

PRESCHOOL and EARLY CHILDHOOD STANDARDS and BENCHMARKS

Iowa Early Learning Standards

Area 7: Physical Well-Being and Motor Development	
7.1 Healthy and Safe Living – Children understand healthy and safe living practices.	
1.	begins to recognize and select healthy foods.
2.	follows healthy self-care routines (brushing teeth and washing hands).
3.	demonstrates safe behaviors regarding environment (stranger, tornado, fire, traffic), substances (drugs, poisons), and objects (guns, knives, scissors).
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	model appropriate mealtime behavior and engage <i>each</i> child with appropriate mealtime conversations to make mealtime pleasant.
	encourage <i>each</i> child to learn and develop self-help skills (e.g. washing hands) during mealtimes and food activities.
	plan and implement emergency and safety procedures, such as fire, disaster, and tornado drills.
	teach <i>each</i> child to use medications with caregiver supervision and to avoid poisons.
	provide nutritious meals and snacks, including giving <i>each</i> child opportunities to prepare nutritious foods.
	uses adaptive equipment to help children with special needs develop self-help skills.
7.2 Play and Senses - Children engage in play to learn.	
1.	participates in a variety of indoor and outdoor play activities that increase strength, endurance, and flexibility.
2.	uses sights, smells, sounds, textures, and tastes to discriminate between, explore, and experience activities and materials.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	use the outdoor environment and natural settings as an integral part of <i>each</i> child's active and quiet learning.
	provide materials and encourage <i>each</i> child to use all their senses to explore materials.
	provide materials in both outdoor and indoor environments that are easily accessible by <i>each</i> child.
7.3 Large Motor Development - Children develop large motor skills.	
1.	shows control and balance in locomotor skills, such as walking, running, jumping hopping, marching, galloping, and skipping.
2.	shows abilities to coordinate movements with balls, such as throwing, kicking, catching, and bouncing.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide space, time, and materials for <i>each</i> child to explore and practice large motor activities such as balancing, running, jumping, climbing, throwing, catching, kicking, and bouncing.
	play games with <i>each</i> child that involve catching, kicking, and bouncing balls, coaching <i>each</i> child and modifying the games to both challenge <i>each</i> child and to allow them to be successful.
	provide adaptive large motor equipment that allows <i>each</i> child with physical disabilities to practice large motor skills.
7.4 Fine Motor Development - Children develop fine motor skills.	
1.	uses hand-eye coordination to perform self-help and fine-motor tasks with

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	a variety of manipulative materials.
2.	shows increased skills in using scissors and writing tools for various learning activities.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide a variety of fine motor tools and materials (beads, pegboards, scissors, crayons, paintbrushes, hammers) that are available and accessible for use in child-directed activities.
	coach <i>each</i> child to improve self-help skills (dressing, toileting, buttoning).
	teach <i>each</i> child to use utensils (spoons, forks, knives) during meals, snacks, and supervised cooking activities.
	provide adaptive equipment that allows <i>each</i> child with physical disabilities to increase their fine motor skills.
Area 8 Approaches to Learning	
8.1 Curiosity and Initiative: Children express curiosity, interest, and initiative in exploring the environment, engaging in experiences, and learning new skills.	
1.	explores and experiences activities and ideas with eagerness, flexibility, imagination, independence, and inventiveness.
2.	chooses to explore a variety of activities and experiences with a willingness to try new challenges.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide an environment with a variety of activities and materials for child-initiated exploration.
	encourage <i>each</i> child to express their own ideas and exercise their imagination.
	provide a variety of activities and materials to challenge and encourage <i>each</i> child's developing skills.
	share <i>each</i> child's excitement in discoveries and exploration of the environment.
	encourage <i>each</i> child to make choices and plan interactions with people and materials in their environment.
	provide opportunities and time to explore a variety of activities and materials including those in their larger community environments.
8.2 Engagement and Persistence: Children purposefully choose and persist in experiences and activities.	
1.	Persists in and completes a variety of both caregiver-directed and self-initiated tasks, activities, projects and experiences.
2.	Maintains concentration on a task.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide an environment with a variety of activities and materials for child-initiated exploration.
	provide clearly defined areas with minimal distraction and some protection to encourage sustained involvement with peers and materials.
	maintain a routine; provide opportunities and sufficient time for engagement in self-selected activities.
	guide <i>each</i> child's learning and development by responding to questions, ideas, and requests for help, by being present with and fully attending to children, and by individualizing their responses to children.
	provide support and assistance as needed to support the involvement of <i>each</i> child with special needs.

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8.3 Problem Solving: Children demonstrate strategies for reasoning and problem solving.	
1.	shows interest in and finds a variety of solutions to questions, tasks, or problems.
2.	recognizes and solves problems through active exploration, including trial and error, and through interactions and discussions with peers and caregivers.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide opportunities for <i>each</i> child to try new ways of using materials.
	create environments that offer an appropriate amount of stimulation and choice for <i>each</i> child using different types of equipment and materials.
	allow <i>each</i> child time to process experiences and information as well as devise alternatives.
	select and use appropriate materials that promote creativity, self expression, number, and emerging literacy skills.
	engage <i>each</i> child in problem-solving with peers and the environment.
	provide appropriate challenges within a safe, predictable environment.
Area 9 Social and Emotional Development	
9.1 Self: Children express a positive awareness of self in terms of specific abilities, characteristics, and preferences.	
1.	expresses sense of self in terms of specific abilities.
2.	expresses needs, wants, and feelings in socially appropriate ways.
3.	shows increasing confidence and independence in a variety of tasks and routines, expresses pride in accomplishments.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide opportunities for <i>each</i> child to develop a sense of their physical self.
	talk with and listen respectfully to <i>each</i> child.
	provide <i>each</i> child with a safe and stimulating setting in which to explore.
	provide <i>each</i> child with opportunities to make meaningful choices and express their preferences throughout the day.
	encourage <i>each</i> child by giving specific feedback that links effort to outcomes.
	model respect for diversity.
	provide <i>each</i> child with opportunities to solve problems on their own.
	link <i>each</i> child's efforts to the outcomes they achieve.
	provide opportunities for <i>each</i> child to express their thoughts and feelings about experiences through a variety of methods.
9.2 Self-Regulation: Children show increasing ability to regulate their behavior and express their emotions in appropriate ways.	
1	Shows increasing capacity to monitor own behavior, following and contributing to classroom procedures.
2	Uses materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully.
3	Begins to accept consequences of own actions.
4	Manages transitions and changes to routines.
5	States feelings, needs, and opinions in difficult situations without harming self, others, or property.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	

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	Identify and explain group procedures while offering each child the opportunity to contribute to procedures and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas concerning them.
	Assist each child in their feelings and the impact on others.
	Model empathy and understanding.
	Make each child aware of upcoming changes in schedule or routines.
	Model self-control.
	Give each child words to express emotions.
9.3 Relationships with Caregivers: Children relate positively to caregivers who work with them.	
1	Interacts comfortably with a range of familiar caregivers.
2	Accepts guidance, comfort, and directions from a range of familiar caregivers.
3	Shows trust in familiar caregivers.
4	Seeks help as needed from familiar caregivers.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	Ensure that a small number of educated, consistent, positive, and nurturing caregivers provide continuity of care and learning opportunities.
	Intentionally spend time with each child, as well as with small groups of children, each day to support positive interactions and relationships.
	Provide feedback that is warm, positive, and encouraging.
	Show affection and caring to each child.
9.4 Peer Interactions: Children develop the ability to interact with peers respectfully and to form positive peer relationships.	
1.	sustains interactions with peers.
2.	develops friendships with other peers.
3.	negotiates with others to resolve disagreements.
4.	takes turns with others.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide time, space, and sufficient materials for <i>each</i> child to interact with peers in common activities (blocks, dramatic play) for lengthy periods of time (60 minutes or more at a time).
	create situations in which <i>each</i> child needs to work with others to accomplish goals.
	encourage <i>each</i> child, coaching them as needed, to resolve conflicts, respect the rights of others, and reach joint decisions.
	point out and draw attention to different perspectives.
9.5 Awareness of Community: Children have an increasing awareness of belonging to a family, community, culture, and program.	
1.	shows that he/she values others within the classroom/program, family, and community.
2.	shows early understanding of the concepts of justice, fairness, individual rights, and the welfare of the community and its members.
3.	shows responsibility as a member of a community.
4.	shows acceptance of persons from different cultures and ethnic groups.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide <i>each</i> child with opportunities to explore their communities.

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	conduct group meetings where <i>each</i> child can participate in discussions of justice, fairness, the welfare of the community and its members, and individual rights in the meaningful context of daily experiences.
	ensure a classroom atmosphere of mutual respect.
	acquaint <i>each</i> child with various community helpers.
	give <i>each</i> child meaningful jobs in the classroom (watering plants, feeding animals, cleaning tables, etc.)
	provide materials such as photographs, books, posters, games, puzzles, foods, dolls, etc., that reflect <i>each</i> child's family, community, and world.
Area 10 Communication, Language, and Literacy	
10.1 Language Understanding and Use: Children understand and use communication and language for a variety of purposes.	
1.	shows a steady increase in listening and speaking vocabulary.
2.	initiates, listens, and responds appropriately in conversations with peers and caregivers.
3.	speaks in sentences of increasing length and grammatical complexity.
4.	follows simple oral directions that involve several actions.
5.	asks and answers a variety of question types.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	expand <i>each</i> child's comments.
	model new vocabulary and explain meaning of new words encountered (in conversations, books, songs, and rhymes).
	provide many opportunities to engage <i>each</i> child in conversations, using wait time (during share time, meal time, center time).
	provide children with opportunities to practice following simple directions (in games, group time, daily routines).
	get on children's eye level when speaking with them whenever possible.
	ask a variety of yes, no, wh-, and open-ended questions in conversations.
	use adaptive strategies and equipment (communication boards, computers, hearing aids, auditory trainers) to facilitate communication with children who have speech production difficulties.
	use materials and words in children's' home language (in music, games, stories, etc.)
10.2 Early Literacy: Children engage in early reading experiences.	
1.	shows an interest and enjoyment in listening to books and attempts to read familiar books.
2.	displays book handling knowledge (turning the book right side up, using left to right sweep, turning one page at a time, recognizing familiar books by cover).
3.	shows an awareness of environmental print.
4.	identifies some alphabet letters by their shapes, especially those in his/her own name.
5.	recognizes the printed form of his/her name in a variety of contexts.
6.	demonstrates comprehension of a book.
7.	demonstrates awareness that language is made up of words, parts of words, and sounds in words.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	read a variety of materials (books, children's magazines, big books,

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	variety of types of literature, signs, recipes) aloud many times during the day to <i>each</i> child individually and in small groups and large groups.
	ensure that <i>each</i> child has access to a variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction, throughout the day.
	display and draw attention to print sources in the environment (signs—exit, women, men, on, off).
	have <i>each</i> child's name and an alphabet chart displayed; draw attention to letters (children's names on their storage cubbies, name charts).
	give <i>each</i> child opportunities to talk about life experiences and opportunities to retell stories after listening to books (using storybook props).
	provide many opportunities for <i>each</i> child to hear, say, and sing rhymes in finger-plays, books, and songs.
	provide opportunities for <i>each</i> child to identify initial sounds in words (such as finding all the objects on a tray that start with the \b\ sound).
	incorporates sounds and words from <i>each</i> child's home language indaily conversations and activities.
10.3 Early Writing: Children engage in early writing experiences.	
1.	attempts to communicate with others using scribbles, shapes, pictures, and/or letters to write.
2.	experiments with a variety of writing tools (pencils, crayons, brushes, chalk) and materials.
3.	tells others about intended meaning of drawings and writing.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide a variety of writing materials and encourage <i>each</i> child to participate in a variety of writing experiences (on an easel, chalkboard, sidewalk, paper on floor).
	incorporate writing materials into play settings (in dramatic play areas).
	model using writing for communication (writing thank-you notes following field trips).
	guide <i>each</i> child to hold and use writing tools, such as pencils, correctly.
	encourage <i>each</i> child to copy (but not trace) his/her name.
	provide adaptive writing tools and materials to aid <i>each</i> child with special needs.

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Area 11 Mathematics and Science	
11.1 Comparison and Number: Children understand amount, including use of numbers and counting.	
1.	shows recognition and naming of numerals (1, 2, 3).
2.	counts objects, matching numbers one-to-one with objects.
3.	uses language such as <i>more</i> or <i>less</i> to compare quantities.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	use counting finger-plays, books, and number rhymes repeatedly.
	post numerals (1, 2, 3) and icons (simple pictures) in the room to indicate group size limits for each learning center.
	use daily routine activities (such as setting the table) to incorporate meaningful experiences involving counting and one-to-one correspondence.
	make available daily puzzles and manipulative materials that link numerals to pictures to represent quantity.
	provide cooking activities with recipes that link numerals to pictured objects.
11.2 Patterns: Children understand patterns.	
1.	shows skills in recognizing and creating some patterns. 2. predicts what comes next in a pattern.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide a variety of materials related to patterns, such as puzzles, stringing beads.
	use, and encourage <i>each</i> child to use, series words (such as first, second, third, last) to describe <i>each</i> child's experiences.
	encourage <i>each</i> child to make predictions in patterns, measurement, and data analysis.
11.3 Shapes and Spatial Relationships: Children understand shapes and spatial relationships.	
1.	demonstrates understanding of spatial words such as up, down, over, under, top, bottom, inside, outside, in front, and behind.
2.	shows more recognition for some simple shapes.
3.	notices similarities and differences among shapes.
4.	notices how shapes fit together to form other shapes.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide a variety of books, materials, and experiences related to shapes and spatial reasoning, such as blocks, shape templates.
	use shape and spatial words to describe the environment.
11.4 Scientific Reasoning: Children observe, describe, and predict the world around them.	
1.	Shows curiosity about living and non-living things.
2.	Notices, describes and predicts changes in the environment.
3.	Shows respect for living things.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide a variety of natural experiences that encourage <i>each</i> child to explore, describe, and classify.
	encourage <i>each</i> child to observe patterns and to make predictions.
	encourage <i>each</i> child to compare their predictions with what they see.
11.5 Scientific Problem Solving: Children apply and adapt strategies to solve problems.	

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1.	uses his/her senses and variety of strategies to solve problems.
2.	invents strategies to figure out answers to problems.
3.	when unsuccessful at solving problems, experiments and adapts strategies.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	model a variety of problem solving strategies.
	provide time and situations that allow <i>each</i> child to problem solve.
	encourage <i>each</i> child to use problem solving strategies.
	use adaptive devices as needed to help <i>each</i> child participate.
11.6 Measurement: Children understand comparisons and measurement.	
1.	sorts, classifies, and puts objects in series, using a variety of properties.
2.	makes comparisons among several objects based on one or more attributes (length, size, weight) and using words such as shorter, taller, bigger, smaller, heavier, lighter.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	Model the use of language involving comparisons, such as more, less and same.
	Provide objects and materials for each child to compare and measure.
	Display information in graphical form so that each child can compare activities and experiences.
Area 12 Creative Arts	
12.1 Art: Children explore art through a variety of media.	
	1. uses a variety of two- and three-dimensional media (drawing materials, paint, clay, wood, markers) to create original works, form, and meaning.
	2. expresses ideas about own artwork and artwork of others, relating artwork to what is happening in the environment, life, classroom, etc.
Caregiving Supports With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide a variety of art materials in the environment, some of which are available and accessible to <i>each</i> child each day for long periods of self-selection time.
	encourage <i>each</i> child to express their own ideas in their artwork without providing models, directions, or pre-made components.
	display a variety of artwork, primarily <i>each</i> child's work, at their eye level.
	provide a supportive atmosphere where <i>each</i> child is encouraged to share their art experiences.
12.2 Music, Rhythm, and Movement: Children participate in a variety of music and movement experiences.	
1.	participates in a variety of musical and rhythmic experiences, including singing, listening, and finger-plays.
2.	notices differences in pitch, tempo, dynamics, and timbre.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide a variety of music materials, some of which are available and accessible to <i>each</i> child each day for long periods of self-selection time.
	model and encourage <i>each</i> child to express themselves through music-related activities.
	incorporate various forms of music and movement into circle or group time.
	adapt activities and materials as needed to involve <i>each</i> child with disabilities in music and movement activities.
12.3 Dramatic Play: Children engage in dramatic play experiences.	

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1.	shows creativity and imagination to use materials and assume different roles in dramatic play situations.
2.	interacts with peers in dramatic play activities that become more extended and complex.
Caregiving With preschoolers, caregivers:	
	provide an environment with sufficient space, time, props, and materials for <i>each</i> child to interact with peers, trying on and carrying out different roles, both familiar and unfamiliar.
	encourage <i>each</i> child, coaching as needed, to interact with peers in dramatic play activities.