

2022 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines

PK3 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 develop the foundational learning skills that support success in prekindergarten and beyond.

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. Recognizing 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 have access to high-quality 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 address the individual learning and developmental 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.

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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 unique strengths and learning experiences. Effective learning environments provide opportunities for all children to engage in meaningful learning. Effective teaching practices use each child's prior knowledge and experiences as a foundation for new learning.
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.

Learning Supports

Multilingual Learners

The *Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines* employ the term **multilingual learner** to capture the spectrum of language learners in Texas schools. This term refers to 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, their multilingual background may include language experiences and perspectives that differ from those commonly encountered in the school environment. The knowledge and experiences these students bring can support learning and contribute to the classroom environment.

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 instruction from an ESL certified teacher designed to support English language development and successful participation in academic settings.

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

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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 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 can participate in and make progress 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

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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 and Health
- 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.

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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.

PK3 Outcome

- **PK3.I.A.1 Child is building competence in controlling own body movements.**
- **PK3.I.A.2 Child can identify own physical attributes and indicate some likes and dislikes when prompted.**
- **PK3.I.A.3 Child begins to show awareness of own abilities.**
- **PK3.I.A.4 Child shows initiative in trying new activities but may not persist when obstacles or challenges arise.**

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.
- **RELEVANT**—Appropriate for children with varying developmental levels learning needs, and experiences.

Six domains (*Social and Emotional Development, Language and Communication, Emergent Literacy Reading, Emergent Literacy Writing, Mathematics, and Science*) include outcomes for both PK3 and PK4. Four domains (*Social Studies, Fine Arts, Physical Development and Health, 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.

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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 development is influenced by a variety of experiences, including language spoken at home and interactions with family and community members. Early childhood educators should create learning environments that recognize the varied experiences and language backgrounds of children.

A. Self-Concept

- **PK3.I.A.1 Child is building competence in controlling own body movements.**
- **PK3.I.A.2 Child can identify own physical attributes and indicate some likes and dislikes when prompted.**
- **PK3.I.A.3 Child begins to show awareness of own abilities.**
- **PK3.I.A.4 Child shows initiative in trying new activities but may not persist when obstacles or challenges arise.**



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:

- **PK3.I.B.1.a Child follows simple rules and routines when assisted by adults.**
- **PK3.I.B.1.b Child takes care of and manages classroom materials with adult assistance.**
- **PK3.I.B.1.c Child manages own behavior with adult guidance and assistance.**

2. Emotional Control:

- **PK3.I.B.2.a Child recognizes and expresses a range of emotions.**
- **PK3.I.B.2.b Child is familiar with basic feeling words (e.g., happy, sad, mad, scared).**
- **PK3.I.B.2.c Child manages intensity of emotions with adult assistance.**

3. Control of Attention:

- **PK3.I.B.3.a Child focuses attention on one task at a time but may not stay with it to completion.**
- **PK3.I.B.3.b Child remains focused on engaging, teacher-led group activities for up to 10–15 minutes at a time.**

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

- **PK3.I.C.1 Child forms positive relationships with adults and peers.**
- **PK3.I.C.2 Child assumes roles and responsibilities as part of the classroom community with adult assistance.**
- **PK3.I.C.3 Child shows interest in peer play but may be less skilled in initiating and joining a group.**
- **PK3.I.C.4 Child enjoys parallel and associative play with peers.**
- **PK3.I.C.5 Child seeks adult help when experiencing conflicts with another child.**
- **PK3.I.C.6 Child responds with concern when a child or adult is distressed.**
- **PK3.I.C.7 Child interacts with peers and may have 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

- **PK3.I.D.1 Child shows interest in other people and their feelings.**



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 may be developing proficiency in spoken English while continuing to build proficiency in their home language(s). 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 aspect of a child's language development regardless of program placement or participation. It will be important for prekindergarten teachers to intentionally make connections between home and school, support continued development of children's language skills, and recognize that students may develop proficiency in more than one language. 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

- **PK3.II.A.1** Child responds to situations in ways that demonstrate an understanding of what has been communicated.
-
- **PK3.II.A.2** Child shows understanding by following two-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)

- **PK3.II.B.1** Child uses language to communicate basic needs and wants.
-
- **PK3.II.B.2** Child begins to use appropriate language, style, and nonverbal cues during communication with familiar adults and peers.
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- **PK3.II.B.3** Child is able to communicate basic information in familiar social settings.
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- **PK3.II.B.4** Child begins to use appropriate language for different situations.

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

- **PK3.II. C.1** Child's speech is understood by familiar adults and peers.



-
- **PK3.II.C.2 Child begins to mimic intonation of language through songs and fingerplay.**

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 incorporate students' prior language experiences to support language development. 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 is able to connect the story to her prior experiences, 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

- **PK3.II.D.1 Child understands (receptive) and uses (expressive) expected words to label and describe common objects, people, places, actions, and events.**
- **PK3.II.D.2 Child understands (receptive) the instructional language of the classroom.**
- **PK3.II.D.3 Child shows a steady increase in understanding (receptive) and using (expressive) language learned from 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

- **PK3.II.E.1 Child typically uses simple sentences of three to four words, usually in correct word order.**
- **PK3.II.E.2 Child begins to use regular plurals and regular past tense correctly.**
- **PK3.II.E.3 Child uses simple sentence structures with at least one idea.**
- **PK3.II.E.4 Child understands increasingly longer sentences that combine two ideas.**



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 a variety of stories and print also helps children develop literacy knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

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 shape families' perceptions of their partnership with the school system. It is important that children have access to a variety of books, activities, and learning experiences that support engagement and interest in reading and writing.

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

- **PK3.III.A.1 Child demonstrates an interest in pictures, text, and stories read aloud.**
- **PK3.III.A.2 Child tells a story by looking at pictures or from memory.**
- **PK3.III.A.3 Child notices and connects meaning to environmental print.**

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

- **PK3.III.B.1** Child recognizes when a word in a spoken sentence is changed.
- **PK3.III.B.2** Child begins to distinguish differences between similar-sounding words.
- **PK3.III.B.3** Child recognizes the individual words in a compound word.
- **PK3.III.B.4** **Three-year olds do not typically develop word manipulation skills, so no outcome is included**
- **PK3.III.B.5** Child participates in oral syllabication activities.
- **PK3.III.B.6** Child uses rhyming words through playful activities such as songs, nursery rhymes, and fingerplay.
- **PK3.III.B.7** Child uses alliteration through playful activities such as songs and read alouds.
- **PK3.III.B.8** Child participates in onset-rime blending activities (in English only).
- **PK3.III.B.9** **Three-year olds do not typically develop phonemic awareness, so no outcome is included**

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

- **PK3.III.C.1 Child shows awareness of letters by singing alphabet songs and recognizing some frequently encountered letters (e.g., first letter of name or letters in environmental print).**
- **PK3.III.C.2 Child identifies the letter associated with the sound of the first letter of his name.**
- **PK3.III.C.3 Child produces the correct sound for the first letter of his name.**

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

- **PK3.III.D.1 Child re-enacts a story after it has been read aloud.**
- **PK3.III.D.2 Child makes personal connections to books read aloud.**
- **PK3.III.D.3 Child asks and answers age-appropriate questions about a book.**
- **PK3.III.D.4 Child attempts to make predictions by looking at the cover of a book or the pictures within a story.**

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

- **PK3.III.E.1 Child can distinguish between pictures and print.**
- **PK3.III.E.2 Child handles books with increasing skill and imitates reading with awareness of directionality (e.g., imitates reading text across a page).**
- **PK3.III.E.3 Child begins to notice the basic features of print (e.g., repeating words, space between words, punctuation vs. letters).**



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

- **PK3.IV.A.1 Child engages in free-choice drawing and writing activities.**
- **PK3.IV.A.2 Child attempts to draw and write for many purposes and begins to explore different 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

- **PK3.IV.B.1 Child discusses and contributes ideas for drafts composed in whole/small group writing activities with adult prompting.**
- **PK3.IV.B.2 Child observes and discusses ideas for revising (add, take out, change) drawings and/or written words in whole/small group writing activities.**
- **PK3.IV.B.3 Child shares written products with others.**

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

- **PK3.IV.C.1 Child attempts to write some letters of own name (usually beginning with the first letter).**
- **PK3.IV.C.2 Child uses drawings, scribbles, and mock letters to communicate ideas.**
- **PK3.IV.C.3 Child begins to write using letter-like forms.**
- **PK3.IV.C.4 Child begins to show understanding of directionality (e.g., attempts to write top to bottom, left to right), but may still start at random places on a page.**
- **PK.3.IV.C.5 **There is not enough research to support the inclusion of a PK3 outcome****



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 will understand that quantities, whether tangible or theoretical, are countable. They will 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

- **PK3.V.A.1 Child rote counts from 1 to 10.**

- **PK3.V.A.2 Child counts up to 5 objects with one-to-one correspondence.**

- **PK3.V.A.3 Child counts up to 5 items and demonstrates cardinality by communicating that the last number indicates how many items are in the set.**

- **PK3.V.A.4 Child instantly recognizes the quantity of up to 3 objects without counting (subitizes).**

- **PK3.V.A.5 Child recognizes numerals 0-5.**

- **PK3.V.A.6 Child represents quantities up to 5.**

- **PK3.V.A.7 **There is not enough research to support the inclusion of a PK3 outcome****

- **PK3.V.A.8 Child compares sets of objects up to 5 using comparative language (e.g., more than, less than, 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

- **PK3.V.B.1 Child uses objects to demonstrate that adding one or more objects to a set will increase the number of objects in the set.**
- **PK3.V.B.2 Child uses objects to demonstrate that taking away one or more objects from a set will decrease the number of objects in the set.**

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

- **PK3.V.C.1 Child names and describes common 2D shapes.**
- **PK3.V.C.2 Child attempts to create shapes using materials and/or manipulatives.**
- **PK3.V.C.3 Child begins to use language to describe position of objects.**
- **PK3.V.C.4 Child recognizes common shapes, regardless of 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

- PK3.V.D.1 Child understands that lengths of objects can vary and be compared.
- PK3.V.D.2 Child begins to recognize capacity based on how much space exists within an object.
- PK3.V.D.3 Child understands that weights of objects can vary and be compared.
- PK3.V.D.4 Child shows awareness of the passage 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

- PK3.V.E.1 Child sorts objects that are the same and different.
- PK3.V.E.2 Child participates in group activities of collecting data and organizing it into graphic representations.
- PK3.V.E.3 Child recognizes and duplicates patterns.



VI. Science Domain

There are no PK3 outcomes for this domain of learning,



VII. Social Studies Domain

There are no PK3 outcomes for this domain of learning.



VIII. Fine Arts Domain

There are no PK3 outcomes for this domain of learning.



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

- **PK3.IX.A.1 Child masters basic skills of running, jumping, climbing, and pedaling.**
- **PK3.IX.A.2 Child engages in movement sequences with adult support.**

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.

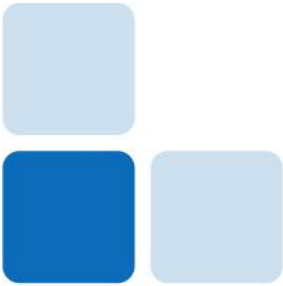
B. Fine Motor Development

- **PK3.IX.B.1 Child experiments with a variety of fine motor tasks but may lack strength and control.**
- **PK3.IX.B.2 Child shows emerging proficiency in tasks requiring eye-hand coordination.**



X. Technology

There are no outcomes for this domain of learning.



Appendix

