on the pictures
- Read books by Alaskan authors or that represent Alaskan cultures (e.g., *Mama, Do You Love Me?*, *On Mother’s Lap*, *Alaskan ABC’s*, *Runaway Mittens*, etc.)

Some Indicators for Children:

- Knows that print conveys meaning
- Compares stories with real life
- Uses pictures to infer or predict meaning in text read aloud and/or shared with others
- Uses strategies such as questioning or predicting to comprehend printed material
- Recalls a story with some level of detail pertaining to characters and setting

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Read part of a story in a book and ask child to predict how it will end
- Use simple stories to help child understand cause and effect (e.g., “Why did Humpty-Dumpty break into pieces?”)
- Discuss the theme of a book or the “heart of the author’s message”
- Allow time for child to discuss ideas, feelings, and opinions about a book after reading
- Try to read/look up answers to questions (e.g., for question “What should you wear today?” read the weather forecast in a printed form to find an answer)
- Read books that represent Alaskan cultures to children (e.g., *Hungry Giant of the Tundra*, *Kitaaq Goes Ice Fishing*, *Kumak’s House*, *Berry Magic*, *Dance on a Seal Skin*, etc.)

36 TO 60 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Writes some letters or numerals
- Prints or copies first name
- Attempts to copy words from print
- Draws basic geometric shapes (e.g., circle, triangle)
- Uses pretend writing activities during play to show print conventions in home language
- Adjusts paper position when writing

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide paper and writing tools (and/or if you choose to use one, access to a computer) for child to use for specific purposes (e.g., create greeting cards)
- Praise child’s attempts to write. Create a safe place for child to test out his or her own theories about how print works
- Ask child to “sign” artwork, cards, and letters
- Point out the shapes of individual letters to help child learn letters
- Write down child’s dictations and read back exactly what he/she said (in both languages for English Language Learner)
- Provide opportunities to talk about what child notices about two different writing systems (especially appropriate for ELL)
- Provide a variety of writing materials in dramatic play areas, art area, with blocks, cars, etc. Engage child in using materials (e.g., take orders for pizza using a notepad in the play kitchen, make tickets to see the art museum, write speeding tickets when playing with cars, draw and label a block structure when child is finished building it)
- Explain to child the reason we are writing something down (e.g., “We will write a list so that we know what to buy at the grocery store.” “Let’s write a thank you note to our friends for inviting us for tea and cookies.”)

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Uses multiple writing tools (e.g., paint, crayons, pencils, pens) to create a picture
- Adjusts grasp to size of writing tool
- Shows beginning knowledge of punctuation marks (e.g., period at the end of a sentence)
- May use an initial letter to represent an entire word

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to develop projects that involve writing (e.g., producing a newspaper, recording events on a family/field trip)
- Create an accessible writing area for child with a smooth writing surface, writing tools, and paper
- Engage child in dictation projects so he/she learns that spoken words can be written (e.g., child dictates a simple story and ‘scribe’ writes it down)
- Hang up child’s writing in prominent places in the home or center, talk about writing and praise the child for his/her good work

GOAL 74 CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY IN HOME LANGUAGE WHILE ACQUIRING BEGINNING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Responds to familiar words in home language (e.g., “clap”– the child claps) and attends to sounds in English (e.g., “clap”– looks towards speaker)
- Uses eight to ten understandable words in home language and may not possess any words in English
- Communicates needs through single-word speech in home language and through facial expression, gestures, or actions (e.g., points to object desired) if attempting to communicate in English

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Support child’s use of home language by talking to, reading, and singing in the home language
- Present child with English words in groups (e.g., animal names), and within a context
- Help child link English vocabulary to real-life experiences by using pictures, objects, and events
- Provide opportunities for parents to continue to use home language with child to build a strong home language base
- Play music from child’s home culture and in home language

18 TO 36 MONTHS

Some Indicators for Children:

- Follows simple verbal direction in home language and attempts to make sense of direction given in English when accompanied by a non-verbal gesture (e.g., signal for come here)
- Uses sounds from home language when speaking in English (e.g., Spanish “v” may be pronounced like “b” so Spanish speaking child might say “bery” for “very”)
- Has a larger vocabulary in home language and is beginning to acquire an English vocabulary
- Recalls words from simple songs in home language and recognizes words from songs in English
- Asks simple questions in home language; uses gestures or single words to ask questions in English
- Inserts words from home language while speaking in English, sometimes

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Read books with child in home language with supplemental reading in English
- Create a supportive environment for learning home language while exposing child to English
- Speak English in ways that help ELL students understand (e.g., simple sentences, repetition, use of gestures)
- Provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects the home language by bringing the home language to settings (other than home) where child may spend part of the day
- Have print materials available in both the home language and English
- Substitute a couple of words into child’s home language when telling a story from a book or an oral story (e.g., use the Tagalog word for alligator, buwaya, when telling a folktale from the Philippines)
- Rephrase or expand child’s speech

36 TO 60 MONTHS

60 MONTHS TO KINDERGARTEN ENTRY

Some Indicators for Children:

- Demonstrates understanding that there are languages other than his/her home language (e.g., identifies sentence spoken in home language in comparison to one spoken in English)
- Relies on non-verbal cues to communicate in English, but does not rely on non-verbal cues to communicate in home language
- Focuses on the meaning of words rather than grammar in acquiring spoken English language competency
- Follows linguistic rules of home language and constructs own rules for English
- Uses sentences in home language and begins to use single word or telegraphic speech in English to communicate
- Bilingual child adjusts language and communication form used according to person with whom he/she is speaking

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Help child develop reasoning skills through use of home language
- Devise strategies that build a home-school collaboration to reinforce home language competency and promote learning English
- Sing songs that incorporate words from two languages (e.g., Pollito-Chicken, Galina-Hen)
- Identify and explain patterns in errors of spoken English to help child acquire language competency (Note: do not correct child but guide child by example)
- Model positive vocabulary learning strategies (e.g., reading cues from the context)
- Help English speaking children understand the second language learner’s speech and vocabulary
- Establish a consistent daily routine that promotes sense of security

Some Indicators for Children:

- Follows multi-step directions in home language and single-step directions in English
- Demonstrates understanding of words used in home language that are different from English
- Makes consistent grammatical errors in English (e.g., mans for men)
- Re-tells a simple story told in home language but may only be able to re-tell a few words from a story told in English
- Begins to understand that non-family adults and peers may not understand home language
- Chooses language (home or English) and/or non-verbal gestures to communicate according to audience, purpose, and setting

Some Strategies for Caregivers:

- Provide opportunities for child to acquire competency in home language and English
- Provide opportunities for child to practice communicating in English through natural and meaningful conversation
- Use books that have a lot of repetition or that are predictable
- Provide opportunities for child to share words from home language with other children
- Be supportive in situations of stress, exhaustion, or emotional strain when child uses “interlanguage” (i.e., neither home language nor English but 3rd language system based on both languages)
- Use home language alongside English in activities such as counting to ten, talking about the weather, reciting the alphabet, and saying names of colors
- Develop a plan for child’s continued use of home language and acquisition of English

* Notes: 1) This goal statement only applies to children whose home language is not English. 2) Language in this goal statement only refers to the “spoken word” or oral language and communication. It does not refer to the “written word” – reading, writing or other literacy abilities.

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