



Introduction to the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Curricular Alignment Tool

Purpose:

The *Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Curricular Alignment Tool* is designed to help your facility determine how well your curriculum aligns with the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines. The tool was created for Early Achievers participants in order to meet a component of the Early Achievers Quality Standards. However, any facility interested in learning about how their curriculum aligns with the Guidelines may use this tool.

Under the ***Facility Curriculum and Learning Environment and Interactions*** quality standard area, participants can earn up to two points for demonstrating that their facility curriculum aligns with the Guidelines. ***Alignment*** means that the facility curriculum is designed and implemented to support the areas of development in the Guidelines for all ages of children served.

Curriculum Profile	Show evidence of program Curriculum Philosophy (1 point)	Demonstrate alignment with WA Early Learning and Development Guidelines (2 points)	3 points
---------------------------	--	---	----------

What is a curriculum?

A ***curriculum*** is a facility’s roadmap for planning and implementing a program and includes:

- Goals for children and families
- Experiences and materials provided by the facility to help children achieve those goals
- How providers and families work together to support children.

A curriculum plays an important role in enhancing the social competence and school readiness of children. The Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines are an important resource to inform the content of a program’s early learning curriculum.

Early Achievers does not require participants to use a *specific* curriculum. Rather, curricula should be aligned with the Guidelines and reflect the values and philosophy of the facility and the children and families served.

What are the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines?

The Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines are a statewide resource for families, caregivers, child care professionals, teachers and others who care for or work with children. They are designed to provide essential information to support and enhance children’s learning and development. Several key resources were considered in creating the Guidelines, including Washington’s 2005 Early Learning and Development Benchmarks, early learning standards from other states, Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) standards, and our state’s academic learning standards. The Guidelines provide an update to the previous Early Learning and Development Benchmarks including a focus on reflecting the rich cultural diversity of Washington State and expanding the ages covered to include children up to 3rd grade.

The Guidelines are organized by age of children and areas of development:

Age:

- Young infants (birth to 11 months)
- Older infants (about 9 months to 18 months)
- Toddlers: (about 16 to 36 months)
- Ages 3 to 4 years
- Ages 4 to 5 years
- Age 5 and Kindergarten
- 1st grade (usually 6 years)
- 2nd grade (usually 7 years)
- 3rd grade (usually 8 years)

Domains or Areas of Development:

- About me and my family and culture
- Building relationships
- Touching, seeing, hearing and moving around
- Growing up healthy
- Communicating
- Learning about my world

To download the full publication, visit: www.del.wa.gov/publications/development/docs/Guidelines.pdf

Why is it important that facility curriculum align to the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines?

Curriculum that is aligned with the Guidelines helps ensure that all children across age groups and settings receive developmentally appropriate instruction and learning experiences. It is important to remember that the Guidelines alone are not the curriculum, but are the foundation for building a curriculum that includes families and supports the social competence and school readiness of children.

What does the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Curricular Alignment Tool help me do?

Providers complete the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Curricular Alignment Tool worksheets (available as a separate document) to demonstrate how their facility's curriculum is aligned with the Guidelines. Providers will compare and match their facility's curriculum goals, activities or objectives to the Guidelines framework. The tool is organized by: Guidelines areas of development; ages of children; and specific learning goals that align to the areas of development¹. In addition, the tool includes the domains from the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCDEL, 2010) so participants can see how Guidelines and their facility curriculum lines up with national standards.

The tool helps providers look at how their curriculum aligns with the Guidelines in two different but equally important ways:

1. Coverage & Balance: Providers can use the tool to review their curriculum to ask:

- Does my curriculum cover each *domain*, or area of child development?
- Is the coverage balanced within and across domains?

Coverage = how well the curriculum addresses all or most child development domains.

- For example, "Am I including activities that support the developmental tasks in the area, *Communication*, as well as developmental tasks in the area *Building Relationships*?"

Balance = how much each domain is represented within the curriculum. Is each area covered and how thoroughly? Are there areas that aren't included?

- For example, "Am I adequately addressing the developmental tasks in the area *Communication* throughout my learning activities?"

¹ The 2012 Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines were created to be in harmony with the domains and learning goals from the 2005 Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks. The learning goals listed on the curricular alignment tool are adapted from the Benchmarks and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. These learning goals are aligned to the Guidelines' indicators and ideas to try with children, and highlight developmental tasks that span across the ages. For more information on the creation of the Guidelines, refer to The Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines.

2. **Depth & Difficulty:** Providers can use the tool to take a deeper look at their curriculum to make sure it supports the range of skills and developmental levels of the children served. The tool will help providers reflect on their curriculum to ask:
 - Does the curriculum support children’s skills with enough depth and difficulty to support child development?

Depth = how well a curriculum provides a sequence of activities that match children’s developing and increasing skills

Difficulty = whether the curriculum helps children to reach beyond their existing skills by providing them with developmentally appropriate challenges and supports

Who should complete the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Curricular Alignment Tool?

The tool is best completed with teams of teachers as a professional development exercise. If providers work alone, as in the case of some family child care providers, it is recommended that they find a community of providers or parents to work with to help them reflect on their curriculum. If this is done, those community members can be listed as “teachers” on the front page of the Curricular Alignment Tool.

Steps to complete the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Curricular Alignment Tool worksheets:

1. Determine the best approach to review your curriculum:

There are two different approaches that providers may use to complete the tool. Providers may choose to complete the tool in both ways for the most rigorous examination of their curriculum, but **only one approach is required**. The approach you choose should be noted on the front page of the tool.

- **Emergent approach:** This approach works best for facilities that use emergent or project-based curricula, (e.g., Reggio Emilia), or that integrate different curricular philosophies to support an overarching theory of child development and learning. In this approach, providers identify the learning goals for each of their learning activities, and then write the activities in the space next to the learning goals. (See Example 1)
- **Published approach:** This approach works best for facilities that use established (e.g., Creative Curriculum) or research-based (e.g., Tools of Mind) curriculum. In this approach, providers will write the goals from the curriculum in the space next to the learning goals. (See Example 2)

2. Complete table and questions for each area of development:

Providers will complete one table and a series of questions for each of the six areas of development. Providers should complete the tables first, and then use that information to answer the questions for each area. Each table will be filled out according to the Emergent or Published approach identified by the provider. The “totals” columns can help you keep track of whether an area is represented and for which age groups as you go along—this can help you later when you are ready to complete the summary reflection at the end of the tool.

3. Complete Curricular Alignment Tool Summary:

At the end of the document, you will have the opportunity to reflect on how well your curriculum addresses all the areas of development of the Guidelines for all of the children in your program. Fill out the summary table by placing a check mark to indicate whether or not the each area is addressed by your curriculum. Then answer the provided questions to reflect on the extent of your program’s curriculum coverage, balance, depth and difficulty.

Example 1--*Emergent* review of curriculum.

ELG Area of Development	Touching, seeing, hearing, moving around
HS Domain	Physical Development & Health, Creative Arts Expression, English Language Development
Objectives/Goals/Activities from Curriculum that Address Goals for Age-groups Served	
Learning Goals	3 - 4 years
Demonstrate strength/coordination of large motor muscles - the control of large muscles for movement, navigation and balance	<i>Native American History Project: Scavenger Hunt/Nature walk to find materials for puppet making and try out different large motor skills</i>
Demonstrate strength/coordination of small motor muscles- the control of small muscles for movement, navigation and balance	<i>Native American History Project: Necklace making activity with bead sequencing; storybook character drawing activity; Puppet making activity with buttons made out of natural materials</i>
Children use senses to guide motions	<i>Native American History Project: Scavenger Hunt/Nature walk to find materials for puppet making and try out different large motor skills</i>
Demonstrate stamina and energy to participate in daily activities	<i>Native American History Project: Scavenger Hunt/Nature walk to find natural materials for puppet making and try out different large motor skills</i>
Children engage in a variety of physical activities	<i>Native American History Project: Scavenger Hunt/Nature walk; Native American Dances</i>
Children use their bodies and movements to express themselves	<i>Native American History Project: Native American Dances</i>
Dual Language Learners: Adaptions have been made so that activities are accessible to Dual Language Learners	<i>Native American History Project: Identified key terms and had them translated, developed a series of gestures to use in explaining steps in activities, and paired Dual Language Learners with peers</i>

Example 2--Published review of curriculum

ELG Area of Development	Touching, seeing, hearing, moving around
HS Domain	Physical Development & Health, Creative Arts Expression, English Language Development
Objectives/Goals/Activities from Curriculum that Address Goals for Age-groups Served	
Learning Goals	3 - 4 years
Demonstrate strength/coordination of large motor muscles - the control of large muscles for movement, navigation and balance	<p><i>Obj.4. Demonstrates traveling skills (a) walks; (b) runs; (c) gallops and skips</i></p> <p><i>Obj. 5. Demonstrates balancing skills (a) Sits and stands; (b) Walks on beam; (c) Jumps and hops</i></p> <p><i>Obj. 6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills (a) Throws; (b) Catches; (c) Kicks</i></p>
Demonstrate strength/coordination of small motor muscles- the control of small muscles for movement, navigation and balance	<i>Obj.7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination (a) Uses fingers and hands; (b) Uses writing and drawing tools</i>
Children use senses to guide motions	<i>Obj. 5. Demonstrates balancing skills (a) Sits and stands; (b) Walks on beam; (c) Jumps and hops</i>
Demonstrate stamina and energy to participate in daily activities	<i>Obj.4. Demonstrates traveling skills (a) walks; (b) runs; (c) gallops and skips</i>
Children engage in a variety of physical activities	<p><i>Obj.4. Demonstrates traveling skills (a) walks; (b) runs; (c) gallops and skips</i></p> <p><i>Obj. 5. Demonstrates balancing skills (a) Sits and stands; (b) Walks on beam; (c) Jumps and hops</i></p> <p><i>Obj. 6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills (a) Throws; (b) Catches; (c) Kicks</i></p>
Children use their bodies and movements to express themselves	<i>Obj.7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination (a) Uses fingers and hands; (b) Uses writing and drawing tools</i>
Dual Language Learners: Adaptions have been made so that activities are accessible to Dual Language Learners	<i>Identified key terms and had them translated, developed a series of gestures and visual cue cards to use in explaining steps in activities, and paired Dual Language Learners with peers</i>