Texas Education Agency

2022 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines

PK4 Streamlined Version

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Introduction

The *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* have been developed to provide guidance for planning quality learning experiences for all children three to five years of age. They are based on current knowledge of theory and scientific research about how children develop and learn. The guidelines reflect the growing consensus among early childhood professional organizations that a greater emphasis should be placed on young children's conceptual learning, acquisition of basic skills, and participation in meaningful, relationship-based learning experiences.

The *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* include multiple domains of learning, each with a broad range of skill development. The intent of this document is to help prekindergarten programs identify the essential foundational learning skills that will help children from all backgrounds, experiences, and levels of development to be successful.

The *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* were designed to help educators identify the types of knowledge and skills that are typical of prekindergarten aged children. It is important to note that there is considerable variability in development among children that is influenced by their individual and unique experiences. Responsive to this variability, the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* are not intended as a rationale to either accelerate or postpone instruction; instead, they define the outcomes as to which children are able to reach or move towards. In addition, they are intended to help educators better understand how they can provide effective instructional practices and learning experiences that support these important early learning outcomes. *The Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* also directly align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), to ensure that all children in Texas receive equitable learning experiences and are ready for kindergarten.

The *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* are intended for use by all those who support young children's learning including school districts, Head Start programs, childcare programs, and, most importantly, children's families. They are designed as a resource to help educators and administrators make informed decisions that pertain to curriculum and instruction. Aligning intentional instructional practices and opportunities for play, exploration, discovery, and problem-solving with the learning outcomes described in the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* will promote successful learning for all children.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles that align to the purpose of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* include the following:

1. Each child is unique and can succeed at their optimal level with appropriate support. Children can be successful learners and achieve the outcomes outlined in these guidelines.
2. Children are capable and competent, regardless of their levels of development. Teaching should be responsive to the individualized needs of each child.
3. All young children learn and thrive in the context of secure, caring, responsive, and stimulating relationships as they explore the world around them.

4. Children learn best when their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs are met and nourished within their environment.
5. Families are children's primary caregivers, teachers, and advocates. All families must be respected and encouraged in their efforts to support their child's learning.
6. Young children flourish when their experiences integrate multiple areas of development and are built on prior knowledge.
7. Effective teaching practices are intentional and build on children's intrinsic strengths and interests by providing developmentally appropriate instruction that incorporates many opportunities for interactive experiences, exploration, meaningful play, and problem-solving.
8. Every child has diverse strengths rooted in their family's culture, background, language, traditions, and beliefs. Responsive and respectful learning environments welcome children from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Effective teaching practices include learning opportunities that build on the unique experiential backgrounds and prior knowledge of each child.
9. Children demonstrate growth in many ways. The systematic monitoring of children's progress plays a vital role in revealing a child's prior knowledge, concept development, and understanding of the world around them.
10. Teaching and learning are dynamic, integrated, and include reciprocal processes. Children build awareness and knowledge through play, exploration, inquiry, and application. Skill development occurs when children are provided with multiple opportunities for practice, reflection, and intentional feedback.

Inclusive Practices

Multilingual Learners

The *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* employ the term **multilingual learner** to capture the spectrum of language learners in Texas schools. This term is inclusive of students from two or more language backgrounds as well as native English speakers participating in a two-way dual language immersion program. Whether students qualify as English learners or not, the multilingual aspect of their background includes culture and traditions that may be different than that of school culture in the United States. The uniqueness of these students should be leveraged as an asset to the culture of the classroom.

The Texas Administrative Code §89.1210 describes the program content and design of English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual programs. English learners may be enrolled in an ESL program, a transitional bilingual education program, or a dual language immersion program model.

In ESL programs, English learners receive linguistically and culturally responsive teaching from an ESL certified teacher to attain full proficiency in English and to participate equitably in school.

In Transitional Bilingual Education programs (TBE), English learners receive instruction in literacy and academic content in their primary language as well as English from teachers certified in bilingual

education. As each child acquires English, the amount of instruction provided in the primary language decreases until full proficiency in English is attained. Early Exit and Late Exit models are both provided throughout the duration of elementary grades with differences in the rate of transition to English proficiency.

In dual language immersion programs (DLI), participants receive instruction in literacy and academic content in the program's partner language (i.e., Spanish, Vietnamese) as well as English from appropriately certified teachers. At least half of the instruction is delivered in the partner language for the duration of the program. One-way models serve English learners only but include participation of former English learners who are continuing after reclassification. Two-way models include English learners as well as participation of English proficient students learning the partner language.

Regardless of program participation, children's current strengths, skills and experiences are assets that serve as the foundation upon which new knowledge is built. During the prekindergarten year(s), multilingual learners can receive the message that they are valuable just as they are, full of ideas, preferences, and potential. The prekindergarten classroom is where this seed will be planted as teachers address the unique strengths of both linguistic and cognitive needs of these children.

Children with Disabilities

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Children with disabilities who receive special education services must be provided with opportunities to learn and make progress in the general education curriculum available to all children, and to the greatest extent possible, alongside their non-disabled peers to allow all children to reach their full potential. The Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee determines the LRE for children who receive special education and related services. The LRE is based on the child's individualized education program (IEP). Once the ARD committee has identified the child's strengths and needs, they consider a continuum of services and supports to ensure the child with a disability has equal access to meaningful participation in the general education curriculum through the development of the IEP.

Three areas have been identified as critical for ensuring a child can meaningfully participate in school and society. For children with disabilities to be fully included in school and to ultimately achieve a high-quality of life, they need opportunities to:

- Develop positive social-emotional skills, including enjoying successful social relationships with peers and adults, expressing emotions, managing self-concepts and self-control, learning about empathy and the perspective of others, and following rules and expectations.
- Acquire and use knowledge and skills, including early language/communication, thinking and problem-solving, imitation, use of symbols, and early literacy.
- Use appropriate behaviors to meet their own needs, including adaptive or self-help skills such as toileting, feeding oneself, and practicing safety.

(Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA)

For children with special needs, expectations for meeting the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* student outcomes requires thoughtful consideration by a team, which includes the child's family and other

identified professionals. For instance, some children can be expected to work toward the same level outcomes as their typically developing peers. Other children may be able to meet these outcomes with adaptations in materials or instructional strategies. Some children may require modified goals. Regardless, it is important not to make assumptions about a child's ability to meet the outcomes in each domain without conducting a careful appraisal of the individual child's capabilities and needs. If the child has an existing IEP, it should be carefully reviewed to determine which student outcomes from the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* are possible for the child to work toward without modifications or accommodations and which are attainable with some accommodations, and/or modifications. Decisions resulting from this process should be documented in writing per the IEP, so that all members of the ARD team are clear about how the child's needs will be met, what types of accommodations and modifications will be made in different domains, and how the child's educational goals will align with the student outcomes described in *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines*.

Note: Removal from the general education classroom should occur only if the use of supplementary aids and services do not permit the child to achieve success. Research indicates that early childhood inclusion is beneficial to children with and without disabilities in reaching their full potential and result in broad societal benefits, including higher productivity in adulthood and fewer resources spent on interventions and public assistance later in life (Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs, U.S Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education, September 14, 2015).

Organization of the Prekindergarten Guidelines

The *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* are organized into the following categories: **Domains, Skills, Outcomes and Child Behaviors.**

Domains: The domains are broad areas of early learning and development from birth to 5 years that are essential for school and long-term success. The *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* are organized into ten domains:

I. Social and Emotional Development
II. Emergent Literacy: Language and Communication
III. Emergent Literacy: Reading
IV. Emergent Literacy: Writing
V. Mathematics
VI. Science
VII. Social Studies
VIII. Fine Arts
IX. Physical Development
X. Technology

Skills: The skills are specific components of development within the domain. Although the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* are organized into specific domains of learning, and each domain is comprised of skills, the intent is not to suggest that children's skills develop separately or apart from each other. Nor is it the intent that isolated skill instruction be used as an appropriate way to support learning during the prekindergarten years. The *Texas Prekindergarten guidelines* are based on the premise that learning occurs on a continuum and that developmental domains are highly interrelated.

Introduction

Children succeed to their highest potential in nurturing environments that support their learning across all domains.

Outcomes: The outcomes are statements of end-of-year expectations of learning and development for children 48 months (PK3) and 60 months (PK4) of age. They describe specific, observable skills, behaviors, and concepts that children should know and be able to do at the end of prekindergarten. Given children's individual differences, some children may demonstrate these indicators sooner, and some may demonstrate them later. The indicators listed for each age are not exhaustive.

Outcomes are numbered in the following manner:

- Student age is identified by "PK3" (up to 48 months) or "PK4" (up to 60 months).
- Learning domains are indicated with Roman numerals.
- Within each domain, separate skills are listed with an alphabetic indicator.
- Under each skill, the outcomes are then numbered sequentially.

PK4 Outcome

- **PK4.I.A.1 Child is aware of where own body is in space and respects personal boundaries.**
- **PK4.I.A.2 Child shows self-awareness of physical attributes, personal preferences, and own abilities.**
- **PK4.I.A.3 Child shows reasonable opinion of his own abilities and limitations.**
- **PK4.I.A.4 Child shows initiative in trying new activities and demonstrates perseverance when attempting to overcome obstacles or challenges.**

The child outcomes are:

- **COMPREHENSIVE**–Cover the central domains of early learning and skills children need to succeed in school and provide sufficient scope and depth in each area.
- **INCLUSIVE**–Relevant for children with varying ability levels and diverse linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

Six domains (*Social and Emotional Development, Emergent Literacy: Language and Communication, Emergent Literacy: Reading, Emergent Literacy: Writing, Mathematics, and Physical Development*) include outcomes for both PK3 and PK4. Four domains *(Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts,* and *Technology*) do *not* include PK3 student outcomes as there is not sufficient research to clearly define typical behaviors of three-year-old children related to these skills. This does not mean that children of this age group should not participate in the experiences related to the learning outcomes, but rather, the focus should be on engaging three-year-olds in the beginning stages of exploration of these concepts. This exposure will support children to develop a solid foundation of understanding, which will allow them to build and deepen their knowledge as they continue to learn and grow.

Child Behaviors: The child behaviors are examples that explain the competency of the outcome. The behaviors are not exhaustive of what a child may be able to demonstrate, rather they are behaviors that a child may demonstrate towards competency of the outcome.

Ultimately, the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* are *not* intended to be used as a curriculum, assessment tool or checklist. They are *not* meant to be used in isolation, or to stifle the creativity of

caregivers and educators. Rather, they are meant to serve as a resource for families, educators, and administrators to provide developmentally appropriate guidance and practices around young children's development and learning in the prekindergarten environment.

I. Social and Emotional Development Domain

While a prekindergarten education should include activities that strengthen cognitive skills, it must also provide for the development of the social and emotional competencies required for school readiness and success in life. The development of these personal and social skills enables children to build a sense of who they are and what they can do. Supportive, positive relationships between teachers and children are essential to implementing effective practices that support a child's social and emotional development. Children must establish positive relationships with adults and peers to participate effectively in the classroom community, assert independence in appropriate ways, and accomplish tasks that are meaningful to them without infringing on the rights of others. Children who can follow directions, communicate their wants, and needs effectively, and get along with other children are better prepared for kindergarten and beyond.

Early experiences influence brain development by establishing the neural connections that provide the foundation for language, reasoning, problem solving, social skills, behavior, and emotional health. Daily experiences such as transitioning from home to school, sharing a space or materials, resolving conflicts, and demonstrating empathy contribute to a child's social and emotional development. However, children benefit from direct instruction and repeated opportunities to practice these skills.

The Social and Emotional Development Domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* is divided into the following skills: self-concept, self-regulation, relationships with others, and social awareness.

A. Self-Concept

Central to understanding emotional development is the idea of self-concept: an ever-increasing level of conscious awareness of one's feelings, thoughts, abilities, likes, and dislikes, as well as awareness of one's body in space. Prekindergarten children's emerging ability to perceive these aspects of themselves at a conscious level distinguishes them from toddlers, who lack such awareness. Children begin to generate multiple answers to the question "Who am I?" which is an essential aspect of becoming competent in related areas, such as self-control and social/friendship skills. A child's identity includes cultural and linguistic factors, and the prekindergarten environment is one of the first public opportunities for children to recognize the uniqueness of their own home culture and language as well as accept and value cultures and languages different from their own. Early childhood educators must model the mindset of diversity as an asset in the classroom, school, and community.

A. Self-Concept

- **PK4.I.A.1 Child is aware of where own body is in space and respects personal boundaries.**
- **PK4.I.A.2 Child shows self-awareness of physical attributes, personal preferences, and own abilities.**
- **PK4.I.A.3 Child shows reasonable opinion of his own abilities and limitations.**
- **PK4.I.A.4 Child shows initiative in trying new activities and demonstrates perseverance when attempting to overcome obstacles or challenges.**

B. Self-Regulation

Prekindergarten children feel safer and function more successfully in the classroom when rules and routines are consistently implemented. A well-organized classroom with well-prepared activities helps children expand their attention span and build self-control and personal responsibility. As they encounter and overcome new and various social obstacles when interacting with peers, guidance from teachers will enable them to learn acceptable ways of dealing with social and emotional stress and/or excitement.

Self-regulation skills include three subskills: behavior control, emotional control, and control of attention. Subskills only appear in this section of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and are represented by a lowercase letter at the end of the citation.

B. Self-Regulation

1. Behavior Control:

- **PK4.I.B.1.a Child follows classroom rules and routines with occasional reminders from adults.**
- **PK4.I.B.1.b Child takes care of and manages classroom materials.**
- **PK4.I.B.1.c Child regulates own behavior with occasional reminders or assistance from adults.**

2. Emotional Control:

- **PK4.I.B.2.a Child begins to understand the connection between emotions and behaviors.**
- **PK4.I.B.2.b Child uses verbal and nonverbal communication to communicate basic emotions and feelings.**
- **PK4.I.B.2.c Child is able to manage intensity of emotions more consistently, although adult guidance is sometimes necessary.**

3. Control of Attention:

- **PK4.I.B.3.a Child sustains attention to personally chosen or routine (teacher-directed) tasks until completed.**
- **PK4.I.B.3.b Child remains focused on engaging, teacher-led group activities for up to 20 minutes.**

C. Relationships with Others

As prekindergarten children enter school, they start forming relationships with the adults and other children in their school environment. Effective teachers offer support and assist children as they develop meaningful and rewarding relationships. During this developmental period, children often begin to

develop special friendships with peers that increase their feelings of comfort, joy, and confidence in their social world. These experiences also help build a sense of empathy and caring for others.

C. Relationships with Others

- **PK4.I.C.1 Child uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to build relationships with adults and peers.**
- **PK4.I.C.2 Child assumes various roles and responsibilities as part of the classroom community.**
- **PK4.I.C.3 Child shows competence in initiating social interactions.**
- **PK4.I.C.4 Child increasingly interacts with peers during cooperative play scenarios that share a common plan and goal.**
- **PK4.I.C.5 Child initiates problem-solving strategies when experiencing conflicts with others and seeks adult support when necessary.**
- **PK4.I.C.6 Child demonstrates empathy and caring for others.**
- **PK4.I.C.7 Child interacts with peers and has preferred friends.**

D. Social Awareness

Prekindergarten children need adult support and guidance in learning how to socially interact with others. It can be a challenge for a young child to sense other people's emotions or to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling. Teachers can reinforce children's social awareness skills by facilitating peer-to-peer and adult-to-child interactions and asking thought-provoking questions with the support of rich, socially relevant educational materials.

D. Social Awareness

- **PK4.I.D.1 Child demonstrates an understanding that others have perspectives and feelings that are similar and/or different from her own.**

II. Emergent Literacy: Language and Communication Domain

During the prekindergarten years, children's expanding language skills have a tremendous impact upon their ability to read and write as they progress successfully through school. Explaining the differences in words and sounds, talking to children about objects and their names (labeling), using expanded vocabulary, and modeling language with grammatical complexity are all ways in which teachers can help to build children's oral language development. Additionally, the pragmatics of oral language in an academic setting, such as conversational skills and the development of storytelling and oral explanations, are an important part of all children's oral language development. Given adequate opportunities to interact with responsive adults in language-rich classrooms, young children's language abilities will expand rapidly during these years. The language and communication domain of learning includes not only receptive (listening) and expressive (speaking) skills, but also vocabulary and sentence structure skills. Mastery of these skills will build young children's ability to understand what they hear and communicate their own ideas and experiences effectively.

Many prekindergarten students in Texas are multilingual learners. A multilingual learner is a student who is exposed to more than one language. A multilingual learner who is also identified as an emergent bilingual student is not as proficient in spoken English as their native English-speaking peers. An identified emergent bilingual student will be offered the opportunity to participate in a state approved bilingual education or English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

Developing language and communication skills across two languages is an important part of a child's unique identity regardless of program placement or participation. It will be important for prekindergarten teachers to intentionally make connections between home and school, honor children's native language, and send the message that knowledge of a language other than English is an inherently valuable asset. Prekindergarten educators help all children develop academic vocabulary and the language skills required for basic social communication, but they should also provide targeted language opportunities for multilingual learners. The guidelines in this domain outline end-of-year language outcomes for 3- and 4-year-old children in their language of instruction.

The Language and Communication Domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* is divided into the following skills: listening comprehension, speaking (conversation), articulation, vocabulary, and sentence structure.

A. Listening Comprehension

From birth, children begin learning by listening to the world around them. As their exposure to language(s) increases, so does their understanding. Multilingual learners understand that they are hearing two language systems from a very early age. Prekindergarten-age children are able to comprehend (with increasing accuracy) what they hear in conversations and in stories read aloud. Children demonstrate understanding through their questions, comments, and actions.

A. Listening Comprehension

- **PK4.II.A.1 Child shows understanding by responding appropriately to what has been communicated by adults and peers.**
- **PK4.II.A.2 Child shows understanding by following three-step verbal directions.**

B. Speaking (Conversation)

Prekindergarten children become increasingly able to describe their wants and needs, carry on conversations with others, and share information with both peers and adults. The ability to engage others in conversations involves asking questions, listening, and responding, as well as using verbal and nonverbal communication. Additionally, multilingual learners become increasingly aware of language context. For example, a staff member with knowledge of Spanish and English learns that he can have a conversation in Spanish with a bilingual librarian but will use English to express a preference to the non-bilingual art teacher.

Children who are multilingual learners may require more time to respond because they are learning and processing two languages at once. Multilingual learners may also respond in one language and use the other language to fill in a word or phrase within a sentence. Both are normal parts of bilingual development. Multilingual learners should be encouraged and expected to demonstrate their speaking/communication skills in their home language as well as in English.

B. Speaking (Conversation)

- **PK4.II.B.1 Child uses language for multiple purposes.**
- **PK4.II.B.2 Child engages in conversations in appropriate ways, demonstrating knowledge of verbal and nonverbal conversational rules.**
- **PK4.II.B.3 Child provides appropriate information in various settings.**
- **PK4.II.B.4 Child matches language to social contexts.**

C. Articulation

Prekindergarten children must learn to vocalize, pronounce, and discriminate sounds and words within languages. Learning to accurately perceive the difference between similar-sounding words will support children's development of early literacy skills and help set them up for future reading and writing success. Young children will continue to acquire the ability to recognize new sounds but may mispronounce some words in their own speech. Difficulty with producing some speech sounds (e.g., /l/, /r/, or /th/) is common for prekindergarten children but may improve with practice and age. Similarly, multilingual learners may need repeated, meaningful opportunities to more closely approximate the sounds of the language with which they are less familiar.

C. Articulation

- **PK4.II.C.1 Child's speech is understood by both familiar and unfamiliar adults and peers.**

- **PK4.II.C.2 Child demonstrates growing understanding of the intonation of language.**

D. Vocabulary

Vocabulary development is one of the most important predictors of later reading achievement. Prekindergarten children experience rapid growth in their understanding of words and word meanings when they are learning in a language-rich environment. Vocabulary acquisition is largely developed by exposing children to new words through stories and engaging them in meaningful and intentional interactions with adults who incorporate new language into daily conversations. Vocabulary development occurs when educators create a space in which there are many opportunities to talk about personal experiences, read familiar stories, sing familiar songs, and play word games on a regular basis. Vocabulary knowledge reflects children's previous experiences and is increasingly refined as they learn new words and concepts through their growing knowledge of the world around them.

Multilingual learners in a bilingual education program will develop vocabulary in both the program language and English via learning opportunities in each language as well as direct instruction in cross-linguistic connections. Both languages are honored and valued, and there is a diminished linguistic barrier between home and school. Educators of multilingual learners outside of bilingual programs should intentionally leverage families' linguistic resources as a foundation for second language learning. Consider Katie, a multilingual learner who speaks mostly Vietnamese at home. During a study of fairy tales, Katie's teacher invites Katie's mom to read a portion of a Vietnamese version of the Cinderella tale in Vietnamese. Katie's language and culture is validated, and Katie's peers get to practice making meaning based on prior knowledge, pictures, etc. The class learns a few key vocabulary words from the story in Vietnamese.

D. Vocabulary

- **PK4.II.D.1 Child understands (receptive) and uses (expressive) a wide variety of words to label, describe and make connections among objects, people, places, actions, and events.**
- **PK4.II.D.2 Child understands (receptive) and uses (expressive) the instructional language of the classroom.**
- **PK4.II.D.3 Child consistently understands (receptive) and uses (expressive) new vocabulary acquired through books, conversations, and play.**

E. Sentences and Structure

Prekindergarten children become increasingly adept at using language to express their needs and interests, share ideas, and participate in conversations with their peers. The grammatical complexity of a spoken sentence expands when they have plenty of opportunities for rich conversations with other children and adults. Children's overgeneralization of language rules, which results in the use of invented words (e.g., saying "foots" instead of "feet"), is a normal part of language acquisition. Multilingual learners may also overgeneralize across languages (e.g., saying "the dog big" instead of "the big dog" is an example of applying the Spanish language structure "el

perro grande" in an English sentence). This flexibility of usage is not a sign of confusion but evidence of a developing bilingual brain. Another sign of developing bilingualism is the use of words from two languages in one sentence. For example, a sequential bilingual student learning Spanish in a dual language immersion program may say at the class party "Quiero el cookie." This child is beginning to use Spanish to communicate thoughts and fills in the gap in vocabulary knowledge with a known English word in order to make preferences known.

E. Sentences and Structure

- **PK4.II.E.1 Child typically uses complete sentences of four or more words with age-appropriate grammatical complexity, usually in standard word order.**
- **PK4.II.E.2 Child correctly uses regular and irregular plurals, regular past tense, personal and possessive pronouns, and subject-verb agreement.**
- **PK4.II.E.3 Child uses sentences that combine multiple phrases or ideas.**
- **PK4.II.E.4 Child uses sentences that provide many details, remains on topic, and clearly communicates intended meaning.**

III. Emergent Literacy: Reading Domain

Learning to read and write are among the most important milestones and achievements in a young child's life. Early language and literacy instruction is critical because research has proven that emergent literacy skills serve as predictors for children's school readiness, and their later capacity to learn academic knowledge. Children acquire emergent literacy skills when they are actively engaged in meaningful and purposeful interactions and learning experiences. They develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print and gain the motivation to learn to read through daily exposure and engagement with various forms of verbal and written language, including nonfiction and fiction books, poems, songs, and nursery rhymes. Being read to and interacting with culturally relevant stories and print also helps children build their social and cultural identities.

Even before children start school, they can become aware of systematic patterns of sounds in spoken languages, manipulate sounds in words, recognize words or environmental print, learn the relationship between sounds and letters, and establish a basic understanding of storytelling and story structure. *The goal of emergent literacy instruction in prekindergarten is not to teach children to read connected text or even whole words, but rather to teach the building blocks that will, in later grades, provide children the foundation needed to become proficient readers and writers.* When given ample opportunities to interact with books and other forms of print, as well as some explicit and systematic instruction in emergent literacy skills, children can learn much more about the purposes and concepts of written language and about the letters that can be combined to form print and their corresponding sounds. Young children learn best through experiences that are meaningful and interesting to them and benefit from guided practice and repetition.

Multilingual learners learning to read only in English will use what they already know and understand about literacy in their primary language to make connections to emergent literacy experiences in English. Families of these learners must be empowered to understand that continuing to expose children to literacy experiences in their native language is not just important, but a critical form of literacy support that they are uniquely qualified to provide. Multilingual learners in bilingual programs who experience emergent literacy instruction in both English and a primary or partner language will be explicitly guided to make cross linguistic connections in school. This biliteracy perspective can be supported by families regardless of language proficiency levels in the home.

The Emergent Literacy: Reading Domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* is divided into the following skills: motivation to read, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, comprehension of text, and print concepts.

A. Motivation to Read

The prekindergarten years are an important time for increased motivation to read and write and can be especially important for children who have not previously and do not currently have access to books. All children benefit immensely from the targeted opportunity to develop an understanding of and appreciation of written languages through early school experiences. Prekindergarten children benefit from classroom activities and environments that build on their own family backgrounds and personal experiences to create positive connections to reading and writing. These early experiences will come to define their expectations and influence their motivation to work toward learning to read and write

independently. These same experiences also give families a first impression of how their home culture will be acknowledged and valued within the school system. It is therefore critical that students of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds see themselves and their families reflected in books, activities, and the classroom culture in general.

Children who are motivated to read and write find pleasure in looking at the covers and illustrations in books, listening and making personal connections to stories being read aloud, and mimicking reading behaviors through independent exploration of books and other forms of text. They also have an intrinsic motivation to ask about surrounding print and a desire to understand how writing works. Learning to read is a gradual, ongoing process; however, building young children's enthusiasm for books and written text at an early age can impact their willingness to overcome potential future challenges with reading and writing.

A. Motivation to Read

- **PK4.III.A.1 Child engages in story-related pre-reading activities.**
- **PK4.III.A.2 Child self-selects books and other written materials to engage in pre-reading behaviors.**
- **PK4.III.A.3 Child recognizes that all print carries meaning and serves as a means for communication.**

B. Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is an auditory skill that involves the understanding of the sounds of spoken language; it is the ability to detect and manipulate the sound structures at the sentence, word, syllable, and phoneme level. The overarching term refers to a continuum of skills that are universal across languages including sentence segmentation, alliteration, rhyming, syllabication, onset-rime (in English only), and phonemic awareness. Research has shown that phonological awareness begins to develop in children as young as 2.5 years old. *See Appendix.*

Children generally develop sensitivity to large units of sound, like words and syllables first, and eventually progress to sensitivity to individual *phonemes,* the smallest units of sound. For example, children are able to detect and manipulate *words* in phrases before they can detect or manipulate *syllables*, and they can detect and manipulate *syllables* before they can detect or manipulate *phonemes.* Within the continuum of skills are varying levels of task complexity. To ensure learning is adequately scaffolded, task difficulty is an important consideration for phonological awareness instruction. For example, teachers should begin with easier tasks such as identification and blending (e.g., synthesis) before introducing more challenging tasks such as segmenting and manipulation (e.g., adding, deleting, or substituting). *However, children do not need to master one skill or task before being introduced to or practicing another skill or task.*

Phonological awareness is highly predictive of success in beginning reading and writing, specifically related to automatic decoding and encoding abilities. Phonemic awareness, the most advanced skill on the continuum, facilitates children's understanding of the individual sounds in spoken words and helps them make the connection that sounds can be represented by letters in print. Therefore, phonological

awareness and alphabet knowledge should work together, with skill development in one area reinforcing development in the other. *Once children demonstrate mastery in both alphabet knowledge and phonemic awareness*, they can benefit from the inclusion of letters in phonemic awareness activities to begin building their understanding of the alphabetic principle.

Oral language proficiency in children's native language supports the development of phonological awareness in English for first- and second-language learners. English learners draw upon their phonological awareness skills in their first language when developing phonological awareness in a second language. English learners benefit from explicit and systematic phonemic awareness instruction, specifically segmentation, blending, and manipulation.

For multilingual learners who are exposed to phonological awareness instruction only in English, it is important to accept oral approximations of English sounds due to English proficiency level or articulation difficulties rather than correcting them in the moment. Non-standard pronunciation does not indicate a lack of understanding, and multilingual learners benefit more from targeted instruction rather than a quick correction. It is also important to connect activities with context, often by adding a picture. For example, if students are generating words that begin with /m/, a native English speaker has a repository of vocabulary from which to draw based on all his oracy experiences from birth. A child who is just beginning to speak English may not have a similarly sized mental word bank. Adding picture cards may remind children of words they know or will allow them to sort cards into /m/ and "other" when the teacher says the word.

B. Phonological Awareness

- **PK4.III.B.1 Child identifies the individual words in a spoken sentence.**
- **PK4.III.B.2 Child distinguishes differences between similar-sounding words.**
- **PK4.III.B.3 Child uses two familiar base words to form a compound word with pictorial or gestural supports.**
- **PK4.III.B.4 Child manipulates compound words with pictorial or gestural support.**
- **PK4.III.B.5 Child begins to blend and segment syllables in multisyllabic words.**
- **PK4.III.B.6 Child identifies rhyming words.**
- **PK4.III.B.7 Child identifies alliterative words with pictorial support.**
- **PK4.III.B.8 Child identifies a familiar one-syllable word that is segmented by onset and rime (in English only).**
- **PK4.III.B.9 Child blends and segments one-syllable words by phonemes with visual or gestural support.**

C. Alphabet Knowledge

Alphabet knowledge is an essential component of emergent literacy and is a strong predictor of success in learning to read and write. Alphabet knowledge includes letter recognition, letter naming, letter-

sound correspondence, and alphabetization. The distinction between each component of alphabet knowledge is identified below:

- **letter recognition** (a receptive skill): the ability to identify letters when asked to touch or point to a letter*
- **letter naming** (expressive skill): the ability to name letters with automaticity
- **letter-sound correspondence**: knowledge of the common sounds – the sounds that a letter represents most frequently
- **alphabetization**: the ability to say and place letters of the alphabet in sequential order

Letter formation is also an important aspect of alphabet knowledge because learning how to write each letter draws children's attention to the similarities and differences among letter shapes. To support young learners' knowledge of letters, adults need to provide children with easy and repeated meaningful interactions with written letters and words within the context of daily experiences and engage them in activities that are fun and interesting. These experiences must integrate all components of alphabet knowledge and should include many opportunities for children to see letters within the context of written text. Relying solely on rote practice can result in frustration and negative attitudes toward learning. Knowing how letters function in writing and how these letters connect to the sounds children hear in words is crucial to children's success in reading. Combined with phonological awareness, letter knowledge is the key to children understanding the alphabetic principle. Children will use this sound/letter connection to begin to identify printed words, such as their names and other familiar words.

*Important things to note:

- In English, students generally identify letter names before letter sounds. However, in Spanish, children tend to learn letter sounds before letter names. During Spanish alphabet knowledge activities, students may know letter sounds before letter names.
- Children generally recognize capital letters before lowercase letters because uppercase letters are more distinguishable than lowercase letters.

C. Alphabet Knowledge

- **PK4.III.C.1 Child recognizes and names at least 20 letters (upper- or lower-case letters).**
- **PK4.III.C.2 Child recognizes at least 20 distinct letter-sound correspondences.**
- **PK4.III.C.3 Child produces at least 20 distinct letter-sound correspondences.**

D. Comprehension of Text

Exposure to many kinds of books, both fiction and nonfiction, helps prekindergarten children build vocabulary, make connections to text, build schema, and background knowledge, and become familiar with how stories and other types of texts work. Children develop concepts of story structures, character actions, and knowledge about informational text structure which influences how they understand, interpret, and link what they already know to new information.

Multilingual learners must have read aloud experiences in their home language regardless of bilingual education or ESL program participation. These experiences are opportunities to learn everything mentioned above without a language barrier. Teachers of multilingual students must communicate the importance of home language read aloud experiences to families and support them as they provide these experiences at home. Multilingual learners who have experiences with stories read aloud in the home language can be prompted to make connections between texts in different languages.

D. Comprehension of Text

- **PK4.III.D. 1 Child retells or re-enacts a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end.**
- **PK4.III.D.2 Child uses information learned from books by describing, relating, categorizing, or comparing and contrasting.**
- **PK4.III.D.3 Child asks and responds to questions relevant to the text read aloud.**
- **PK4.III.D.4 Child makes inferences and predictions about a text.**

E. Concepts of Print

Through daily experiences with a variety of print materials, young children delight in discovering the connections between spoken and written words. Frequent exposure to print allows prekindergarten children to understand that print carries meaning and encourages them to explore what print is used for and how it works. Children will begin to recognize the distinction between letters, words, sentences, punctuation marks, and images. They will also deepen their understanding of how books work, including print directionality and appropriate handling of books, and learn how to hold and care for books. These print concepts and skills can be taught explicitly, modeled through shared reading experiences, and reinforced through print-rich learning environments. Print-rich learning environments incorporate labels, signs, letters, menus, magazines, digital media, and storybooks into every aspect of the day.

Multilingual learners should be exposed to print in both the home language and English. Targeted instruction should be provided for students whose home language differs from English to explicitly compare characteristics of the two print systems, rather than elevate print concepts in one language over another. This will reinforce the transferability of many print concepts across both languages and help children understand key distinctions.

E. Concepts of Print

- **PK4.III.E.1 Child can distinguish between elements of print including letters, words, and pictures.**
- **PK4.III.E.2 Child holds books right side up and demonstrates understanding of print directionality (e.g., knows where a book starts and ends, turns pages, points to words left to right, top to bottom, with correct sweeping).**
- **PK4.III.E.3 Child can identify some conventional features of print that communicate meaning including end punctuation and case.**

IV. Emergent Literacy: Writing Domain

Prekindergarten children begin to notice, imitate, and explore the many ways adults use writing to communicate. Early writing experiences may include asking adults to write their names, signs, and letters for them and progresses to independently imitating adults, using marks to represent their own thoughts and ideas. Through these early writing experiences, young children develop initial understandings about the forms, features, and functions of written language. Over time, children's writing attempts more closely approximate conventional writing. In prekindergarten classrooms, teachers serve as models and guides, writing for different purposes for and with children.

Fine motor skills may impact children's ability to write legibly; however, this should not limit their opportunities to write for meaning. The child's level of fine motor development should determine the tools and the size of the surfaces that are provided for writing experiences. Fine motor skills can be developed alongside writing and through writing as children progress through the developmental stages.

The Emergent Literacy: Writing Domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* is divided into the following skills: motivation to write, writing as a process, and conventions of writing. *See Appendix.*

A. Motivation to Write

As young children watch adults write for many purposes, they develop the understanding that print conveys meaning and become motivated to write by engaging in drawing or scribbling to communicate. They will sketch lines and scribble "notes" in an attempt to imitate adults' writing behaviors and begin to make connections between print and spoken words. Eventually their writing abilities will progress, and they may begin to use letters or letter strings to communicate. It is important to remember that all efforts to convey meaning in the form of scribbles, letter-like forms, or strings of letters should be celebrated. Teachers play an important role in the development of prekindergarten children's emergent writing by encouraging them to communicate their thoughts and record their ideas.

A. Motivation to Write

- **PK4.IV.A.1 Child intentionally uses marks, letters, or symbols to record language and verbally shares meaning.**
- **PK4.IV.A.2 Child independently draws and writes for many purposes to communicate ideas, using a variety of writing tools.**

B. Writing as a Process

As young children begin to understand that marks convey meaning (what they think, they can say; and what they say, they can read and write), it is important to model that writing is not simply about a product. Writing is a thought process that moves from thinking of an idea to a well-developed idea or piece of writing (one the young author is proud to share). Teachers who interact with children to compose a piece of writing over a series of days, using modeled, shared, and/or interactive writing

expose children to the process of prewriting/brainstorming, writing/drafting, revising (what the writing sounds like), editing (what the writing looks like), and publishing/sharing in a way that is understandable. Children's ability to engage in each of the stages of the writing process develops over time. Guiding children through the process of taking a piece of writing from the "thought stage" to the "sharing stage" motivates children to write and helps them see and understand the power of using print to convey meaning. Multilingual students who begin writing in two languages will also learn which language is more appropriate to use based on context and audience.

B. Writing as a Process

- **PK4.IV.B.1 Child discusses and contributes ideas for drafts composed in whole/small group writing activities.**
- **PK4.IV.B.2 Child interacts and provides suggestions for revisions (add, take out, change order) and edits (conventions) in whole/small group writing activities.**
- **PK4.IV.B.3 Child shares and celebrates class-made and individual written products.**

C. Conventions in Writing

Foundational writing skills (also known as conventional writing skills) are important predictors of children's future reading and writing skills. Just as children learn to talk by talking, children learn concepts of print through interacting with print. To children, it may appear that writing is simply talk that has been written down. However, there are rules that apply to writing that do not apply to speaking. These specific rules that govern how to record thoughts in writing must be learned so children can become more proficient at conveying their thoughts and actions. Shared and/or interactive writing experiences can help children better understand these conventions of writing.

C. Conventions in Writing

- **PK4.IV.C.1 Child writes first name (or nickname) using legible letters in the proper sequence.**
- **PK4.IV.C.2 Child progresses from using scribbles and mock letters to forming letters and letter strings as a way to communicate.**
- **PK4.IV.C.3 Child begins to write familiar words using letter-sound correspondences, often using letters associated with beginning and/or ending sounds to write words.**
- **PK4.IV.C.4 Child uses appropriate directionality when writing (e.g., top to bottom, left to right).**
- **PK4.IV.C.5 Child begins to experiment with punctuation when writing.**

V. Mathematics Domain

Prekindergarten children's mathematical understandings are built on informal experiences acquired at a very early age. For example, young children know immediately if someone gets more cookies than they do simply by looking at the amount of cookies given. Teachers can build upon these informal foundational mathematical experiences by:

1.) planning a rich environment where math concepts can be practiced,
2.) offering sequential learning experiences that give children the opportunity to learn math concepts and skills, and
3.) taking advantage of the opportunities in the classroom where mathematical reasoning is meaningful for the child.

The classroom environment can effectively support mathematical competencies. Those competencies require the use of informal representation of math concepts. Abstract symbols, no matter how carefully designed or simplified, cannot involve the child's senses the way real materials can. Real materials can be maneuvered to demonstrate the math concept concretely and can be experienced visually by the child. Concrete representation such as counters, tally marks, fingers, or other objects help children create connection to math concepts. In addition, concrete objects allow multilingual learners the opportunity to demonstrate their mathematical knowledge even if they do not have the language to express it yet. As children gain comfort with concrete representation, they will begin to use pictorial representations which prepare them for abstract representations.

- **Concrete representation**: the child counts to five to join a set of two objects and a set of three objects.
- **Pictorial representation**: the child uses a sketch to represent the joining of a set of two objects and a set of three objects.
- **Abstract representation**: the child uses math symbols to represent the joining of two sets (e.g., 2 + 3 = 5).

Although math concepts and skills can be learned through one's experiences, teacher-directed instruction that focuses on the progression of skills/concepts is an effective way to introduce and/or expand each child's mathematical sense. All math concepts should be taught from the progression of easy-to-understand to the more difficult. Teachers should be especially sensitive to what is known about each individual learner's developmental skills to meet their needs most effectively.

Early math instruction is not limited to a specific period or time of the day in the prekindergarten classroom. Instead, it is a natural part of any quality prekindergarten learning environment and can be incorporated throughout the day. For example, as children build with blocks, their teacher can introduce concepts such as higher, lower, in front of, beside, larger, and smaller. Children require repeated opportunities to hear, discuss, and practice math skills and concepts. These informal teachable moments should be used to reinforce and extend each student's foundational math vocabulary.

The Math domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* is divided into the following skills: number sense, joining and separating, geometry and spatial sense, measurement, and classification and patterns.

A. Number Sense

Number sense is a broad term that refers to a set of prerequisite skills that are needed to perform basic math operations; it is the deep understanding of how numbers work. Number sense includes counting, number recognition, understanding quantities, composing, and decomposing numbers, and making number comparisons. It is one of the strongest indicators of overall mathematics achievement.

Prekindergarten children learn number sense through play and continuous exploration in their natural environment. Prekindergarten teachers can organize experiences for children by intentionally setting up the environment to promote these experiences. The prekindergarten child has innately learned much about counting and numbers from the environment they live in. They sing songs and listen to rhymes that contain numbers and can hold up the right number of fingers to show how old they are. To strengthen their ability to count with an understanding of quantity, the classroom should be filled with opportunities to practice the counting sequence. Counting is foundational to later math concept development. To develop a strong understanding of quantity and, eventually, how to manipulate quantities (like adding and subtracting), children need an abundance of counting experiences. Prekindergarten children also begin to learn about quantities. They'll understand that quantities, whether tangible or theoretical, are countable. They'll also learn that numerals are used to represent the quantities. In addition to developing an initial understanding of a quantity of small groups of objects, children can compare small groups to tell if the groups are the same, if one is smaller (has less or fewer), or which group has more. An understanding of these comparisons provides an important foundation which helps the child fully grasp the relationship and correlation between one number and another at the concrete level.

A strong foundation in number sense teaches children to be flexible in their problem solving. Children learn that numbers are meaningful and despite manipulation, their outcomes are constant and sensible.

A. Number Sense

- **PK4.V.A.1 Child rote counts from 1 to 30.**
- **PK4.V.A.2 Child counts up to 10 objects with one-to-one correspondence.**
- **PK4.V.A.3 Child counts up to 10 items and demonstrates cardinality by communicating that the last number indicates how many items are in the set.**
- **PK4.V.A.4 Child instantly recognizes the quantity of up to 6 objects without counting (subitizes).**
- **PK4.V.A.5 Child recognizes numerals 0-10.**
- **PK4.V.A.6 Child represents quantities up to 10.**
- **PK4.V.A.7 Child begins to understand that numbers 0-10 can be composed and decomposed in various ways to represent a quantity.**
- **PK4.V.A.8 Child compares sets of objects up to 10 using comparative language (e.g., greater/more than, less/fewer than, equal to/same number of).**

B. Joining and Separating

This math skill develops the concept of more, less, and the same. Children make comparisons — an understanding of these comparisons provides an important foundation which helps the child fully grasp the relationship and correlation between one number and another at the concrete level. It is especially important that young children be given numerous opportunities during the school day to manipulate objects to internalize this mathematical concept.

B. Joining and Separating

- **PK4.V.B.1 Child uses objects, pictorial models, and/or a verbal word problem to represent adding up to 5 objects.**
- **PK4.V.B.2 Child uses objects, pictorial models, and/or a verbal word problem to represent subtracting objects from a set of 5.**

C. Geometry and Spatial Sense

The basis of geometry and spatial sense skills begins with a child who explores, describes, and organizes objects according to their attributes and position/location. Through intentional classroom activities guided by teachers, children notice and describe small details in the materials they see in the environment, using terms that categorize their shape and describe their relative position in space. They then progress to investigating what happens when two shapes are put together, and they can apply their ideas about location to the object's direction and distance.

C. Geometry and Spatial Sense

- **PK4.V.C.1 Child names and describes common 2D shapes and names at least 1 solid 3D shape.**
- **PK4.V.C.2 Child creates shapes using materials and/or manipulatives.**
- **PK4.V.C.3 Child demonstrates use of position words.**
- **PK4.V.C.4 Child recognizes common shapes, regardless of orientation and size.**

D. Measurement

Young children can recognize differences in the measurable aspects of objects by saying things like "Her cup is less full than mine" or "My dog is heavier than your dog because he is bigger". Classroom activities that include explorations of weight, length, and capacity should involve children in hands-on learning using measurement tools. Teachers can introduce and reinforce terms associated with measurement such as longer, shorter, heavier, and lighter. Early measurement skills begin with comparisons before progressing to using a unit to measure.

D. Measurement

- **PK4.V.D.1 Child recognizes and compares heights or lengths of people or objects.**
- **PK4.V.D.2 Child recognizes and compares capacity based on how much space exists within an object.**
- **PK4.V.D.3 Child recognizes and compares weights of objects.**
- **PK4.V.D.4 Child uses language to describe concepts associated with the passing of time within a day.**

E. Classification and Patterns

Children can sort and classify objects according to one or more of their characteristics. With guidance, they learn how to arrange a pattern so that an attribute repeats itself over and over in a predictable manner. In their interaction with adults and peers, children use foundational math vocabulary, picking up words used for comparison, position, and sequencing. As children progress, they extend their comparing skills by creating visual representations of objects in the form of graphs.

E. Classification and Patterns

- **PK4.V.E.1 Child sorts objects that are the same and different into groups and uses language to describe how the groups are similar and different.**
- **PK4.V.E.2 Child collects data and organizes it in a graphic representation.**
- **PK4.V.E.3 Child recognizes, duplicates, extends, and creates patterns.**

VI. Science Domain

Young children often think that events simply happen without a specific cause or effect. To mature past this developmental stage, prekindergarten children need exposure to inquiry-based science, which gives them the opportunity to explore and to make sense of their world with adult guidance. This allows children to be curious about the environment in which they live, ask a lot of questions, make observations, describe what they experience using their five senses, and make tentative explanations that can be shared with others. Children's curiosity creates a natural desire to watch, explore, question, and understand the world around them.

Science concepts for prekindergarten children should be developmentally appropriate, interesting, and engaging, and able to be studied from multiple perspectives, in depth, and over time. When children have many and varied opportunities to explore a concept, they come to the final stage of scientific inquiry with a rich set of experiences to which they base their reflections and their developing theories. Although children can easily learn science as they observe and interact daily, it is the teacher's role to provide a learning environment that offers discovery and exploration through hands-on opportunities. These opportunities are particularly helpful for multilingual learners who may not be able to explain what they know or have learned in a second language. Children should be encouraged to be curious, ask questions, work collaboratively, plan investigations, record their observations, and discuss their findings. In addition, science provides a unique context for developing vocabulary, literacy, and math skills and concepts.

The Science domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* is divided into the following skills: physical science, life science, and earth and space science.

A. Physical Science

Prekindergarten children begin to explore properties of materials, positions, and motion of objects through investigations. These explorations using the senses continue as children use attributes to classify and sort objects, make observations and predictions, problem solve, question, and compare. Children learn about sources of energy by investigating and discussing light, heat, electricity, and magnetism. This builds an early understanding of life science, physical science, earth science and chemistry. Processes such as observing and recording data, posing questions, predicting, investigating, and drawing conclusions can provide experiences to support literacy, math, and the sciences.

A. Physical Science

- **PK4.VI.A.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses characteristics of common objects.**
- **PK4.VI.A.2 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses position and motion of objects.**
- **PK4.VI.A.3 Child uses simple scientific tools to learn about objects.**

- **PK4.VI.A.4 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses sources of energy including light, heat, and electricity.**

B. Life Science

Young children have a keen interest in studying living things, including the unique features of plants and animals, the environments in which they live, and what each living thing needs to thrive. Effective teachers provide opportunities for children to explore, observe, and investigate various organisms through hands-on experiences. Through these experiences, children are encouraged to use newly acquired vocabulary to describe and discuss their observations.

B. Life Science

- **PK4.VI.B.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the characteristics of organisms.**
- **PK4.VI.B.2 Child observes, describes, and discusses the life cycles of organisms.**
- **PK4.VI.B.3 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses the relationship of organisms in their environments.**

C. Earth and Space Science

Young children are innately curious about nature and the outdoors. When given the opportunity, they love to play with earth's materials – sand, dirt, water, and rocks. They are aware of weather conditions and wonder why the weather changes from day to day. They notice the clouds in the sky, and they observe that the sun moves across the sky each day and the moon changes shape. These concepts are all a part of earth and space science. Studying earth and space science expands young children's vocabulary and guides them to discover their place in the world by understanding how they can impact their environment with positive actions.

C. Earth and Space Science

- **PK4.VI.C.1 Child observes, investigates, describes, and discusses earth materials, and their properties and uses.**
- **PK4.VI.C.2 Child identifies, observes, describes, and discusses objects in the sky.**
- **PK4.VI.C.3 Child observes and describes what happens during changes in the earth and sky.**
- **PK4.VI.C.4 Child demonstrates an understanding of the importance of caring for our environment and our planet.**

VII. Social Studies Domain

It is important for prekindergarten children to learn about people, places, and events in society, beginning with themselves, their family, and their community. This helps develop children's self-identity and expand their understanding of the world outside their direct experience. The prekindergarten classroom may be one of the first places children experience a variety of cultures and languages and where diversity is elevated and honored. Skills such as beginning economics, geography awareness, problem-solving, decision-making, and working independently as well as in teams in a classroom prepare children to become active participants in their local and larger society.

Children come from a variety of cultural and linguistic settings; therefore, their background knowledge and understanding of the world can be unique and diverse. It is important to incorporate and honor children's home community and culture in the prekindergarten classroom. This will help children make connections to some of the concepts in the social studies domain.

The Social Studies domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* is divided into these skill areas: people past and present, economics, geography, and citizenship.

A. People Past and Present

Prekindergarten children are aware of time and begin to organize their lives around it. Young children learn to depend on events and routines that occur in a regular and predictable order. They begin to understand past events and how these events relate to each of their cultural backgrounds as well as present and future activities, demonstrating evidence of their growing understanding of time, change, culture, and continuity.

A. People Past and Present

- **PK4.VII.A.1 Child identifies similarities and differences between himself, classmates, and other people through specific characteristics and cultural influences.**
- **PK4.VII.A.2 Child identifies similarities and differences in characteristics of families.**
- **PK4.VII.A.3 Child connects his life to events, time, and routines.**

B. Economics

Prekindergarten children learn about the world through their community. They explore the roles and relationships of consumers and producers and become aware that people produce both goods and services. Children learn that their community benefits from its members working to contribute in many different ways.

B. Economics

- **PK4.VII.B.1 Child demonstrates an understanding that all people need food, clothing, and shelter.**
- **PK4.VII.B.2 Child demonstrates an understanding of what it means to be a consumer.**
- **PK4.VII.B.3 Child discusses the roles and responsibilities of family, school, and community helpers.**

C. Geography

Geography is taught as a part of social studies because it plays a crucial role in developing children's awareness of relationships between people and the environment. In prekindergarten, geography is often viewed with a focus on activities that build geographic skills, such as mapmaking or drawing/describing geographical land features. Prekindergarten children begin to think about geography using location and direction. Children use direction to locate their relative position in space and to locate their home and school in their community. However, the geography discipline consists of two main categories: physical geography and human geography. While human geography is the study of the relationship between humans and their natural environment, physical geography is the study of the natural environment. Prekindergarten children should also explore the outdoors and experience the natural world. It is recommended that lessons about physical geography be taught outdoors on the school lawn, playground, or in the neighborhood nearby, when possible.

C. Geography

- **PK4.VII.C.1 Child identifies and creates common geographic features.**
- **PK4.VII.C.2 Child explores geography tools and resources.**

D. Citizenship

Prekindergarten children begin to understand important symbols, routines, and celebrations that represent American culture. They begin to understand what it means to be a citizen of the United States of America and a resident of the state of Texas.

D. Citizenship

- **PK4.VII.D.1 Child identifies the United States and Texas flag.**
- **PK4.VII.D.2 Child recites the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Texas flag and observes a moment of silence.**
- **PK4.VII.D.3 The child engages in voting as a method for group decision-making.**

VIII. Fine Arts Domain

Art can help prekindergarten children learn to observe, organize, and interpret experiences through multiple mediums. They can benefit from many opportunities to creatively express themselves through music, movement and dance, dramatic play, and the visual arts (e.g., drawing, painting, building sculptures, etc.). The outcomes in this domain reflect children's need to experiment, manipulate and transform materials. Teachers can encourage this by providing opportunities for children to engage in the "process" of creating rather than focusing on the "product" that is created. Art should be integrated across all learning domains and can be used to support many aspects of development (e.g., self-expression, fine and gross motor skills, and vocabulary).

The Fine Arts Domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* is divided into the following skills: art, music, and dramatic expression.

A. Art

Prekindergarten children explore a wide variety of materials and make discoveries about color, shape, and texture through art experiences. They learn to express what they know and begin to recognize how others express themselves through art. They begin to gain control of fine-motor muscles and practice hand-eye coordination. The majority of art experiences should be model/sample free with the focus being on the process of creating.

A. Art

- **PK4.VIII.A.1 Child uses a variety of art materials for sensory experiences and exploration.**
- **PK4.VIII.A.2 Child uses art as a form of creative self-expression and representation.**
- **PK4.VIII.A.3 Child demonstrates interest in and shows appreciation for the creative work of others.**

B. Music

Prekindergarten children express themselves through singing and movement and by playing simple instruments. Like art, music is a form of experiencing, learning, and communicating with others. Children learn to experiment with musical concepts, such as volume, tempo, and sound. Their vocabulary is expanded. They begin to appreciate different types of music.

B. Music

- **PK4.VIII.B.1 Child participates in classroom music activities including singing, playing musical instruments, and moving to rhythms.**
- **PK4.VIII.B.2 Child responds to different musical styles through movement and play.**

C. Dramatic Expression

Prekindergarten children participate in expressive and spontaneous productions through creative dramatic play. Children demonstrate their unique interpretation of music, songs, and stories through movement and dramatic experiences. These experiences contribute to children's ability to communicate more effectively and engage in cooperative activity with others.

C. Dramatic Expression

- **PK4.VIII.C.1 Child creates or recreates stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations.**

IX. Physical Development Domain

Prekindergarten children's learning is directly influenced by their development of gross and fine motor skills as well as their knowledge of personal safety and health. The motor development outcomes included in this domain describe opportunities for children to develop rhythmic, stability, loco-motor, and manipulative skills that ultimately influence many aspects of children's success in cognitive, perceptual, and social emotional development. Children's knowledge of personal safety and health impacts their development of healthy habits early, which are key to life-long health and overall well-being.

The Physical Development Domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* is divided into the following skills: gross motor development, fine motor development, and personal safety and health.

A. Gross Motor Development

Prekindergarten children explore their physical space and understand how their bodies function in space through active movement experiences. Large-motor skills are developed first, followed by stability (e.g., turning, twisting, balancing, dodging) and manipulative (e.g., throwing, catching, kicking, striking) motor skills. Gross motor development requires thought and deliberate movement. Four-year-old children develop greater control of gross motor manipulative movements that involve giving force to objects and receiving force from objects.

A. Gross Motor Development

- **PK4.IX.A.1 Child demonstrates coordination and balance in isolation.**

PK4.IX.A.2 Child coordinates sequence of movements to perform tasks.

B. Fine Motor Development

Prekindergarten children participate in fine-motor manipulative movements through object-handling activities that emphasize motor control, precision, and accuracy of movement. Cutting with scissors, manipulating modeling dough, and drawing are the foundational skills needed for the demands of handwriting and other small-motor skills in later school years. Fine motor activities that help to strengthen the small muscles of the hands in preparation for writing are integrated into learning centers.

B. Fine Motor Development

- **PK4.IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.**
- **PK4.IX.B.2 Child shows increasing control of tasks that require eye-hand coordination.**

C. Personal Safety and Health

Prekindergarten children develop an understanding of health and safety issues related to their daily routines and activities. Children learn to make healthy choices in nutrition and understand the importance of well-being through exercise and rest.

C. Personal Safety and Health

- **PK4.IX.C.1 Child practices good habits of personal safety.**
- **PK4.IX.C.2 Child practices good habits of personal health and hygiene.**
- **PK4.IX.C.3 Child identifies good habits of nutrition and exercise.**

X. Technology Applications Domain

Technology can greatly enhance learning experiences for prekindergarten children, but it is critical that young children learn about the appropriate use of technology and interactive media. It can enhance active, hands-on, creative, and authentic engagement with others and with the world, but it must be used with intentionality. Technology should not replace face-to-face instruction. Regular access and exposure to computers and related technology including challenging learning applications, programs, and websites, can provide opportunities for children to expand their ability to acquire information, solve problems, and communicate. These technologies serve as important learning tools and are integrated throughout the instructional program to enrich learning of curriculum content and concepts. Providing access to a variety of technologies is critical in the development of skills that young children need to learn and grow in the 21st century.

The Technology Applications Domain of the *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* includes only one skill: technology and devices.

A. Technology and Devices

Prekindergarten children learn how technology can enhance our lives. Surrounded by technology, children can benefit from becoming aware of and interacting with digital media and a variety of other available technology. They develop techniques for handling and controlling various devices, becoming increasingly confident and independent users of developmentally appropriate interactive media.

A. Technology and Devices

- **PK4.X.A.1 Child opens and navigates through digital learning applications and programs, when appropriate.**
- **PK4.X.A.2 Child uses and names a variety of digital tools that support and enhance learning.**
- **PK4.X.A.3 Child uses digital learning applications to contribute to class-made digital products that express own ideas, as appropriate.**
- **PK4.X.A.4 Child uses technology to access appropriate information, with adult assistance.**
- **PK4.X.A.5 Child practices safe behavior while using digital tools and resources.**

Appendix

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS: Development Timeline[1]

2-3 YEARS OLD	3-4 YEARS OLD	4-5 YEARS OLD	5-6 YEARS OLD	6-7 YEARS OLD
AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION				
Distinguishes voices (e.g., knows mom vs. dad's voice)	Distinguishes sounds (e.g., animal noises or vehicles)	Distinguishes words (e.g., recognizes when two words are the same or different)		
SENTENCE SEGMENTATION				
Becomes aware that sentences are made up of words that carry meaning	Counts the number of words in a sentence	Recognizes which word changes in a sentence	Manipulates words in a sentence and replaces them with new words to make a new sentence	
RHYMING				
Exposure to rhyme through nursery rhymes and finger plays	Identifies rhyme	Identifies and produces a mix of real and nonsense rhymes	Distinguishes between rhymes (can determine which does not rhyme)	Rhyme completion (can complete a sentence with a word that rhymes)
	ALLITERATION			
	Identifies if two words begin with the same sound	Produces a word that begins with the same sound	Generates a list of words that begin with the same sound	Distinguishes between alliterative and non-alliterative words in a list, sentence, or story
SYLLABLES				
Syllable awareness through finger plays	Blending and segmenting compound words	Blends and segments multisyllabic words up to 3 syllables	Blends and segments multisyllabic words up to 5 syllables	Syllable manipulation (adding, deleting, substituting)
	ONSET-RIME[2]			
	Identifies the onset in words (single letters and consonant blends)	Blends onset and rime to form *familiar* one-syllable words	Blends onset and rime to form one-syllable words	
	PHONEMES[3]			
	Isolating initial phonemes	Blending and segmenting 2-3 phonemes	Blending and segmenting 4-5 phonemes	Blending and segmenting phonemes; phoneme manipulation

[1] Skill development is fluid. Children may not follow the exact order outlined in this generalized timeline.

[2] Onset-rime is only taught in English-language instruction.

[3] In Spanish, phoneme blending is taught to help children blend individual syllables (2-3 phonemes) in words, which they will then use syllables to decode.

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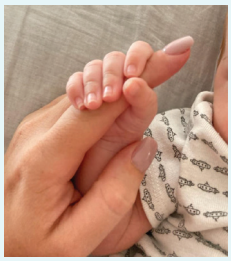
EARLY CHILDHOOD WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Awareness Stage

GRIP

- Uses entire fist to grasp items
- Starts to explore fine motor movements through grabbing objects, such as hair, toys, or a bottle, but lacks real control and often requires adult supports

EXAMPLE:
An infant exploring grasp by gripping a finger



FORMATION & SPELLING

- Begins to use **random scribbling**—starts at any place on the page and includes random marks that do not resemble print or communicate a meaning

EXAMPLE:
Basic scribbles

COMPOSITION

- Begins to understand, through interactions with text and talk, the connection between spoken and written language (i.e., recognizes that written language communicates ideas, stories, and facts)
- Starts to recognize environmental print
- Uses a variety of writing tools to share messages

Pre-literate Stage

GRIP

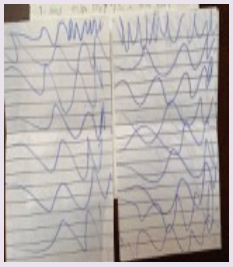
- Attempts to mimic adults by grasping various tools (crayons, markers, Q-tips, clothespins, paintbrushes, etc.) with four fingers pointed toward palm

EXAMPLE:
A four-finger grip

FORMATION & SPELLING

- Scribbles to imitate adult writing
- Improves fine motor skills by developing hand and finger strength, resulting in **controlled scribbling**—repeated marks on a page (e.g., open circle, diagonals, straight or curved lines, wavy lines written across the page).

EXAMPLE:
A To Do List (and the scripted meaning)



COMPOSITION

- Uses single drawings to represent written stories
- Believes that drawings and scribbles communicate a purposeful message
- Reads their drawings as if there were words on them
- Tells teacher or peers what a picture represents which may change with repeated explanations

EXAMPLE:
Yo puedo patear un balón de fútbol con mis pies.

"I can kick a soccer ball with my feet."

EARLY CHILDHOOD WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Early Emergent Stage

GRIP

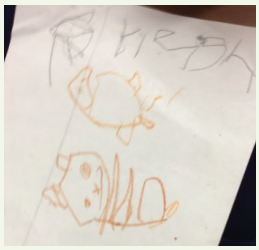
- Attempts five-finger grip including a grasp with index finger and thumb

EXAMPLE:
A five-finger grip

FORMATION & SPELLING

- Scribbles begin to indicate the child's understanding of basic writing conventions - left to right, top to bottom
- Makes letter-like forms and shapes, or individual letters, to represent words
- Attempts to write name
- Copies letters and words from environmental print

EXAMPLE:
Scribbles with letter-like forms



COMPOSITION

- Uses drawings across several pages to represent a clear message
- Includes story elements into drawings (e.g., character names, setting) to represent a story
- Adds meaningful labels to illustrations demonstrating the understanding that written words add meaning and context
- Shares meaning of pictures and labels with teachers and peers with consistency
- Starts to build awareness that messages (stories or individual pictures) need to make sense and will revise drawings and/or labels to make it happen

Emergent Stage

GRIP

- Uses **static** three-finger grip and whole arm movement to form letters (lacks control)

EXAMPLE:
A **static** three-finger grip, that uses the whole arm to make marks on the paper (and limits control)

FORMATION & SPELLING

- Strings random letters together in an attempt to create words
- Includes both upper and lowercase letters randomly
- Continues to develop conventions of writing - writes across the page, adds spaces to represent each word within a sentence

EXAMPLE:
Mi comida
"My food"

COMPOSITION

- Develops stories with a beginning and an ending, represented by drawings and corresponding phrases
- Continues to develop awareness that written stories follow a logical sequence
- Revises drawings and writings to ensure their message is clear to their audience

EXAMPLE:
A story about a student's feelings

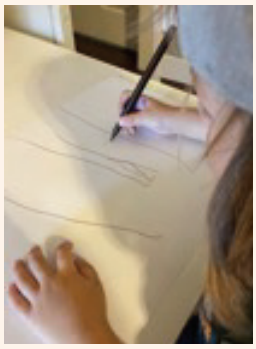
EARLY CHILDHOOD WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Transitional Stage

GRIP

- Uses **dynamic** three-finger grip resulting in more control as movement originates from the wrist

EXAMPLE: A **dynamic** three-finger grip with more control at wrist



FORMATION & SPELLING

- Spells words by using letter-sound knowledge (approximation spelling) which may progress as follows
  - » Beginning and final sounds used to represent a word
  - » Medial consonant sounds are added
  - » Medial sounds (vowel), even if incorrect, may be represented
  - » All sounds are represented even if inaccurately spelled
  - » Writes known words (e.g., high-frequency words, sight words)
- Spells one word several different ways in one piece of writing, which illustrates that spelling is still developing (e.g., “like” might be spelled as “lik” and “liek” in the same story).
- Begins to use spacing to distinguish between words
- Adds random punctuation to writing

EXAMPLE: A writing sample that includes a mix of approximated spelling and words from the word wall to convey meaning

The circled words represent that the child understands individual words make up a sentence.

COMPOSITION

- Begins to convey messages more through written text than illustrations
- Writes sentences that correspond with each of the drawings in their stories
- Composes clear messages with meaning and context for a specific audience
- Includes a beginning, middle, and end when writing stories
- Begins to model compositions after familiar authors

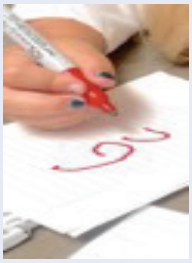
EARLY CHILDHOOD WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Conventional Stage

GRIP

- Continues to develop control and personal style using a dynamic three-finger grip

EXAMPLE:
A **developed** three-finger grip



FORMATION & SPELLING

- Begins phrase writing
- Writes complete sentences
- Uses correct capitalization and punctuation more often
- Increasingly writes with conventional spelling and fewer instances of approximation spelling

EXAMPLE:
A writing sample that includes accurate use of capitalization and punctuation, with conventional spelling

COMPOSITION

- Writes sentences of varying lengths and structures to add coherence around a central topic or theme
- Consistently conveys messages through written text versus illustrations
- Uses writing to express personal ideas, thoughts, understandings, and learning
- Recognizes and imitates various genres of writing
- Uses mentor texts to develop composition skills and creativity in writing
- Writes for a variety of purposes, accurately using various features of writing (e.g., begins letters with "Dear," or "*Estimado*:"; begins writing fairy tales with "*Había una vez*"; makes lists with numbered lines or bullets)