



# Preparing Children for Success: Defining Desired Outcomes in the Preschool Years

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**SERVE**<sup>TM</sup>  
*Improving Learning through  
Research & Development*

# Perspectives on Readiness

- No uniform definition of readiness but general consensus on elements of development that are important





# What Teachers Say About Readiness

- NCEDL survey of 3600 teachers
  - 52% successfully transitioned
  - 16% had difficulty transitioning
- Areas of greatest concern
  - Following directions
  - Academic skills
  - Working independently
  - Working as part of the group



# Eager to Learn

- Children are capable of learning a great deal when they are in environments that support their development.
- What and how they learn are greatly impacted by their family background, culture, and their own temperament and learning style

# Domains of Development



- Physical well-being and motor development
- Social and emotional development
- Approaches toward learning
- Language development
- Cognition and general knowledge



# Physical Well-being and Motor Development

- Overall rate of growth
- Level of physical fitness
  - Strength, stamina, flexibility, etc.
  - Motor skills
- Health



# Emotional Domain

- Self-concept
- Self-efficacy
- Self-regulation
- Sensitivity to the feelings of others



# Social Domain

- Relationships with adults
  - Ability to get along well with adults
  - Ability to follow directions
- Relationships with peers
  - Ability to play well with other children
  - Ability to make friends



# Approaches Toward Learning

- Openness to and curiosity about new tasks and challenges
- Task persistence and attentiveness
- Reflection and interpretation
- Imagination
- Thinking style
- Confidence in their ability to succeed



# Language Development

- Verbal language
  - Listening
  - Speaking
  - Vocabulary
  - Social uses of language
- Emerging literacy
  - Oral language
  - Print knowledge
  - Phonological awareness



# Cognition and General Knowledge

- General knowledge
  - Physical
  - Logico-Mathematical
  - Social-Conventional

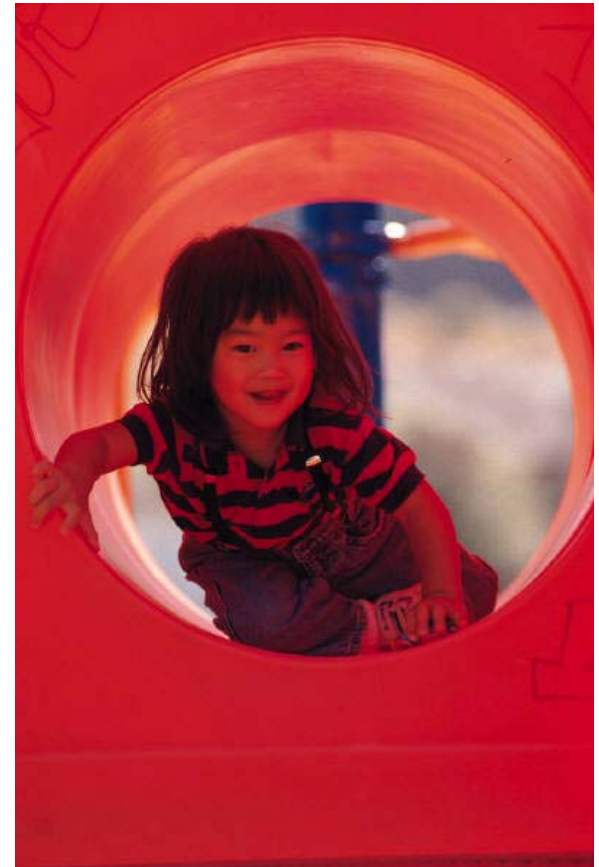


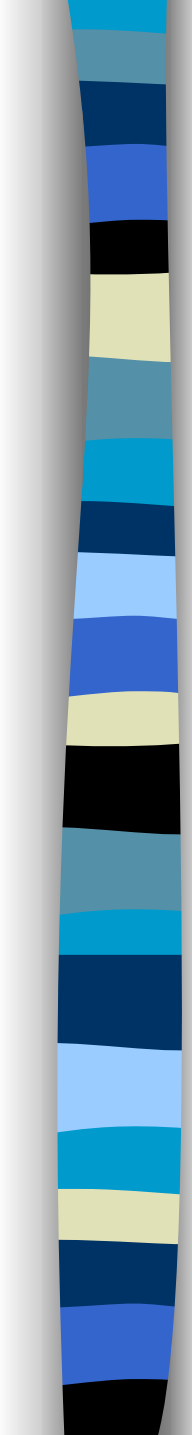
# Development Proceeds Differently for Every Child

- Development influenced by
  - Genetics
  - Culture
  - Social context
  - Family experiences
  - Out-of-home care experiences
- Yet we know that children are more competent learners than we previously thought.

# What do we know about children entering kindergarten?

- Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten class of 1998-99
  - 22,000 kindergarteners
  - Follow through fifth grade





# Children vary in the skills and characteristics they exhibit when they enter kindergarten

- Generally healthy but 12% overweight
- Generally exhibit high incidence of prosocial behaviors and low incidence of problem behaviors
- Most exhibit positive approaches toward learning
- Cognitive skills and general knowledge ranges

# SERVE's Study of Early Learning Standards

Scott-Little, Kagan & Frelow, 2003





# Purposes of the Study

- Document which states have developed early learning standards for children before kindergarten
- Learn about the process that was used to develop the standards
- Develop a preliminary understanding of what was included in the standards
- Learn how the standards are being implemented/used



# Data Sources

- National survey with key informants
  - Telephone interviews (November 2001-May 2002)
    - 177 individuals contacted
    - 77 provided data
      - 50 Early Childhood Specialists
      - 13 Child Care Administrators
      - 14 AEYC Representatives
- Document reviews



# Findings



# Where States Are in the Standards Development Process

- 27 states had CBO standards covering at least one developmental domain or content area for pre-school age children.
  - These states had a CBO standards document published and available at the time of the interview.
- 12 states, plus the District of Columbia, were in the process of developing standards.



# Standards Development Process

- Started in response to a mandate/order or informal recognition of the need
- Highly inclusive
- Funded through a variety of sources
- Used a variety of resources
- Took one to two years
- Incorporated public input

# The Nature of Child-based Outcome Standards



- Ages included
- Developmental domains and subject areas
- Inclusion
- Linkage with K-12 standards



# Ages Addressed in Standards

- Most states addressed preschool age
  - States most commonly developed standards to address a broad age range and not one specific point in time - ages three to five (17).
  - Others described expectations for children at the completion of pre-K or the beginning of kindergarten (6).
  - Some states developed CBO standards for infants and toddlers (4).
- Florida's standards have outlined expectations for children at age 3, 4 & 5



# Areas of Development Addressed

- Developmental domains and subject areas covered in CBO standards documents
  - Language/literacy and cognition most common domains
  - Approaches to learning and social/emotional development least common
- Florida's standards include 6 domains

# Relatively few states have addressed the needs of diverse learners



- Limited guidance on how the standards are to be adapted for children with varying characteristics, from various cultures, or with disabilities
- Unclear from most of the documents how the standards would be utilized with children whose primary language is not English



# Linkage With the K-12 Standards

- All states reported that their state's CBO standards were either linked or related to the K-12 state standards.
- Different approaches to express linkage
  - Specific CBO standards are cross-referenced with K-12 standards (15)
  - In remaining states, linkage is less evident (12)
- Florida's standards show linkage to Sunshine State Standards, the Statutory Checklist and Head Start.

# Intended Purposes for CBO Standards

- Inform curriculum and instruction (27)
- Provide a basis for instructional assessment (14)
- Improve school readiness (13)
- Improve overall program quality (11)
- Hold programs accountable for child outcomes (4)



# Examples of Child-based Outcome Standards

- California
- Washington
- Maryland





# California: Desired Results System

Desired Results of all CDE-funded child care and development programs:

- Children are personally and socially competent
- Children are effective learners
- Children show physical and motor competence
- Children are safe and healthy
- Families support their children's learning and development
- Families achieve their goals

Indicators for birth through 14 years



# Washington: Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program

- Outcomes selected for measurement in the ECEAP Evaluation:
- Children
  - Increase their literacy skills
  - Increase their language and communication skills
  - Increase their numeracy skills
  - Improve their social/emotional skills
  - Have self-care skills
  - Receive needed medical care
  - Receive needed dental care
- Families are involved in their child's education and have access to community resources



# Maryland Model for School Readiness

- Readiness system includes all providers birth through kindergarten
- Developed outcome and indicators for
  - Physical well-being and motor development
  - Social and emotional development
  - Approaches toward learning
  - Language and literacy development
  - Cognition and general knowledge



# Training and Support . . .

- Overall, investment in the standards development process appears to have outpaced efforts to provide support for their use.



# What Should the Relationship Look Like?

Standards -- Curriculum -- Assessment

# Considerations for Establishing Child-based Outcomes Standards



- Clear on how they will be used
- Each developmental domain is important
- Expect variation in children's abilities
  - Typically developing children
  - Children with special circumstances
    - Cultures
    - Languages
    - Disabilities

# Additional Considerations

- Safeguards to ensure that the program, not the children, are held responsible
- Training and support essential
- Assessments carefully aligned with the standards and the curriculum



# Final Considerations



- Standards as unifying element in early childhood field
- Avoid multiple sets of standards