Excellence in Care and Education

MARYLAND ACCREDITATION

Maryland Accreditation

Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Programs

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood Development
200 West Baltimore Street 10th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

TABLE OF CONTENTS

** This document references the following publication as "The Guide":

Supporting Every Young Learner: Maryland's Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy, Birth to Age 8. (2015). **Baltimore, MD, Maryland State Department of Education**

I. Program Administration

Standard

Program Philosophy

1.1 The early childhood program's philosophy statement and policies are consistent with early childhood practices that are age and developmentally appropriate and reflect the role of families. The written philosophy statement for the early childhood program is used by the staff as the foundation for planning, for staff development, and for implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the program.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.1.1 Philosophy The program has a written philosophy and mission statement, which reflect effective early childhood practices; best practices for staff; and an appreciation for diversity and welcoming individuals of all abilities.	The philosophy and mission statement are integral components of the program. Both reflect the principles of developmentally appropriate research and literature-based practices; best practices for staff; and the role of families in the education of their children. The philosophy and mission statement exhibit a respect and appreciation for diversity of the global community and is welcoming of adults and children of all abilities. The philosophy and mission statement describe the beliefs and practices of the program related to children, families, and staff. The philosophy and mission statement are shared with staff and families. Staff members are knowledgeable of the philosophy and mission of the program.
Required Evidence ☐ Written philosophy and mission statement	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: _10/13/22_ __ Not Met ☒ Partially Met __Fully Met	Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

Standard	
Program Philosophy	
1.1 The early childhood program's philosophy statement and policies are consistent with early childhood practices that are age and developmentally appropriate and reflect the role of families. The written philosophy statement for the early childhood program is used by the staff as the foundation for planning, for staff development, and for implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the program.	

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.1.2 Program Evaluation The program establishes and implements a process for ongoing program evaluation. Annually, the program conducts a self-evaluation of the program policies, procedures, and practices. The results of the program evaluation are shared with staff, families, and other stakeholders.	Annual program evaluation is a process to help check the effectiveness of the program; identify systemic issues, and consider improvements/adjustments. It is also an important way to examine quality, and work to continually improve your program. Program evaluation is a key part of program planning and continuous improvement. The evaluation process is conducted by program administration, staff, families, and other community partners. Quality requires identification of program goals; assessment of policies and procedures; and the implementation of best practices.
Required Evidence ☐ Process for program evaluation and timeline ☐ Copies of completed annual program evaluation ☐ Program goals for on-going improvement	The results of the program evaluation are used throughout the year to ensure program accountability.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _/0/13/22_ __ Not Met _X_ Partially Met __Fully Met	Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

Standard

Program Personnel

1.2 **The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel.**

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.2.1 Communication The administrator/supervisor communicates with program staff regarding developmentally appropriate strategies for implementation, assessment, and accountability.	Regular communication among program staff facilitates the exchange of information and full participation in program activities to promote quality program practices. The administrator/supervisor implements various mechanisms for regular communication among staff. Staff are informed about developmentally appropriate programming and practices; state standards; family engagement practices; the program planning and evaluation process; and resources to improve performance.
Required Evidence ☐ Staff Meeting Schedule ☐ Staff Meeting Agenda and Minutes ☐ Documentation of ongoing communication and information shared with staff regarding developmentally appropriate practices and program planning and evaluation	An effective communication system is an integral component of a quality program. Formal and informal opportunities allow staff input regarding the quality of services to children and families; and opportunities to express concerns and provide feedback related to program practices.

Program Notes

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Standard	
Program Personnel	
1.2 The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel.	

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.2.2 Staff Evaluation and Ongoing Supervision The administrator/supervisor conducts staff evaluations annually and ongoing as needed. Results are used to develop Individual Staff Development Plans.	Staff evaluation is the foundation to identifying staff strengths, improving staff performance and program planning. Effective formal and informal evaluation processes are used to provide effective feedback related to professional development and growth. Staff evaluations conducted annually identify strengths, interests, and areas of improvement. Information is used to create individual staff development plans and ongoing program plans. Annual staff evaluations support professional development and growth as well as program planning and quality. The staff evaluation process is another component of the program's communication system.
Required Evidence ☐ Staff Evaluation Policy and timeline ☐ Completed annual staff evaluation tool ☐ Individual staff development plan ☐ Copies of staff observations	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
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Standard	
Program Personnel	

1.2 The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.2.3 Qualification: Early Childhood Educator Licensed Child Care/Head Start – Early Childhood Educator, responsible for the care and education of a group of children from birth through age five, must have at least an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development or related field **and** must hold a Maryland Child Care Credential of level five. **Public School** – Classroom Educator must have at least a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development or related field **and** meet Maryland State Certification requirements for early childhood education.	Early Childhood Educators who are appropriately educated are better prepared to plan and implement quality, developmentally appropriate programs for young children. Knowledge of child development and best practice is gained through education, experience working with young children, and ongoing professional development. Programs understand the importance of employing qualified educators and providing ongoing professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills. When the early childhood educator is absent, a qualified substitute is provided to ensure continued program quality.
Required Evidence ☐ College Degree ☐ Current Maryland Child Care Credential (Licensed Child Care and Head Start) ☐ Current Maryland Certification certificate (Public School) ☐ Job Description	Educators are provided job descriptions that reflect expectations in: building relationships with children and families; implementing curriculum; instructional and assessment strategies; and professionalism.

Program Notes

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__ Not Met __ Partially Met X Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating
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Standard

Program Personnel

1.2 The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.2.4 Qualification: Assistant Teacher **Licensed Child Care/Head Start –** Assistant Teacher working with Early Childhood Teacher must have a high school diploma **and** Maryland Child Care Credential of level two or higher.	Assistant Teachers who are appropriately trained are better prepared to assist with planning and implementing quality, developmentally appropriate programs for young children. Knowledge of child development and best practice is gained through education, experience working with young children, and ongoing professional development.

Public School – Assistant Teacher and/or Paraprofessional working with the Classroom Teacher must have a high school diploma **and** meet Maryland ParaPro requirements.

Required Evidence

- ☐ High School Diploma
- ☐ Current Maryland Child Care Credential (Licensed Child Care and Head Start)
- ☐ Maryland ParaPro test results (Public School)

Programs understand the importance of employing qualified assistant teachers and providing ongoing professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills. When the early childhood teacher is absent, a qualified assistant teacher will ensure continued program quality.

Assistant Teachers are provided job descriptions that reflect expectations in: building relationships with children and families; facilitating learning; and professionalism.

Program Notes

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Standard	
Program Personnel	
1.2 The early childhood program is collaboratively administered, supervised, and implemented by qualified personnel.	

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.2.5 Professional Support The program implements policies that provide support to staff in order to meet professional and personal needs.	The cornerstone of a program's success is the staff. Teaching staff are responsible for guiding children's learning experiences in the classroom. The support provided to the teaching staff is essential to children's learning and program quality. Professional support strategies are effective at: increasing staff retention; promoting personal and professional well-being; and improving performance. Adult restroom and lounge separate from children's activity area; adequate individual storage area for personal belongings; designated meeting or conference area; and time for staff members to meet their personal needs and handle administrative/planning tasks are all strategies for professional support.
Required Evidence ☐ Lesson Planning Policy ☐ Evidence of Planning Time ☐ Professional Development Opportunities	Planning time is an essential professional support. Educators need a designated time to think about and plan activities that are engaging, challenging, and developmentally appropriate.

Program Notes

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Standard	
Program Continuity	

1.3   The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.3.1 Transition and Continuity of Services *within* the program Program staff develops transition plans for children moving to a new group/classroom within the program that communicate children's individual strengths and needs.	Consistency and continuity play an important role in helping children successfully manage transitions. Young children develop relationships with educators and learn to trust or distrust the world around them through predictable routines and experiences. Children grouped by age will likely change educators and classrooms several times over the course of their enrollment. It is important to recognize that a child who is moving from one classroom to another will experience multiple losses: a place he or she has come to know and trust; an educator he or she depends on and adores; children he or she has befriended; and routines that help him or her feel secure and competent. These transitions are handled with great care.
Required Evidence ☐ Agendas and minutes of transition/articulation meetings between classrooms ☐ Evidence of communication with families regarding transition within the program	
	The goal is a smooth transition that minimizes any emotional concerns for the child and family, and maximizes all that is known about the child's prior progress so that there are no interruptions in learning. (p.124, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard	
Program Continuity	

1.3   **The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children.**

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.3.2 Transition and Continuity of Services *between* Licensed Child Care/Head Start and Local Public School	Consistency and continuity play an important role in helping children successfully manage transitions. Transition planning addresses issues for all children, including children with special needs, such as:
Licensed Child Care/Head Start and Local Public School staff collaboratively develop transition plans for children moving to a new program that communicate children's individual strengths and needs.	• Ways for the family to facilitate the child's health and learning needs • Written or verbal communication between program staff that provide children's strengths, needs, and interests • Preparing the child and family for the transition

Required Evidence	
☐ Written transition plan and activities	The goal is a smooth transition that minimizes any emotional concerns for the child and family, and maximizes all that is known about the child's prior progress so that there are no interruptions in learning. (p.124, The Guide)
☐ Evidence of transition activities between Local Public School and Licensed Child Care/Head Start	

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__ Not Met __ Partially Met X Fully Met	__ Not Met __ Partially Met __ Fully Met

Standard	
Program Continuity	

1.3   The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.3.3 Schedules and Routines The program documents daily routines and schedules to support continuity of learning.	The daily schedule provides a consistent structure that children can come to expect. A routine that children can count on contributes to a sense of comfort and security. The daily schedule needs to be developmentally appropriate and reflect instruction in the various domains of development. There is a balance of quiet and active learning, time to explore at one's own pace to promote independence, and time to explore with others to build cooperative learning skills. There is a balance between child-directed activities and educator-directed activities. There need to be ample opportunities to scaffold instruction during the day. Educators build in flexibility to be able to follow the interests of the children. For children aged two and younger, the schedule is primarily individual. Group instruction for children two or younger is optional. (pg. 121-123, The Guide)
Required Evidence ☐ Daily schedule includes core components of the day appropriate to the age of the children ☐ Schedules and lesson plans reflect intentional planning for daily transitions ☐ Daily schedules reflect integrated learning in all seven domains of learning	

Program Note

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Standard

Program Continuity

1.3 The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.3.4 Intentional Planning The program documents lesson plans to support continuity of learning and an organized approach so that interactions are intentional and goal directed.	Educators strategically plan for and prepare the learning environment so that children can naturally engage in developmentally appropriate learning activities that accommodate their age, experience, and abilities - and that provide exposure and practice for children to reach increasingly challenging goals. As educators plan for children's learning, it is critically important that they set high, achievable expectations for all children, including those with unique challenges due to physical, cognitive, emotional, or linguistic differences. By targeting the particular strengths and interests of each child, educators are able to plan for instruction that supports the achievement of their goals.
Required Evidence ☐ Implementation of State recommended curriculum, Public School developed curriculum or a curriculum individually developed by the program and accepted by MSDE ☐ Lesson plans reflect implementation of curriculum and are relevant to children's culture and personal interest ☐ Lesson plans meet the needs of each and every child, are informed by information gained from families, include information from IEP/IFSP and other resource personnel who may work with a child ☐ Lesson plans include opportunities for questioning and problem solving; learning through play and child initiated discovery; and children to make choices for how they work on a project	Curriculum that is aligned to the Maryland Early Learning Standards reflects intentional and systematic instruction that will advance growth and learning. Lesson plans reflect the curriculum and allow for strategies to provide opportunities for children to be actively engaged in discovery and learning. These should include a mix of child-directed and educator-directed explorations that value teachable moments. (pg. 115-120, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard

Program Continuity

1.3 The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.3.5 Multiple Assessment Methods Multiple assessment methods are used to identify children's strengths, needs, interests, and progress. Information about areas of development and progress are systematically collected and documented throughout the program year.	Ongoing assessment helps educators understand if the curriculum and related lesson plans are effective. The data from assessment helps educators know when it is appropriate to jump ahead, or when they need to circle back to cover material again. Instructional goals are fine-tuned, and decisions about grouping and re-grouping children are based on a variety of assessment data.
Required Evidence ☐ Written assessment plan ☐ Assessment tools are aligned with Maryland Early Learning Standards ☐ Evidence of ongoing observations used to inform planning ☐ Evidence of informal assessment using portfolios, checklists, anecdotal notes, work samples, etc. ☐ Written plans reflecting differentiation of instruction based on assessment	Educators regularly observe the developmental needs and interests of children. Documentation techniques such as anecdotal records, checklists, and collection of work samples are used to gain information about each child's interests, strengths, and needs. Parent's knowledge of their child's learning and development is solicited and incorporated into ongoing assessment strategies. Attention is given to assessing progress of English Language Learners and other children with linguistic differences. There is evidence of classroom assessment accommodations for children with disabilities. (Chapter 8, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard

Program Continuity

1.3   The early childhood program utilizes curricula and instructional strategies that ensure continuity of learning and development for all children.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.3.6 Assessment Strategies Developmentally appropriate assessment informs instruction and is an integral part of daily planning.	Assessing children's development and learning helps educators better understand individual children and tailor learning experiences accordingly, so that all children reach their full potential. Assessment of children is used as part of the curriculum planning and implementation cycle.
Required Evidence ☐ Evidence of completed assessment tools ☐ Samples of data collected ☐ Evidence of differentiation, e.g. grouping based on assessment data ☐ Strengths and interests of children are reflected in instructional strategies, e.g. think-pair share, cooperative learning, problem solving, etc.	Understanding the whole child helps educators apply the results of assessment in context, allowing educators to focus on the strengths of the child and how those can be used to bolster all areas of learning and development. The purpose of assessment is to gain a better understanding of a child's areas of strengths and needs, and to adjust instruction to promote learning. It is essential that assessments are intentionally linked to child growth, development, curriculum, and instruction. Educators continuously review progress and use that information to modify their teaching to match the children's pace of learning, abilities, and interests. (Chapter 8, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard	
Program Accountability	
1.4 The early childhood program uses the results of the program evaluation of the early learning program in planning for overall program improvement.	

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
1.4.1 Reporting The results of the Annual Program Evaluation and Accreditation Self-Appraisal are reported to the governing body of the early childhood program, i.e. Board of Directors, Parent Advisory Board, Board of Education or School Improvement Team.	After conducting the annual program evaluation and accreditation self-appraisal, the results and strategies for program improvement are shared with parents, staff, governing bodies, and others as appropriate. The program uses the results of the program evaluation and self-appraisal to develop a program improvement plan, which includes improvement strategies, resources, persons responsible, and a timeline for implementation and completion.
Required Evidence ☐ Program Improvement Plan ☐ A copy of Annual Program Evaluation Report ☐ Evidence that program evaluation and accreditation self-appraisal results were shared with staff, parents, and governing body ☐ Documentation from School Improvement Team Meetings	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: _10/13/22_ X Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met	Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

II. Program Operation

2.1 Environment
(Birth to 6 years)

Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1   A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.1.1(a) Outdoor Environment: Safety The learning environment meets standards for safety, toxicity, construction, and cleanliness. The program must comply with zoning requirements, fire, health, and safety regulations.	Outside play areas are free of sharp or dangerous objects, trash, animals and poisonous plants, garden sprays, alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs and other hazards. The area is well drained and accessible by safe walkways or paths. If play area is near a road or unsafe area, a fence provides security. The outdoor space has at least one area that provides some protection from the elements.

Required Evidence

o   Clean

o   Well drained

o   Free of clutter

o   Appropriate storage of outside equipment

o   Appropriate and well maintained playground equipment

o   Appropriate surfaces

o   Shaded/covered area

Equipment is appropriate for the ages and abilities of the children and is well maintained. There is enough portable and stationary equipment so that children have access without long waits. Portable equipment is stored in a locked facility.

Program Notes

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Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.1.1(b) Outdoor Environment: Organization of Space The outdoor space has designated areas and equipment to support various types of play and learning.	The outdoor environment provides time for children to learn to play together – how to coordinate their actions for physical activities, how to take turns and collaborate, and how to follow directions in a game. The outdoor space allows for a variety of opportunities for children to interact with large groups, small groups, and individually.
Required Evidence O Structures for promoting sensory integration O Space for digging, gathering, and investigating O Space to play games O Variety of surfaces to support different types of play i.e. sand, mulch, dirt, grass, blacktop O Space for large group play O Space for small group play O Space for quiet play	Equipment stimulates a variety of skills (balancing, climbing, ball play, steering, pedaling, etc.) on different levels (tricycles with and without pedals, different size balls, ramp and ladder access to climbing structures). Structures provide opportunities for children to crawl, roll, jump, climb, and swing to promote sensory integration. Adaptations are made or special equipment is provided for children with disabilities. Outdoor space has a variety of surfaces permitting different types of play. (pgs. 139-141, The Guide)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ 10/13/22 __ Not Met / __Partially Met ✓ Fully Met	Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1   A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.1.1(c) Outdoor Environment: Intentional Learning Opportunities Daily opportunities provided for structured and unstructured outdoor play as part of the lesson plan/curriculum.	Outdoor time is intentionally linked to the learning occurring indoors so that skills are reinforced in multiple venues. Children continue to learn through play, exploration, and discovery in the natural environment. Educators ensure that children are dressed appropriately for daily outdoor learning experiences. Authentic materials are available for children to construct their learning. Materials are developmentally appropriate, safe, and support learning goals. There is a mix of materials that supports all types of learners so that all children can work to develop new skills and understanding. Materials are available to support physical development, stimulate dramatic play, support music and movement, and promote building, drawing and creative expression. (pgs. 139-141, The Guide)
Required Evidence O Prop boxes and space to stimulate dramatic play O Materials for building O Materials for drawing and painting O Instruments and materials to dance, march, and create sounds	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _10/13/22_ X̧ Not Met /__Partially Met __Fully Met	Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1   A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.1.2(a) Indoor Environment: Safety The learning environment meets standards for safety, toxicity, construction, and cleanliness. The program must comply with zoning requirements, fire, health, and safety regulations. Furniture and equipment meet standards for safety, size, durability, toxicity, construction, and cleanliness.	Instruction is located in clean, safe, and clutter free areas. Natural light and ventilation are controlled. The environment is planned to avoid safety problems. Bathroom supplies (toilet paper, paper towels, soap) are easily accessible to children. Drinking water is accessible to children. Furnishings and materials follow the most recent safety standards (available through organizations such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission). Furniture in the classroom is sturdy, in good repair, appropriate in size, and addresses the routine care, play, and learning needs of the children. Furniture is arranged for convenient use. Furnishings, such as open shelves for safe materials and sturdy storage containers, encourage appropriate independence. Cozy and soft areas (e.g. rug, bean bag chair) are available. Adaptive furniture permits the inclusion of children with special needs.

Required Evidence

o   Clean

o   Well lighted and ventilated

o   Free of clutter

o   Separate diapering area, if applicable

o   Furnishings are durable and designed to support children's needs

o   Furnishings are appropriate height and size

o   Developmentally appropriate soft areas

Program Notes

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Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1   A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator	**Best Practices Rationale**
2.1.2(b) Indoor Environment: Organization of Space The learning environment reflects effective and flexible utilization of available space.	The indoor environment is welcoming, organized, and adaptable for all children. It provides clear, wide paths for children to move safely. There are areas for large group discussion and activity as well as areas for small group exploration, with a logical flow between such areas. Children of all ages have a space for their personal belongings, labeled with their name and picture. Meeting areas have a soft yet safe floor covering that is inviting to children. Small group meeting areas may have a table to facilitate activities between educators and children. Children are supported in developing a love of books both in groups and as an individual activity. A variety of books and text materials are a part of all centers, and are rotated to support subjects being explored and the variety of reading levels within a class. (pgs. 125-127, The Guide)
Required Evidence O Space for personal belongings labeled for each child O Large meeting area O Small meeting area O Library O A variety of books and text materials in multiple places in the room O Calming area O Space is organized to be child centered, flexible and accessible to all children	
	All programs have a calming area where children can relax. The calming area includes pillows, a comfortable floor covering and other cozy furnishings. This is a space where children can take their own time to relax and compose so they are ready to move on to a new activity. (p. 134, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1   A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.1.2(c) Indoor Environment: Intentional Learning Opportunities The learning environment reflects the goals of the early childhood program, creating an environment where learning is integrated across domains and the layout of the room is organized to support intentional, integrated learning.	The environment provides children with choices, offering some control over what they are choosing and instilling a sense of independence, ownership, and pride in the process. Items displayed on the walls, bulletin boards, and windows reflect learning goals of the program. Educators are mindful of clutter and over-stimulation. Intentionally placed displays also allow space for the eyes to rest, promoting a calm aesthetic environment. Items displayed provide an opportunity to highlight the children's imagination, creativity, and experiences. Displays are at children's eye level and reflect a multicultural environment. A skillful educator builds the environment with the children so that they develop a sense of ownership for the environment and see a representation of their work.
Required Evidence O Displays are at children's eye level, are hung neatly, and reflect current learning goals O Walls, windows and bulletin boards have intentional displays and are not cluttered O Tubs, trays, bins, baskets, shelves, boxes, and other items labeled and accessible	
	Easily moveable furniture and shelves enable educators to place materials close to their related learning spaces. Labels on materials help children easily find materials for use and for clean-up. (pp. 134-135, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.1.3(a) Fostering Appreciation and Support for Diversity: Learning Environment The learning environment promotes an awareness and appreciation of diversity in all its forms such that children see themselves as full participating members in the global community.	The learning environment demonstrates respect for all, promotes authenticity in materials, and accommodates the areas of diversity identified in state law (ability, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, race, region, religion, socioeconomic status). In addition, early childhood educators recognize physical, cognitive, social and emotional differences as diversity. (pp. 56, The Guide)
Required Evidence O Instructional materials are authentic, accurate, and reflect positive images and information about diverse groups O The environment reflects customs, traditions, structure and songs relevant to the culture of children, families, and staff	Multiculturalism is relevant and supportive of a diverse staff and family traditions that expand farther than the country from where a child's ancestors originated. It is reflective of what is in our neighborhood and community, honest and true, not just dressed up in traditional clothing, respectful and kind, comprehensive and cross-curricular. The materials, books, pictures, posters, artifacts/realia, music, art, and puppets are authentic in reflecting diversity. The ultimate goal is to ensure that children are able to "see" themselves using these objects and to use them to learn about others. Early childhood educators are sensitive to read the cues of the family, respect their values and priorities for their children and not insert their own expectations or views. Further, understanding the role the community plays for the family is also key. (pp. 67-68, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1   A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.1.3(b) Fostering Appreciation and Support for Diversity: Intentional Teaching Teaching strategies promote an awareness and appreciation of diversity and appreciation of diversity in all its forms such that children see themselves as full participating members in their early childhood program and in the global community.	The learning environment demonstrates differentiated instruction and accommodates the areas of diversity identified in state law (ability, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, race, region, religion, socioeconomic status). The more early childhood educators are able to help children and adults value and respect diversity in all of its forms, the further we move toward living in a more respectful and cooperative society. Valuing and respecting diversity needs to be part of the foundation of education for all children.

Required Evidence	
O Evidence of collaboration among children O Activities accommodate various learning styles and are accessible to all children O Activities that promote an understanding and value of diversity in all its forms O Characters in books and social stories used to help children understand social interactions, situations, and expectations relevant to children's personal lives	Skilled educators find ways to identify the unique contributions each child brings to the learning environment and adapt practices, routines, and teaching strategies to build upon these contributions. Educators help children work together across gender, cultural, religious, and economic bounds, and engage in true collaboration. Early childhood educators recognize that there is no such thing as a "typical learner" and that any kind of one-size-fits-all educational approach does not reach all learners. (p. 63, The Guide)

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Standard

Environment (Birth – 6 years)

2.1 A planned and well-structured learning environment promotes active learning and full participation for each child.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.1.4 Technology Appropriate use of technology and interactive media follow a developmental progression in the way children use technology.	Effective uses of technology and media are active, hands-on, engaging, and empowering. They give the child control; provide adaptive scaffolds to help children progress in skill development at their individual rates; and are used as one of the many options to support children's learning.

Required Evidence	
O Appropriate and equitable shared use of technology O Interactive use of technology O Adults support and scaffold children's use of technology	Screen time recommendations from public health organizations are considered when determining technology use for children birth – 5 years of age. Use of technology with children ages 2 – 6 is interactive. Any uses of technology and interactive media in programs for children younger than 2 years of age is limited to those that appropriately support responsive interactions between educators and children and strengthen adult-child relationships. When used appropriately, and keeping screen time recommendations in mind, technology and interactive media have the potential to enhance, without replacing, creative play, exploration, physical activity, outdoor experiences, conversation and social interactions. (p. 121, 136, The Guide and NAEYC/Fred Rogers Center position statement)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: ___/o/[3/22___ __ Not Met /X Partially Met __Fully Met	Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

II. Program Operation

2.2 Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 36 Months)

Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers
(Birth to 36 Months)

2.2   The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and align with *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.*

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.2.1(a) Responsive Caregiving: Relationships Relationships between children and educators promote growth when they are warm, nurturing, individualized, and responsive in a reciprocal manner.	There is a safe, structured environment with predictable routines and interesting materials to explore. Continuity of care is provided by sensitive, supportive, and dependable educators who have nurturing, protective and stable relationships and interactions with infants and toddlers.(www.zerotothree.org)
Required Evidence O Educators position themselves to be physically close to children O Educators respond to children's needs O Educators make eye contact, use a warm tone of voice, and are in close proximity to the child when interacting	Young children's relationships with their primary caregivers have a major impact on their cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and moral development.

Program Notes

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Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers
(Birth to 36 Months)

2.2 The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and align with *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.*

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.2.1(b) Responsive Caregiving: Curriculum Curriculum for very young children is focused on social interactions based on consistent and intentional daily routines.	To ensure an effective foundation for later development and success, infant/toddler experiences are designed to meet the individual needs of each child. The developmental foundation built during this period has lifelong implications. An individualized curriculum provides a way for educators-caregivers to be intentional about the way they support development and learning in children under 3 and ensures that all aspects of development are being monitored and appropriately supported in a variety of ways.
Required Evidence O Materials in the environment are intentionally used to support individual child development. O Educators spend time engaged with individual children O Activities are geared towards individual needs and the needs of the group	Daily routines such as diapering, feeding, sleeping and transitions are individualized to meet the needs of the each child. Individual needs are determined in partnership with families. Educators take time to interact with each child in a consistent manner during daily routines through verbal and non-verbal communication. Routines and schedules are flexible to meet the individual needs of children.

Program Notes

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Standard

Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers
(Birth to 36 Months)

2.2 The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and align with *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.*

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.2.2 Social/Emotional Development Educators support the development of positive and secure relationships and growing independence of children.	From birth, children learn about the world by touching, tasting, smelling, seeing, and hearing. Sensory play also contributes in crucial ways to brain development. Stimulating the senses sends signals to children's brains that help to strengthen neural pathways important for all types of learning. For example, as children explore sensory materials, they develop their sense of touch, which lays the foundation for learning other skills, such as identifying objects by touch, and using fine-motor muscles. Experiencing and differentiating the characteristics of sensory materials is a first step in classification and sorting – an important part of science learning and discovery.

Required Evidence

O   Opportunities for children to self-soothe and calm down throughout the day

O   Opportunities to develop self-help skills such as potty learning, dressing, feeding

O   Opportunities to attend to and persist at a variety of tasks

Program Notes

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Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers
(Birth to 36 Months)

2.2 The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and align with *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.*

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.2.3 Sensory and Exploration Each child is provided the opportunity to explore a variety of sensory and cognitive experiences with support and stimulation from the staff.	Very young children interact with the world through their senses, touching, looking and manipulating objects and materials to learn about them. Sensory experiences stimulate touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing. Sensory activities allow children to naturally explore materials and their environment. Providing children with a variety of tactile experiences helps develop the sense of touch and fine motor skills. As children explore water, sand, dirt, dough, paints, and other mediums they have the opportunity to build on prior experiences to create new learning.
Required Evidence O Access to appropriate materials for exploration O Educators support children's explorations and persistence through questioning, guidance, and communication O Evidence of a variety of sensory based experiences	Educators' interactions with children during sensory exploration allow the children to learn more about the materials and objects they are using. Educators support learning by giving language and words for children to use while playing. Educators regularly change materials to promote exploration and learning. Educators vary their interactions with children during sensory play to meet individual needs.

Program Notes

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Standard

Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers
(Birth to 36 Months)

2.2 **The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and align with** *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.*

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.2.4 Communication Skills Educators support emerging communication skills by providing daily opportunities for children to interact with others and express themselves freely.	Educators provide opportunities for infants and toddlers to observe and practice communication skills by imitating the behaviors of others. Educators talk to children during play and routine activities, maintaining eye contact with the children. They repeat what children say, adding words and ideas when appropriate. However, they maintain a balance between listening and talking, allowing wait time for the child to respond. Educators encourage language development by engaging infants and toddlers in a variety of language activities using songs, finger plays, stories, books, puppets and games.
Required Evidence O Conversation occurs during responsive caregiving routines O Educators use wait time to allow children to reciprocate conversations O Nonverbal interactions, positive facial expressions, gestures, touching, holding and positive body language used O Open-ended conversation encouraged O Communication includes: questioning, reading, naming objects, repeating child's sounds/words and expanding their vocabulary	

Program Notes

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Standard	
Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 36 Months)	

2.2 The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and align with *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.*

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.2.5 Gross Motor Development Educators support the development of gross motor skills such as grasping, pulling, pushing, crawling, walking, and climbing.	A comprehensive program for infants and toddlers encourages play and active exploration to support the development of gross motor skills and enhance self-confidence, independence, and autonomy. It allows infants to self-initiate motor development such as rolling, sitting, and walking at their pace. The program provides space for crawling on a variety of surfaces and low sturdy furniture for children to pull themselves up with or to hold on to while walking. The program also provides padded and safe play structures for exploration and surfaces that are appropriately cushioned.
Required Evidence O Indoor and outdoor equipment and materials encourage gross motor development O Variety of experiences to support development such as rolling, sitting, walking, crawling	A convenient outdoor area where infants and toddlers are separated from older children is available for daily use. Materials and equipment used daily indoor or outdoor stimulate a variety of large muscle skills (crawling, walking, balancing, climbing, ball play).

Program Notes

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Standard
Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 36 Months)

2.2 The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and align with *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.*

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.2.6 Fine Motor Development Educators support the development of fine motor skills that encourage control and specialized motions, using eyes, mouth, hands, and feet.	Educators provide opportunities for infants and toddlers to practice the coordination of specialized motions (e.g. grasping, reaching, pulling up, using hands, stacking, releasing objects). A variety of age-appropriate materials of different types, color, size, shape, and texture are available for daily use. Toddlers have access to objects for carrying, such as balls or baskets, as well as, simple puzzles, nesting toys, stacking toys, toys with handles and pop-beads.
Required Evidence O Variety of experiences to grasp, reach, pull, push, stack and/or release objects O Access to appropriate materials for developing fine motor skills	

Program Notes

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Standard	
Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 36 Months)	

2.2   The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and align with *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.*

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.2.7 Fine Arts Educators provide opportunities for children to be exposed to and to explore the visual and performing arts.	Fine arts experiences are adapted to the developmental level of children this age. Very young children need opportunities to explore materials, rather than create a finished product. The program recognizes the child's active role in learning and offer opportunities for children to construct and elaborate meaning. It includes stimulating imagination through drama and other language-rich experiences, as well as, engaging in dialogues to learn about others, enhance communication skills, and expand vocabulary.
Required Evidence O Opportunities to engage in music/song O Props and materials for imaginary play O Open ended art exploration	Educators encourage children to represent their thoughts and ideas symbolically, with a focus on the process of self-expression, rather than a finished product. The role of the educator is to provide a variety of materials, including materials that represent a variety of cultures, and opportunities to support children's self-expression.

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Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers
(Birth to 36 Months)

2.2   The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and align with *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.*

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.2.8 Problem Solving Children engage in hands on experiences. Children have time to find solutions to challenging situations.	Problem solving is the foundation of a young child's learning. It must be valued, promoted, provided for, and sustained in the early childhood classroom. Opportunities for problem solving occur in everyday context of a child's life. By observing the child closely, educators can use the child's social, cognitive, movement, and emotional experiences to facilitate problem solving and promote strategies useful in the lifelong process of learning. By exploring social relationships, manipulating objects, and interacting with people, children are able to formulate ideas, try these ideas out, and accept or reject what they learn. It is this discovery within the problem solving process that is the vehicle for children's learning.
Required Evidence O Encouragement to complete simple tasks independently O Educators support children's explorations and persistence through questioning, guidance, and communication O Opportunities for children to engage in new experiences, try new things and discover solutions	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
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II. Program Operation

2.3 Curriculum
(3 to 6 years)

Standard	
Curriculum **(3 to 6 years)**	

2.3   The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.3.1 Curriculum Content The curriculum content is integrated and includes concepts for all areas, while being appropriate for the age and level of development of each child.	The Maryland Early Learning Standards define key aspects of development and learning that are the foundation for a child's success in learning. Seven domains are identified as key areas of development for preschool –aged children. Understanding the developmental characteristics of young learners provides a frame of reference so that early childhood educators can anticipate and plan for a continuum of children's learning.
Required Evidence O Learning experiences are interesting and appropriately challenging O A variety of materials are used for children to engage in learning that fits within the curriculum O Opportunities for practicing skills are integrated across the curriculum O The needs of the individual child are balanced with the needs of the group O Evidence of learning experiences occurring in all domains	Taking all of the domains of development into consideration and adding temperament, personality, interests, family culture, and wellness into the unique profiles of a child's knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward life and learning is taking a whole child view. This is important when considering the development of a child because looking at a specific domain informs what to teach and how to build-up individual skills in a child. Looking at the whole child informs how to teach including approaches differentiation individualization, and pace. Providing ways for children to demonstrate understanding gives each child the opportunity to express their abilities and interest as individuals. (pp. 21, 26, 29, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard	
Curriculum **(3 to 6 years)**	
2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.	

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.3.2 Social Foundations Children are provided opportunities to engage in playful learning to support social foundations skills.	Young children's attention, self-regulation and social behaviors are as important as cognitive abilities as predictors of later academic success. Social foundations include the skills necessary to regulate one's own behavior and emotions, develop healthy relationships with adults and other children, and create a sense of positive identity. It focuses on children's approaches to learning including: their willingness to initiate, engage, and sustain participation in different learning activities; their ability to demonstrate control through executive function skills; and self-regulation to remain on task in the face of distractions and comply with rules, routines and expectations.
Required Evidence O Age appropriate classroom rules written in positive terms are posted O Intentional activities that promote appropriate behavior such as: ▪ Class meetings/circle time discussions ▪ Small group interactions ▪ Paired activities ▪ Role playing ▪ Small group problem solving O Educators use visual cues and social stories to support conflict resolution and self-regulation strategies O Educators model positive social interactions with all children and adults O Educators have respectful interactions with children	Skilled early childhood educators intentionally plan for and help young children learn how to develop healthy relationships with adults and other children. Educators and children generate classroom rules together and decide on appropriate consequences throughout the year. Social conflicts between children are used as a learning experience with educators providing guidance and support to help children resolve conflicts. (pp. 22, 81, The Guide)

Program Notes	

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__ Not Met   __Partially Met   __Fully Met |

Standard	
Curriculum **(3 to 6 years)**	
2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.	

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.3.3 Executive Function The development of approaches to learning and executive function skills facilitate and support the process of learning.	Executive function is part of social foundations and includes working memory (i.e. short term memory), so that children are able to hold information in their mind and recall it when needed, and cognitive flexibility, so that children are able to engage in problem solving and symbolic representation. Inhibitory control, the ability to control one's impulses, is also an executive function skill.

Required Evidence
 	
o Visual cues to guide children's choices and decisions in social situations
 	
o Visual cues to help children plan their play and work
 	
o Opportunities to engage in play such as:
   ▪ Role playing
   ▪ Turn taking
   ▪ Rule making
   ▪ Making choices
	Working memory and mental flexibility strengthen as children gain, through practice, the ability to wait for their turn, return to interrupted work, or wait for the educator's attention (and remember why they wanted to talk to their educator). Early childhood educators continuously support children in building executive function because it influences learning at all stages.
	
	Throughout the day, skilled educators look for ways to introduce and extend exposure to the types of executive function skills that will serve children long into the future. This includes those skills that facilitate and support the process of learning, such as a child's willingness to initiate, engage, sustain participation in different learning activities, and the ability to demonstrate control, so that they can remain on task in the face of distractions. (pp. 22, 83, The Guide)

Program Notes	

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Standard	
Curriculum **(3 to 6 years)**	

2.3   The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.3.4(a) Language Arts: Listening & Speaking Children are provided with learning experiences that develop effective listening and speaking skills, enabling them to increase the development of oral language in a variety of contexts.	Early childhood educators promote opportunities for speaking and listening by modeling the role of the speaker as well as the listener throughout the day. Engaging children in conversation, making eye contact and asking questions help children develop their speaking and listening skills. Children will learn how to take turns during a discussion and to ask questions. Children need opportunities to work in pairs to share information, take turns speaking and listening, and ask other children to repeat what was said to help develop their listening and speaking skills. (pp. 87-88, The Guide)
Required Evidence O Teaching staff model and elicit standard English and complete thoughts O Opportunities for children to listen and respond to daily read-aloud O Opportunities for children to increase vocabulary through listening activities O Opportunities for children to participate in individual and small group discussions O Opportunities for children to speak to inform, to question, to retell, and to dramatize using complete thoughts O Opportunities for children to participate in process drama	Children need multiple opportunities to hear language to develop and expand vocabulary. English language learners are supported in speaking their home language while learning English. Through a variety of activities in large and small groups, children develop confidence in their abilities to express their needs, choices, feelings, and points of view.

Program Notes

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Standard	
Curriculum **(3 to 6 years)**	
2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.	
Indicator	**Best Practices Rationale**
2.3.4(b) Language Arts: Reading Learning experiences in the reading foundational skills are provided for children, including print awareness, phonological awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary development.	To promote print awareness and concepts, children have regular exposure to books to see how spoken words are represented in print. Educators help young children make connections to print in books as well as in the environment.
Required Evidence O Educators model and implement age appropriate reading strategies, e.g. fingerplays, rhyming, picture matching, phonics and phonemic awareness activities, and comprehension strategies O Classroom library contains 2-3 books, of various genres, per child. O Educators intentionally use functional and environment print O Children are provided opportunities for choral reading O Children are given feedback to promote the development of reading foundational skills O Children are provided opportunities to read for enjoyment	Phonemic awareness and phonics are elements of phonological awareness and precursors to emerging reading skills. Educators use systematic instruction where there is a deliberate and sequential focus on building relationships between sounds and letter symbols so that children can begin to decode new words. Educators also help children develop recognition of sight words. Educators model fluency through read-aloud stories and provide opportunities to read and re-read familiar texts. Literature and informational texts are used to expose children to a variety of genres. Educators provide strategies and activities to build children's vocabulary and comprehension. By asking questions or having children make choices, educators are supporting comprehension skills and vocabulary growth. (pp. 88-91, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard

Curriculum
(3 to 6 years)

2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.3.4(c) Language Arts: Writing Daily writing instruction includes opportunities to write for a variety of intentional purposes.	Skilled early childhood educators make writing a part of every center in the classroom, so that children have many opportunities throughout the day to practice. Writing is an effective means for expressing ideas that can be shared with others, rather than a laborious task of practicing penmanship.

Required Evidence

O Children are provided opportunities for intentional writing to express ideas

O Educators model writing during shared writing, class book creation, language experience charts, and dictation

O Writing center with varied materials are available daily

O Variety of writing materials available in all learning centers

O Child generated books are displayed and available to children

Educators help children understand that thoughts and ideas can be represented in drawing and writing and that those convey meaning. Children are encouraged to express ideas using shapes, symbols, drawings, or dictating words and phrases. Children may use inventive spelling, while adults model "adult writing" when a child is dictating a story. (p. 92, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard	
Curriculum **(3 to 6 years)** **2.3** The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.	
Indicator	**Best Practices Rationale**
2.3.5 Mathematics The curriculum includes mathematics content and process outcomes that support children's ability to solve problems, reason, and make and communicate connections.	Early childhood educators create opportunities for children to learn and manipulate mathematical ideas and concepts through play, exploration, and analysis. They are aware of how to build on children's experiences and intentionally incorporate math into everyday learning across the curriculum. The five strands of math are counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, geometry, and number and operations in base ten.
Required Evidence O Children are provided opportunities for hands-on activities that support mathematical concepts e.g.: counting, graphing, sorting, weighing, measuring, subitizing, comparing, etc. O Materials/manipulatives are available for children to explore and practice math concepts daily O Educators use and encourage mathematical vocabulary throughout the day O Educators integrate mathematical concepts into all content areas and learning centers O Educators promote exploration and inquiry through the use of questioning	Educators use children's natural interest in math to enhance their experiences in preschool and school, using the following practices: • Establish number and operations as a foundational content area • Incorporate math in other content areas • Use progress monitoring to guide instruction • Focus on teaching children to view the world mathematically • Intentional daily math instruction
Program Notes	
Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: __10/13/22__ __ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met	**Final Self-Appraisal Rating** Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

Standard	
Curriculum **(3 to 6 years)**	
2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.	
Indicator	**Best Practices Rationale**

2.3.6 Science

The curriculum emphasizes skills and processes and engages children in activities that include real-life connections and problem-solving opportunities.

Best Practices Rationale

Educators help children develop scientific thinking skills while exploring the natural and physical world around them. As children explore with sand and water, cook, garden, or care for a pet they are recognizing patterns, making predictions, and formulating answers to questions. The educator's role is to bring the scientific vocabulary to these activities and ask children questions that expand their thinking.

Using inquiry-based and problem-based learning, educators guide children toward the scientific processes of observation, prediction, and investigation. Young children use information from science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) while engaged in activities that include real-life connections and problem-solving opportunities. (pp. 97-99, The Guide)

Required Evidence

- O STEM is integrated in all learning centers and content areas
- O Authentic use of science vocabulary in functional print and literature
- O Children are provided opportunities to ask questions, explore, and observe materials and phenomena
- O Children are provided opportunities to make comparisons between objects and materials
- O Variety of tools and multisensory materials that support curriculum implementation
- O Educators use questions that promote exploration and inquiry

Program Notes

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Standard	
Curriculum **(3 to 6 years)**	
2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.	
Indicator **2.3.7 Social Studies** The curriculum focuses on key knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes in the areas of history, government, economics, geography, and peoples of the nations and world.	**Best Practices Rationale** Early childhood educators help children understand their sense of self-identity and the part they play in their family, the early childhood program, and the community. Educators help children value diversity and recognize the important role that each person plays in building a strong and vibrant society. The social studies program enables children to participate effectively in the groups to which they belong. Democratic and participatory school and classroom environments are essential to this type of real world learning. (pp. 99-100, The Guide)
Required Evidence O Age appropriate classroom rules written in positive terms are posted O Authentic materials representing social studies concepts (e.g. books, music, dolls, globes, and/or maps of classroom, school, U.S., world, etc.) O Authentic opportunities to learn about people and their roles O Authentic use of social studies vocabulary O Variety of print materials (newspapers, magazines, books, original photographs, etc.) O Children are provided opportunities to work collaboratively with peers O Social studies activities are integrated in all learning centers and content areas	The social studies program focuses on opportunities for children to learn about themselves, their community and the world. Learning takes place in the context of openness and appreciation for diversity of culture, and respect for similarities and differences among people. Activities that foster citizenship skills and an understanding of the unique qualities and characteristics of others promote cooperative learning and achievement of common goals.

Program Notes

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Standard	
Curriculum **(3 to 6 years)** **2.3** The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.	
Indicator **2.3.8 Fine Arts** Fine arts curriculum provides regular opportunities for children to create, perform, and respond to quality and culturally diverse experiences in visual art, music, theatre, and dance.	**Best Practices Rationale** Opportunities to engage with the arts are integrated throughout the curriculum. Children have multiple opportunities for the following: • Creating new art in all its forms • Performing, presenting, and producing art in all its forms • Responding to all forms of art • Connecting with art in a personally and culturally meaningful way (pp.101-102, The Guide) Instruction in the arts is focused on the process of creating and engaging in art rather than the end product. Young children have time to explore materials in multiple ways. Early childhood educators recognize the value in stand-alone experiences with the arts, but also find ways to integrate the arts into all curricular areas. Children have the opportunity to engage in independent art experiences and educator-guided art experiences.
Required Evidence O Opportunities for children to engage in creative movement, dance and music O Opportunities for children to analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation O Children's creative work is labeled with name and displayed in the classroom/program O Utilization of various music forms i.e.: classical, folk, country, lullabies, cultural music, etc. O Children are provided opportunities to relate personal experiences and knowledge to various forms of art O Fine arts are integrated in all content areas and learning centers	
Program Notes	
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Standard

Curriculum
(3 to 6 years)

2.3 The early childhood program utilizes curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with Maryland's early learning standards.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.3.9 Physical and Health Education Physical education promotes development of healthy lifestyles through daily opportunities for children to develop motor skills, participate in exercise/physical activities, and health/safety practices.	Early childhood educators help children learn self-care routines such as hand washing, and following basic safety rules. Educators help facilitate the physical development of young children by providing opportunities for motor development, both gross and fine motor, that are foundational for developing pre-writing skills, eye-hand coordination, and instilling routines that promote healthy lifestyles.

Required Evidence	
O Children are provided daily opportunities to use indoor and outdoor equipment that promote fine and gross motor skills (climbers, balance beam, balls, bean bags, etc.) O Educators provide guidance and practice in the healthy habit of hand-washing. O Educators intentionally implement indoor and outdoor learning centers that include activities and/or games promoting movement skills O Educators provide appropriate modifications and accommodations for children with disabilities	Children need many opportunities both indoors and outdoors to engage in activities that promote gross motor skills, connect with nature, and develop social foundation skills. Rigorous play gives children a chance to discharge energy and join with peers in developmentally appropriate interactions. Regular intervals of physical activity help support brain development and allow children to learn by doing, and respond to environmental inputs. (pp.84-87, The Guide)

Program Notes

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II. Program Operation

2.4 Instruction
(3 to 6 years)

Standard	
Instruction **(3 to 6 years)**	
2.4 Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards.	
Indicator	**Best Practices Rationale**
2.4.1 Learning Through Play Daily activities include time for free and guided play to provide learning opportunities that are integrated across domains.	Research continues to provide evidence that playful learning supports social foundations, promotes the development of executive function skills, and impacts cognitive development. Free play, such as recess is the time that children spend in a less structured setting and are able to independently initiate and practice activities or games. There is a higher degree of independence and choice. Guided play is initiated by the educator and is more structured. Learning centers (traditional interest areas or literacy based) are examples of guided play.
Required Evidence O Learning centers/Interest areas reflect domains of learning O Children are provided daily opportunities for children to choose where to play O Children are provided daily opportunities for children to choose materials for play O Materials are easily accessible to children	The skilled educator ensures that play is purposeful and serves as a vehicle for learning concepts taught in a more structured setting. Thus, guided play promotes the development of social foundation skills as well as academic skills. Through intentional engagement with learning materials, play, child-directed learning, and educator-directed instruction, opportunities are provided for children to practice skills and concepts of the domains of learning. (pp. 81-82, The Guide)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _10/13/22_ __ Not Met _X_ Partially Met __Fully Met	Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

Standard

Instruction
(3 to 6 years)

2.4 Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.4.2 Independent Learning Exploration Independent learning provides opportunities for children to explore, experiment, question, investigate, and problem-solve. Children take responsibility for their learning.	Materials that encourage open-ended thinking and active participation are an integral part of daily application and follow-up learning. Educators facilitate learning based on the understanding of each child's developmental strengths and needs and use independent learning opportunities to observe and record children's performance. This is a dynamic process between the educator and child with the educator being the facilitator and the child becoming the investigator.
Required Evidence O Learning centers/Interest areas are accessible to all children O Daily schedule provides adequate time for children to immerse themselves in independent learning exploration O Appropriate equipment, manipulatives and materials are accessible O Children are engaged in independent learning activities O Authentic objects and props are utilized by children daily	Independent learning is an integral part of each day. Educators provide time for children to immerse themselves in learning without the pressure of a quick rotation from one center/task to the next. A tremendous amount of development happens as children work within learning centers. Learning center goals are linked to the goals of the curriculum. Educators are mindful of connecting the opportunities in learning centers to the domains of development, providing multiple modalities, and offering multiple levels of tasks so that all learners can work together but on different activities within a learning center. (pg. 128, The Guide)

Program Notes

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__ Not Met / _X_ Partially Met __Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating
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Standard	
Instruction **(3 to 6 years)**	
2.4 Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards.	
Indicator	**Best Practices Rationale**

2.4.3 Authentic Learning

Instruction integrates concepts of curriculum into developmentally appropriate practices and relates in a meaningful way to children's real life experiences.

Instruction is presented in the context of the child's world and related in a meaningful way to real-life experiences. Educators facilitate learning based on children's prior experiences, documented observations, and work samples as part of their ongoing assessment of children's strengths and needs. As part of daily instruction, educators facilitate opportunities for children to investigate, apply, and extend their learning. When educators provide home/school connections, children are able to extend and apply their learning outside the classroom. The planning process includes alignment with curricular objectives across content areas.

Required Evidence

O   Educators provide topics/discussions relevant to young children's interests and needs

O   Educators provide hands-on learning opportunities

O   Classroom activities reflect children's prior experiences

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: __/0/13/22__
__ Not Met   _X_Partially Met   __Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: _____
__ Not Met   __Partially Met   __Fully Met

Standard	
Instruction **(3 to 6 years)** **2.4 Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards.**	

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.4.4 Instructional Strategies Instruction is based upon children's individual needs, interests, strengths, and learning styles.	Educators align instructional practices, curriculum, and assessment methods for the purpose of facilitating each child's learning. To help children to acquire new skills and concepts, educators select from a range of strategies, including: asking open-ended questions; offering cues and prompts; listening attentively to children's responses and giving them enough time to express themselves; demonstrating skills; adding more complex materials or concepts to a learning situation; and providing opportunities for cooperative learning.

Required Evidence
 	
O   Educators provide opportunities and activities that meet children's needs:
     ▪ Cooperative learning experiences
     ▪ Exploratory learning centers
     ▪ Differentiated tasks
     ▪ Scaffolding
O   Educators implement strategies that encourage higher level thinking skills such as
     ▪ Open-ended, higher level questions, and investigation
     ▪ Cooperative learning strategies
     ▪ Problem solving strategies
O   Balance of educator-directed and child-initiated experiences
O   Multiple and flexible means for children to express and engage in learning
	Because there is no such thing as a "typical learner" and any kind of one-size-fits-all educational approach does not reach all learners, children of all abilities need a variety of opportunities to access curriculum and assessments. Educators provide multiple and flexible ways for children to demonstrate what they have learned. Educators also have multiple and flexible means of engaging the learner so that all children are motivated to learn. (p. 63, The Guide)

Program Notes	

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__ Not Met / X Partially Met __Fully Met | Final Self-Appraisal Rating
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Standard

Instruction
(3 to 6 years)

2.4 **Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards.**

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.4.5(a) Management Strategies: Transitions Instruction incorporates management strategies which facilitate logical and organized transitions and routines.	Children are learning important life skills as they transition from one activity to another. Transition times are opportunities for developing social foundation skills. In this, educators help children learn how to manage choices and change, how to plan their time, how to follow directions, how to work collaboratively, and how to learn responsibility. The main idea is that transitions are a time for learning, too.
Required Evidence	
O Wait time is limited for children during transitions O Educators use a variety of strategies to signal a transition is approaching O Educators use a variety of behavior management strategies that result in positive learning behaviors (e.g., acknowledging positive behavior of children, avoidance, ignoring, etc.) O Children know routines O Visual schedule is posted to assist children with daily routines	The classroom community is organized and structured. The children are aware of expectations and daily routines. Children and educators share responsibility for the classroom. Minimal amounts of time are spent getting ready, sitting, and listening. Sufficient time is allocated for transitions to allow children to clean up and prepare for the next activity. Educators use a variety of strategies to signal a transition, e.g. rhythmic clapping, finger play, son, dimming the lights, ringing a bell, music, or verbal announcement. (p. 123, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard	
Instruction **(3 to 6 years)**	

2.4 **Curriculum is delivered through instructional strategies which support each child's development and attainment of Maryland early learning standards.**

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
2.4.5(b) **Management Strategies: Behaviors** Instruction incorporates management strategies which facilitate and promote positive behavior.	Early childhood educators use positive strategies, e.g. re-direction, to support children's appropriate behaviors. Educators' responses are consistent in guiding behavior to meet each child's developmental needs. When problems arise, the educator responds quickly to support the child and maintain the safety and flow of the classroom.
Required Evidence O Educators use visual cues that support classroom expectations O Children know classroom rules and expectations so they can function with appropriate adult supports based on age and developmental need	Children are actively involved in creating solutions to classroom challenges. Classroom activities and expectations are appropriate to the age and developmental needs of children. Educators are intentional in teaching positive social interactions to all children. (pp. 70-73, The Guide)

Program Notes

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__ Not Met /✓ Partially Met __Fully Met	__ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

III. Home and Community Partnerships

3.1 Partnerships (Birth – 6 years)

Standard	
Partnerships **(Birth – 6 years)**	

3.1   Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
3.1.1 Communication with Families Expectations and information about early learning programs are disseminated on an ongoing basis and allow for family input.	Designing effective forms of communication about programs and program activities helps bridge the gap between families and programs. Effective communication provides opportunities for parents to communicate information regarding their children's strengths and needs, and their expectations for their child.
Required Evidence ☐ Registration/Enrollment materials ☐ Parent/Family Handbook ☐ Evidence of ongoing family communication	Expectations for early learning programs and plans for implementing them are disseminated to parents on an ongoing basis. Scheduling activities at times convenient and flexible for parents encourages family participation. Programs encourage family engagement by co-creating a monthly calendar of events that highlight adult and family-child opportunities in the program, as well as in the community. (pp. 37-41, The Guide)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: _/o//3/2Z_	Date: _____
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Standard

Partnerships
(Birth – 6 years)

3.1   Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
3.1.2 Supporting Child Development Families, community members, and staff collaborate to promote child development and learning at home.	Effective family engagement strategies create a culture of high expectations in programs where family members support learning at home and monitor their children's performance. They advocate for their children and are active in guiding their education. Families are respected as the experts on their children. Educators engage families about their hopes and dreams for their children. Families are asked about any ideas or concerns they may have regarding collaboration and involvement. Educators take the time to listen to family ideas and concerns, as well as invite them to continuously share input. Educators and families work together to set goals and identify ways in which they can work together to achieve those goals.
Required Evidence ☐ Evidence of family education and outreach containing information about child development and learning ☐ School readiness materials shared with families	Educators share information about evidence-based family programs to support specific family engagement goals. These goals may focus on literacy, comprehensive family support, home visiting, or school readiness goals. Strategies that encourage engagement also include sending materials home with tips for families to support learning at home. (pp. 41-46, The Guide)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: ___ /o / /3/ 22_ __ Not Met ⤬Partially Met __Fully Met	Final Self-Appraisal Rating Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

Standard

Partnerships
(Birth – 6 years)

3.1   **Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.**

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
3.1.3 Communication of Assessment Information Assessment information is communicated with children and parents/guardians on a regular, ongoing basis or at least twice per year.	As early childhood educators talk with families about the purpose of assessment, they acknowledge the important role that families play as their child's first educator. Early childhood educators need families to be active participants in supporting children's learning in and out of the home.

Required Evidence	
☐ Completed Progress Reports/Report Cards ☐ Conference Schedules (twice per year) ☐ Completed Parent-Teacher Conference form ☐ Documentation of strategies shared with families to support development	From the beginning, early childhood educators talk with families about the importance of regular, ongoing assessment and how different assessments are used to monitor children's progress. Assessments help educators and families better understand the strengths and potential challenges of individual children, so that strategies can be tailored to best meet each child's interests and needs. A parent-teacher conference is the typical approach used to share information about children's learning and the growth they have made. Most critical in those conversations is the professional guidance by educators on what families can do at home to support their child's learning. Providing suggestions for action is also important so that the family knows precisely what they can do to help their child make gains in a given area of development. (pp. 188-189, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard	
Partnerships **(Birth – 6 years)**	

3.1   Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
3.1.4 Family Engagement and Involvement Families, staff, and administrators are actively involved in program-based activities, curriculum, shared decision making, and advocacy for children.	The opportunities for engaging families are endless. While early childhood educators come up with a host of strategies, they keep in mind that engagement is a reciprocal partnership and involve families in the development of ideas and strategies as well. Effective family engagement strategies create a culture of high expectations in programs where family members support learning at home and monitor their children's performance. They advocate for their children and are active in guiding their education.

Required Evidence
 ☐ Evidence of implementation of family engagement strategies
     ▪ Policy handbook which outlines the decision making, grievance, problem solving process
     ▪ Agendas for trainings/workshops provided for families
     ▪ List of: Parent Advisory Board; PTA/PTO; Parent Officers or Committee Chairs; School Improvement Team Parent Members
	Some strategies that encourage engagement include: sending materials home in language that is family friendly; inviting families into the program to help with learning projects; giving families specific tasks so they can be part of the learning/teaching experience; and working with groups of families to co-create events of special interests. (pp.38-43, The Guide)
	
	 Additional information on family engagement strategies can be found in *The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework: Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children.*

Program Notes

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Standard	

Partnerships
(Birth – 6 years)

3.1 **Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.**	
Indicator	**Best Practices Rationale**
3.1.5 Community Engagement and Involvement Community resources are used to strengthen early learning programs, families, and children's learning.	Community engagement is a partnership. The early childhood program and the larger community work together supporting one another and sharing responsibility for meeting the comprehensive needs of young children and their families. Programs look for ways to rally the support and resources needed to meet the needs of the whole child and go beyond what the program can provide. They can seek out ways to be a valued resource to the community as well, offering a place for meetings, extending training opportunities to providers through the community, participating in local celebrations, and joining forces with the community to speak out on behalf of children and their families
Required Evidence ☐ Newsletters regarding community resources ☐ Community Resource Directory available to parents ☐ Evidence of partnerships with community programs and businesses	
	There are many strategies that programs can use to engage the community. Some of these strategies include, but are not limited to: inviting community and business leaders to your program; partnering with the local library; reaching out to local museums; partnering with local service organizations; and/or connecting with a local nursing home or hospital. (pp.46-49, The Guide)

Program Notes

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Standard	
Partnerships **(Birth – 6 years)**	

3.1 Family and community partnerships support the success of early learning programs.

Indicator	Best Practices Rationale
3.1.6 Evaluation Family and community partners are encouraged to provide input to strengthen early learning programs, family practices, and children's learning and development.	Evaluation and feedback from families are important elements of successful programs. There are three steps programs can use to evaluate their effectiveness: • Measuring participation and attendance at events to help identify how to best recruit and retain participants • Gathering baseline family data at the beginning of the year, which allows staff to identify roadblocks or strengths for families • Surveying the needs and satisfaction of families to tailor the types of activities to support families Knowing the research on the characteristics and evaluation practices of successful family engagement programs can be helpful as educators seek to develop or choose initiatives to engage their families. A systemic approach where family engagement values and principles are woven into every aspect of the program has a greater likelihood of being effective and successful.
Required Evidence ☐ Completed parent survey ☐ Evidence parent survey results shared with parent advisory committee; Program/School Improvement Team; and/or governing body	

Program Notes

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