

Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Head Start Bureau has identified a framework of domains and indicators for child development.



I. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH

A. Physical Health Status: the maintenance of healthy and age appropriate well-being.

1. Possesses good overall health, including oral, visual, and auditory health, and is free from communicable or preventable diseases.
2. Participates in prevention and management of chronic health conditions and avoids toxins, such as lead.
3. Maintains physical growth within the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended ranges for weight and height by age.
4. Gets sufficient rest and exercise to support healthy development.

B. Health Knowledge & Practice: the understanding of healthy and safe habits and practicing healthy habits.

1. Completes personal care tasks, such as dressing, brushing teeth, toileting, and washing hands independently from adults.
2. Communicates an understanding of the importance of health and safety routines and rules.
3. Follows basic health and safety rules and responds appropriately to harmful or unsafe situations.
4. Distinguishes food on a continuum from most healthy to less healthy.
5. Eats a variety of nutritious foods.
6. Participates in structured and unstructured physical activities.

C. Gross Motor Skills: the control of large muscles for movement, navigation, and balance.

1. Develops motor control and balance for a range of physical activities, such as walking, propelling a wheelchair or mobility device, skipping, running, climbing, and hopping.
2. Develops motor coordination and skill in using objects for a range of physical activities, such as pulling, throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing or hitting balls, and riding a tricycle.
3. Understands movement concepts, such as control of the body, how the body moves (such as an awareness of space and directionality), and that the body can move independently or in coordination with other objects.

D. Fine Motor Skills: the control of small muscles for such purposes as using utensils, self-care, building, and exploring.

1. Develops hand strength and dexterity.
2. Develops eye-hand coordination to use everyday tools, such as pitchers for pouring or utensils for eating.
3. Manipulates a range of objects, such as blocks or books.
4. Manipulates writing, drawing, and art tools.

II. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Social Relationships: the healthy relationships and interactions with adults and peers.

1. Communicates with familiar adults and accepts or requests guidance.
2. Cooperates with others.
3. Develops friendships with peers.
4. Establishes secure relationships with adults.
5. Uses socially appropriate behavior with peers and adults, such as helping, sharing, and taking turns.
6. Resolves conflict with peers alone and/or with adult intervention as appropriate.
7. Recognizes and labels others' emotion.
8. Expresses empathy and sympathy to peers.
9. Recognizes how actions affect others and accepts consequences of one's actions.

B. Self-Concept & Self-Efficacy: the perception that one is capable of successfully making decisions, accomplishing tasks, and meeting goals.

1. Identifies personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts, and feelings.
2. Demonstrates age-appropriate independence in a range of activities, routines, and tasks.
3. Shows confidence in a range of abilities and in the capacity to accomplish tasks and take on new tasks.
4. Demonstrates age-appropriate independence in decision making regarding activities and materials.

C. Self-Regulation: the ability to recognize and regulate emotions, attention, impulses, and behavior.

1. Recognizes and labels emotions.
2. Handles impulses and behavior with minimal direction from adults.
3. Follows simple rules, routines, and directions.
4. Shifts attention between tasks and moves through transitions with minimal direction from adults.

D. Emotional & Behavioral Health: a healthy range of emotional expression and learning positive alternatives to aggressive or isolating behaviors.

1. Expresses a range of emotions appropriately, such as excitement, happiness, sadness, and fear.
2. Refrains from disruptive, aggressive, angry, or defiant behaviors.
3. Adapts to new environments with appropriate emotions and behaviors.

III. CREATIVE ARTS EXPRESSION

A. Music: the use of voice and instruments to create sounds.

1. Participates in music activities, such as listening, singing, or performing.
2. Experiments with musical instruments.

B. Creative Movement & Dance: the use of the body to move to music and express oneself.

1. Expresses what is felt and heard in various musical tempos and styles.
2. Moves to different patterns of beat and rhythm in music.
3. Uses creative movement to express concepts, ideas, or feelings.

C. Art: the use of a range of media and materials to create drawings, pictures, or other objects.

1. Uses different materials and techniques to make art creations.
2. Creates artistic works that reflect thoughts, feelings, experiences, or knowledge.
3. Discusses one's own artistic creations and those of others.

D. Drama: the portrayal of events, characters, or stories through acting and using props and language.

1. Uses dialogue, actions, and objects to tell a story or express thoughts and feelings about one's self or a characters.
2. Uses creativity and imagination to manipulate materials and assume roles in dramatic play situations.

IV. APPROACHES TO LEARNING

A. Initiative & Curiosity: an interest in varied topics and activities, desire to learn, creativeness, and independence in learning.

1. Demonstrates flexibility imagination, and inventiveness in approaching tasks and activities.
2. Demonstrates eagerness to learn about and discuss a range of topics, ideas, and tasks.
3. Asks questions and seeks new information.

B. Persistence & Attentiveness: the ability to begin and finish activities with persistence and attention.

1. Maintains interest in a project or activity until completed.
2. Sets goals and develops and follows through on plans.
3. Resists distractions, maintains attention, and continues the task at hand through frustration or challenges.

C. Cooperation: an interest and engagement in group experiences.

1. Plans, initiates, and completes learning activities with peers.
2. Joins in cooperative play with others and invites others to play.
3. Models or teaches peers.
4. Helps, shares, and cooperates in a group.

V. SOCIAL STUDIES KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

A. Self, Family & Community: the understanding of one's relationship to the family and community, roles in the family and community, and respect for diversity.

1. Identifies personal and family structures.
2. Understands similarities and respects differences among people.
3. Recognizes a variety of jobs and the work associated with them.
4. Understands the reasons for rules in the home and classroom and for laws in the community.
5. Describes or draws aspects of the geography of the classroom, home, and community.

B. People & the Environment: the understanding of the relationship between people and the environment in which they live.

1. Recognizes aspects of the environment, such as roads, buildings, trees, gardens, bodies of water, or land formations.
2. Recognizes that people share the environment with other people, animals, and plants.
3. Understands that people can take care of the environment through activities, such as recycling.

C. History & Events: the understanding that events happened in the past and how these events relate to one's self, family, and community.

1. Differentiate between past, present, and future.
2. Recognizes events that happened in the past, such as family or personal history.
3. Understands how people live and what they do changes over time.

VI. LOGIC & REASONING

A. Reasoning & Problem Solving: the ability to recognize, understand, and analyze a problem and draw on knowledge or experience to seek solutions to a problem.

1. Seeks multiple solutions to a question, task, or problem.
2. Recognizes cause and effect of relationships.
3. Classifies, compares, and contrasts objects, events, and experiences.
4. Uses past knowledge to build new knowledge.

B. Symbolic Representation: the use of symbols or objects to represent something else.

1. Represents people, places, or things through drawings, movement, and three-dimensional objects.
2. Engages in pretend play and acts out roles.
3. Recognizes the difference between pretend or fantasy situations and reality.

VII. LITERACY KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

- A. Book Appreciation & Knowledge: the interest in books and their characteristics, and the ability to understand and get meaning from stories and information from books and other texts.**
- Shows interest in shared reading experiences and looking at books independently.
 - Recognizes how books are read, such as front-to-back and one page at a time, and recognizes basic characteristics, such as title, author, and illustrator.
 - Asks and answers questions and makes comments about print materials.
 - Demonstrates interest in different kinds of literature, such as fiction and non-fiction books and poetry, on a range of topics.
 - Retells stories or information from books through conversation, artistic works, creative movement, or drama.
- B. Phonological Awareness: an awareness that language can be broken into words, syllables, and smaller pieces of sound.**
- Identifies and discriminates between words in language.
 - Identifies and discriminates between separate syllables in words.
 - Identifies and discriminates between sounds and phonemes in language, such as attention to beginning and ending sounds of words and recognition that different words begin or end with the same sound.
- C. Alphabet Knowledge: the names and sounds associated with letters.**
- Recognizes that the letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.
 - Recognizes that letters of the alphabet have distinct sound(s) associated with them.
 - Attends to the beginning letters and sounds in familiar words.
 - Identifies letters and associates correct sounds with letters.
- D. Print Concepts & Conventions: the concepts about print and early decoding (identifying letter-sound relationships).**
- Recognizes print in everyday life, such as numbers, letters, one's name, words, and familiar logos and signs.
 - Understands that print conveys meaning.
 - Understands conventions, such as print moves from left to right and top to bottom of a page.
 - Recognizes words as a unit of print and understands that letters are grouped to form words.
 - Recognizes the association between spoken or signed and written words.
- E. Early Writing: the familiarity with writing implements, conventions, and emerging skills to communicate through written representations, symbols, and letters.**
- Experiments with writing tools and materials.
 - Recognizes that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes, such as giving information, sharing stories, or giving an opinion.
 - Uses scribbles, shapes, pictures, and letters to represent objects, stories, experiences, or ideas.
 - Copies, traces, or independently writes letters or words.

VIII. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- A. Receptive Language: the ability to comprehend or understand language.**
- Attends to language during conversations, songs, stories, or other learning experiences.
 - Comprehends increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
 - Comprehends different forms of language, such as questions or exclamations.
 - Comprehends different grammatical structures or rules for using language.
- B. Expressive Language: the ability to use language.**
- Engages in communication and conversation with others.
 - Uses language to express ideas and needs.
 - Uses increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
 - Uses different forms of language.
 - Uses different grammatical structures for a variety of purposes.
 - Engages in storytelling.
 - Engages in conversations with peers and adults.

IX. ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- A. Receptive English Language Skills: the ability to comprehend or understand the English language.**
- Participates with movement and gestures while other children and the teachers dance and sing in English.
 - Acknowledges or responds nonverbally to common words or phrases, such as "hello," "goodbye," "snack time," or "bathroom" when accompanied by adult gestures.
 - Points to body parts when asked, "Where is your nose, hand, leg...?"
 - Comprehends and responds to increasingly complex and varied English vocabulary, such as "Which stick is the longest?" or "Why do you think the caterpillar is hungry?"
 - Follows multi-step directions in English with minimal cues or assistance.
- B. Expressive English Language Skills: the ability to speak or use English.**
- Repeats word or phrase to self, such as "bus," while group sings the "Wheels on the Bus" or "brush teeth" after lunch.
 - Requests items in English, such as "car," "milk," "book," or "ball."
 - Uses one or two English words, sometimes joined to represent a bigger idea, such as "throwball."
 - Uses increasingly complex and varied English vocabulary.
 - Constructs sentences, such as "The apple is round." or "I see a fire truck with lights on."
- C. Engagement in English Literary Activities: understanding and responding to books, storytelling, and songs presented in English.**
- Demonstrates eagerness to participate in songs, rhymes, and stories in English.
 - Points to pictures and says the word in English, such as "frog," "baby," or "run."
 - Learns part of a song or poem in English and repeats it.
 - Talks with peers or adults about a story in English.
 - Tells a story in English with a beginning, middle, and end from a book or about a personal experience.

X. MATHEMATICS KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

- A. Number Concepts & Quantities: the understanding that numbers represent quantities and have ordinal properties (number words represent a rank order, particular size, or position in a list).**
- Recognizes numbers and quantities in everyday environment.
 - Recites numbers in the correct order and understands that numbers come "before" or "after" one another.
 - Associates quantities and the names of numbers with written numerals.
 - Uses one-to-one counting and subitizing (identifying the number of objects without counting) to determine quantity.
 - Uses the number name of the last object counted to represent the number of objects in the set.
- B. Number Relationships & Operations: the use of numbers to describe relationships and solve problems.**
- Uses a range of strategies, such as counting, subitizing, or matching, to compare quantity in two sets of objects and describes the comparison with terms, such as more, less, greater than, fewer, or equal to.
 - Recognizes that numbers (or sets of objects) can be combined or separated to make another number through the grouping of objects.
 - Identifies the new number created when numbers are combined or separated.
- C. Geometry & Spatial Sense: the understanding of shapes, their properties, and how objects are related to one another.**
- Recognizes and names common shapes, their parts, and attributes.
 - Combines and separates shapes to make other shapes.
 - Compares objects in size and shape.
 - Understands directionality, order, and position of objects, such as up, down, in front, behind.
- D. Patterns: the recognition of patterns, sequencing, and critical thinking skills necessary to predict and classify objects in a pattern.**
- Sorts, classifies, and serializes (puts in a pattern) objects using attributes, such as color, shape, or size.
 - Recognizes, duplicates, and extends simple patterns.
 - Creates patterns through the repetition of a unit.
- E. Measurement & Comparison: the understanding of attributes and relative properties of objects as related to size, capacity, and area.**
- Compares objects using attributes of length, weight, and size (bigger, longer, taller, heavier).
 - Orders objects by size or length.
 - Uses nonstandard and standard techniques and tools to measure and compare.

XI. SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

- A. Scientific Skills and Method: the skills to observe and collect information and use it to ask questions, predict, explain, and draw conclusions.**
- Uses senses and tools, including technology, to gather information, investigate materials, and observe processes and relationships.
 - Observes and discusses common properties, differences, and comparisons among objects.
 - Participates in simple investigations to form hypotheses, gather observations, draw conclusions, and form generalizations.
 - Collects, describes, and records information through discussions, drawings, maps, and charts.
 - Describes and discusses predictions, explanations, and generalizations based on past experience.
- B. Conceptual Knowledge of the Natural & Physical World: the acquisition of concepts and facts related to the natural and physical world and the understanding of naturally-occurring relationships.**
- Observes, describes, and discusses living things and natural processes.
 - Observes, describes, and discusses properties of materials and transformation of substances.