INTRODUCTION:
In our increasingly diverse society, professionals in early education serve children with a wide range of backgrounds, languages, beliefs, and needs. This tool has been designed to help professionals review seven components of their early education programs:

- Administrative Practices
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Family Involvement Practices
- Healthy, Safe, and Engaging Environments
- Effective Teaching Practices
- Social Emotional Environment; and
- Transition Practices

Each area of the tool presents fundamental, sound early education practices. The tool has two distinct purposes in mind and is designed to answer the following questions:

1. **Is your early education program responding to and supporting children’s school readiness, especially the readiness of those who are at risk for experiencing gaps and delays at school entry?** For example:
   - Children coming from poverty
   - Children with limited language proficiency
   - Children with disabilities
   - Children of color
   - Children with unique learning patterns

   The importance of children being ready for school is well-documented in the literature. There are specific skills, dispositions and health characteristics that are essential to children’s future success in school. Children who enter school ready to learn are curious and enthusiastic, eager to learn, with a willingness to get along with others, and are healthy both physically and mentally. This concept of school readiness encompasses the child, the school and the family. In addition to children being ready for school, schools need to be ready to receive all children, and this checklist looks at practices in which programs engage in order to support the school readiness of both children and families.

2. **Is each aspect of your program universally-designed, so that all children and their families may participate, learn, and benefit?**

   Is your program designed in a way that assures:
   - Equitable opportunities for all children and families?
   - Common experiences for children and families?
   - Access to all because physical, social, and cognitive barriers have been minimized?

   Is your program designed so there are multiple means for:
   - Presenting children with information?
   - Affording children access to all learning opportunities?
Engaging children in learning?
Allowing children to express themselves?
Observing and documenting children’s progress?

There are many well-designed, research-based tools that look carefully at specific areas of practice in early education. This tool synthesizes information from our own research around school readiness as well as from a variety of program practices evaluation tools. Our efforts have been focused on developing a practical tool that integrates this information within a universal design framework. Universal design provides a framework for supporting all young learners. The universal design of early learning suggests that it is better to start off with an instructional design which provides learners with a variety of ways to access and process information and demonstrate what they have learned instead of creating a curriculum and then adapting it to meet the needs of individual children in the program. This framework calls for early educators to value from the beginning the importance of planning learning environments and activities for a diverse population – creating universally designed settings in which all children and their families can participate and learn.

Instructions: Using This Checklist as a Self-Assessment:
The purpose of this checklist is to identify and promote growth among individuals and within organizations to enhance their ability to support school readiness skills for all young children. Self-assessment provides an opportunity to identify strengths as well as areas of growth. The assessment is best when it is conducted by a team whose members know one or more of the seven aspects of early education mentioned earlier.

The results of this checklist (assessment) will be shared with the larger Ready Schools group to guide decisions regarding future emphasis. The process or timeline for sharing this information will be decided by your Ready Schools group.

Instructions: This checklist looks at the component areas included in most early education environments. It includes indicators that will help you to identify whether or not you are implementing practices that support school readiness and to assess whether or not you are implementing these practices in a way that supports, encourages, and recognizes the many unique variables that each child brings to the learning environment. Please consider the following as you complete this checklist:

- When choosing a component frequency option, the “DK” indicates that you simply “don’t know”.

- When we use the word “teacher”, we are referring to all early education providers, and when we use the word “classroom”, we are referring to any setting in which young children are being served.

- As you analyze and summarize the results, keep in mind that more than three “Never”, “Seldom”, or “Sometimes” responses may indicate that you need to focus your improvement efforts in those component areas, Therefore, you would check “yes”, in the “target for improvement” column.

- On the other hand, you may find that you have done well in the component area as a whole, but you still want to target a specific
indicator/practice in order to enhance your program. If so, you would check “yes” in the “target for improvement” column.

You may find it more difficult to measure some of the indicators – especially in the administrative section. Simply answer to the best of your knowledge, and we may also follow-up by interviewing a member of the administrative staff to get their input as well.

In the Observations/Evidence column of the checklist we are asking you to give us examples of what it may look like in your classroom when you are using the specific practice or you may provide evidence that shows that the practice has been implemented. This manual also includes examples of each practice to present a clear understanding of what it may look like in the classroom.

Here is a sample of one practice under the Administrative section of the checklist:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>D K</th>
<th>Target for improvement</th>
<th>Observations/Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Supportive Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Leadership has a clear vision and plan to ensure the success of every child, and take steps to implement that plan.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The director has worked with us on a plan and we talk about what it means. We have a brochure that explains it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Field testing this Checklist:**

We are asking early education providers who are members of a Ready to Learn community to complete this SRUD checklist. ECC staff will follow up with interviews and observations to confirm the results. This checklist is not finalized yet. Your participation in this research will help us to refine this tool by applying the checklist and giving feedback on ways to improve this tool. Here is a list of questions that we would ask you to consider as you are going through the checklist. Please record your thoughts, ideas and suggestions:

**Overall Questions:**
1. Does the checklist meet your needs as part of the Ready Schools Community? Why or why not?

2. Is the organization of the tool clear, and does it make sense?

3. Does the overall scoring accurately reflect the quality of your program in helping children to be ready for school?

4. How long did it take you to complete the checklist?

**Questions following each section:**
5. Did you struggle with documenting your responses with examples of actual practices you use in the classroom?

6. Are each of the items clear and easily understood and answered?

7. Do the practices apply to your early education setting?

Description of sections within the Checklist including examples of most of the practices:

I. Administrative Practices – The design of the administrative practices facilitates early education environments that are ready to welcome, include, educate, and support all children and families.

A. Supportive Leadership
   1. Leadership has a clear vision and plan to ensure the success of every child, and take steps to implement that plan.
      Examples:
      • The administrative plan defines the responsibilities for administrators and staff, such as a monthly meeting with each classroom team to review individual children’s progress and challenges and to jointly develop solutions.
      • The director expresses her genuine expectation that every child will experience success in the setting whether in her individual communications with children, families, and staff or in her public communication.

   2. Administrative policies and practices welcome all children and families regardless of ability levels, health status, or racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
      Examples:
      • When families ask the center’s receptionist about enrolling their children who may not be "potty-trained" or talking at age four, there is no hesitation in her welcome or assurance of enrollment.
      • The enrollment forms ask for information from the parent, other family member, or guardian rather than asking for information about the father and mother.
      • The school’s brochures, web site, and other information pieces explicitly state the welcome of all children and families or include a comprehensive non-discrimination statement.

   3. Leadership encourages ideas and recommendations from staff, families, children, and members of the community.
      Examples:
      • The preschool director maintains relationships with administrators of other community organizations that enable her to gain unsolicited comments and ideas about the preschool, as well as to solicit input on specific questions that the program has.
      • The child care center director has asked the staff and parents to assist with developing and instituting an annual self-assessment system. This helps her see the components and items that staff members think are important to improving their program.

4. Administrative staff who supervise teachers have professional training in early childhood education and experience working with children ages birth to five.
   Examples:
• The child care center director who has education and experience in early childhood education reviews the applications of new teacher applicants in order to determine which of them will be most able to support the healthy development, relationships, and learning of the children who are enrolled.
• The school principal provides guidance on early childhood curriculum.

5. Leadership regularly assesses program quality using research-based measures (e.g., environmental rating scale, classroom interaction analysis, etc.)
• Programs that are accredited create program and/or classroom portfolios or other methods to assess and maintain program quality. Organizations that offer accreditation include National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (through NAEYC), the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Preschool Accreditation Program, the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) and others.
• Programs might instead use such research-based measures as the American Academy of Pediatrics Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care, 2nd Edition or the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale.

6. Leadership supports the use of early education practices that effectively teach all children and prepare them and their families for school.
• The principal is responsive and seeks the required resources when teachers ask for support that enables them to meet children’s needs, whether it is inservice education to develop skills in diversifying curriculum and instruction or time to problem solve around a child’s learning progress.
• The education coordinator mentions literature she has read describing evidence for effective education strategies and encourages teachers to look for and share with the staff the practices for which they have found supportive evidence.

B. High Quality Staff
All teaching staff has academic training and experience in early childhood education.
• Teaching staff have taken classes for credit on topics related to early childhood education.
• Teaching staff have experience working with children 3-5 in early education settings (i.e., private or public preschool, Head Start, Montessori, or other child care settings).

Teachers receive training to select and modify curricula and instructional methods according to individual student needs.
• Teachers receive training that helps them to understand how to adapt the way they teach children with a variety of special needs (i.e., cognitive delays, communicative, physical or behavioral challenges, etc.).
• The administrator works with teachers to find workshops, conferences, and professional journals that help them to plan activities that meet the unique needs of the children.

Staff development emphasizes training that is long-term, intensive and supports teachers in using teaching practices proven to be effective.
• Training for teachers includes in-depth information on instruction and assessment topics, and there are opportunities for them to support each other in what they have learned.
• The program finds ways to help staff earn teaching degrees.

Program staff reflects the cultures and languages of the children and families they serve.
• If a number of children speak Spanish, then there is at least one staff member that speaks Spanish
• If a number of children are African-American, then one or more staff members are African-American

Teachers receive training needed to work with children from diverse linguistic-cultural backgrounds.
• If the classroom teacher comes from a white, middle class cultural perspective, then he or she is provided with training to understand the strengths and needs of a Latino child or a child from a lower socio-economic background.

Program staff uses language that is respectful of all people and groups.
• Teachers use person first language. (i.e. a child with autism, rather than an autistic child)
• Teachers refer to other cultural groups by names that are accepted as being appropriate and polite (i.e. Latinos rather than Hispanics, people with disabilities rather than handicapped).

Teachers receive training needed to work with children with special needs
• Teachers receive training on how to support children who may have difficulty communicating.
• Teachers receive training on a variety of instructional techniques that support children’s learning (i.e., modeling, simplifying their language, providing physical as well as verbal support).

II. Assessment and Evaluation – The **design of individual assessment and program evaluation practices** provide multiple approaches to finding out what children know and can do in order to equitably assess individual learning, development, and educational progress.

A. Appropriate Assessment Practices

1. Teachers regularly keep track of children’s learning and progress through a variety of assessment techniques (observation, portfolios, checklists, etc.)
   Examples:
   • The teacher uses a system to ensure that observations are made regularly. She and her assistant will make focused observations of individual children in one half of the class each week.
   • The teacher has a checklist in each child’s folder to keep track of the products she needs to collect from each child (writing, painting, photo of child’s building, etc.) and the skills, knowledge, and dispositions the child has acquired.

2. Teachers regularly keep track of children’s learning and progress by asking families to share information about their child.
   Examples:
   • On the first of each month, the child care center teacher asks parents to sign in for the day by jotting down something their child has learned.
   • The teacher makes her email address, her school phone number, a note box, and a message board available to families to share information about their child.

3. Assessment practices allow teachers to present the information, directions, and/or tasks in different, but equivalent ways to respond to a wide range of individual strengths and needs.
   Example:
   • The teacher wants to know if each child can find the beginning and ending of a book. She brings books to small group time to assess several children at once. She brings a book about block building to the block corner where a child is intensely focused on building to get his response. She uses both Farsi and English to ask a child whose home language is Farsi.

4. Assessment practices allow children to demonstrate what they know through multiple means of expression (physical, verbal, home language).
   Example:
   • A teacher wants to assess children's knowledge of big and small. She says, "You can show me something big and something small. You can build something big and
something small. You can tell me about something big and something small. What do you want to do?"

5. Common assessment and evaluation practices are used for all children whenever possible and do not segregate or stigmatize individual children and families.
   Examples:
   • The teaching team decides to use the Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting (ISTAR) for assessing all of the children in their program rather than using it only for children with disabilities.

6. Individual assessment practices provide a number of ways for teachers to find out what children are learning, how they are developing and whether or not they are making educational progress.
   Examples: delete this one?

B. Appropriate Uses of Assessment
1. Teachers use assessment information to design and modify classroom instruction so that it is responsive to the individual strengths and needs of children.
   Examples:
   • A teacher makes notes about the knowledge, skills, and excitement a child expressed during a cooking activity. Knowing that the child has not made progress on number recognition, she decides to offer a cooking activity the following week. She will embed recognition of the numerals 1, 2, and 3 in the recipe, the numerals the child needs to learn.
   • The teacher has been making notes about the playmates each child has and how the relationships influence each of them. She notes that one child is more able to stay involved in activities when paired with a friend and finds ways to pair them on learning activities.

2. Teachers use assessment information to design and modify classroom instruction so that it is responsive to the individual strengths and needs of children.
   Examples:
   • A teacher and her assistant work on making lesson plans for the circle times, small groups, and learning center activities for the next week. As they think and write, they take notes about assessment results for specific children and add to the lesson plans the skills to be addressed with these children.
   • A teacher makes notes about the knowledge, skills, and excitement a child expressed during a cooking activity. Knowing that the child has not made progress on number recognition, she decides to offer a cooking activity the following week. She will embed recognition of the numerals 1, 2, and 3 in the recipe, the numerals the child needs to learn.

3. Teachers share assessment information with families to support children’s learning goals outside the early childhood setting.
   Example:
   • A teacher makes appointments to talk with each family three times a year to share information about their child's progress. She also asks families if they would like suggestions for activities they can implement at home. The appointments are sometimes phone calls, a chat in the school hallway, in writing, or at the local fast food restaurant.
4. Teachers share assessment information with kindergarten teachers in order to insure continuity of quality care and education of children.
   Example:
   • When the teacher has gotten the family's consent to share information, she contacts the school to make plans for getting the information into the kindergarten teacher's hands. The information to be shared includes the child's interests, strengths, needs, and a report on the skills, dispositions, and knowledge the child has acquired.

III. Effective Teaching Practices
   - The design of the instructional environment enables all children equitable access to learning opportunities and multiple means for engagement and learning. The design of the social-emotional environment offers all children equitable access and full membership to the social-emotional life of the group, and supports their social-emotional development.

A. General Curriculum and Instruction
   1. The curriculum is aligned with the *Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children from Birth to Age Five* (Indiana Foundations), kindergarten standards and local school curricula.
      Example:
      • The leadership team and the teaching team have carefully checked, item by item, their curriculum against the Indiana Foundations and made changes to ensure that their curriculum addresses the skills and knowledge needed for school readiness.
   2. The curriculum includes teaching children skills that successfully prepare them for kindergarten, including:
      ❑ Social-emotional skills such as cooperation, relationships, self-control
      ❑ Language/literacy such as communication, book skills, early writing
      ❑ Cognitive and general knowledge such as math, science, general concepts
      ❑ Approaches to learning such as attention span, showing initiative, persistence
      ❑ Health and physical well being such as stamina, eating habits, motor skills
         (no examples needed)
   3. A common curriculum is used for all children whenever possible, and does not segregate or stigmatize any children.
      Example:
      • The teachers have adopted a curriculum that can be diversified to meet the learning needs of the group. Each curriculum area lists strategies for making upward and downward extensions so that the children can be engaged in the same content in different ways.
      • The teachers have decided to use the social skills curriculum with all of the children rather than just with children with behavior or social challenges.

Teaching plans
4. Teachers design instructional activities that reflect children's assessment data, interests, prior knowledge, needs, learning styles, and life experiences.
   • At the beginning of the school year, the teacher reviews the results of the screenings that were done, the parent information forms, and the records from other teachers to decide
which skills, knowledge, and dispositions need to be addressed first. She uses her anecdotal observations to guide her later lesson plans.

- The teacher notices that the children have been very interested in the construction project across the street and so she finds ways to weave skill instruction into their interest. For example, they decide to build a block building and she uses the opportunity to help them with their planning skills.
- The children are being introduced to the practice of brushing their teeth after lunch. She knows that some children may never have brushed their own teeth, while others may have, but haven't applied toothpaste to the brush, so she makes her plans to accommodate their prior knowledge.
- Some children have been struggling with taking turns. The teacher plans a series of activities to focus on taking turns, including board games, helper tasks, and others that will bring about the chance to talk about and practice turns.
- The children in the class have a range of learning styles. Some children are very physical and others talk their way through learning activities. When the teacher makes her plans she decides to have children sort the animals into containers. One container is on each end of the table, one container is on the shelf, and one on the floor, thus requiring the children to move and the novelty of the activity encourages the other children to talk their way through the task.
- The school where the teacher works is in on the coastline where most families work in the fishing industry. She decides to introduce content about farms and plans a field trip so that children have first-hand experience to start this topic.

5. Teachers design learning activities that are appropriate and equitable for all children regardless of gender, ability level, language, and socio-economic, religious or cultural background.
   Examples:
   - The teacher plans small group activities, learning centers, and circle times based on seasonal themes rather than on holiday themes.
   - The fiction and non-fiction books the teacher chooses for instruction show both girls and boys as leaders and show adults in jobs that do not suggest various ethnic or cultural background limits.
   - When the teacher chooses which field trips to take, she plans them for days that are not religious holidays for any of the children and takes into consideration the costs she will ask parents to contribute.

6. Teachers design learning tasks and activities at multiple levels of difficulty to allow children at various levels to participate successfully.
   Examples:
   - The teacher's lesson plans for the water table activity had this objective: Children will find how many cups of water it takes to fill three containers of different shapes and write the information on a chart. Some children will make marks on the chart to use a tally system. Other children will write the numbers on the chart and others will copy the number words from the Word Wall.
   - The teacher designs the learning center activity so that children can complete the task at their own skill level. The objective is for children to make strings of wooden bead to match patterns found on cards. The child chooses the card he wants to make. When the child completes the bead string he shows the teacher and they talk about the pattern. The cards have a range of difficulty, such as three beads of the same color or seven beads of the same color, but of different shapes.

Instructional delivery
7. Teachers present information and directions in different ways (for example using pictures, using words, or using materials they can touch), and in children’s home language.
   **Examples:**
   - The teacher tells the children about the schedule for the day. At the same time she shows them a written schedule that includes pictures of the children in the routines and activities.
   - When it is time for the children to go to their cots for naps, the teacher puts on the CD of the nap time music, she says, "Nap time" in Spanish and English, and mimes going to sleep.

8. Teachers present information and directions simply and/or at different levels of difficulty to ensure everyone understands.
   **Examples:**
   - When the teacher sees that most of the children can follow two step directions, she begins to give three step directions. She prompts them to listen and remember. Then she tells them the directions. After a pause, she asks them to listen again. This time she breaks the directions into three separate sentences to help them understand.
   - When the child wants to give the classroom bunny a piece of carrot, the teacher makes a mark on the carrot and says, "Cut it here." She also says "We are giving the bunny half of the carrot."

**Engagement and Performance Expectations**

9. Teachers are sensitive to the physical demands placed on each child and accommodate differences in children’s stamina, attention, or understanding.
   **Example:**
   - The teacher knows that one of the children has limited strength in his trunk muscles. At circle time she ensures that he can lean on a chair, use a bolster, or lay on the floor, as may the other children.

10. Teachers help children to express and/or demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways.
    **Example:**
    - The teacher says, "Let's see if we can spot children being friends. Can you watch for people being friends? We'll talk about it at circle time." At circle time, some children talk about their friends. Some children mention seeing people helping each other. One child goes across the room to sit next to a peer and makes the sign for friend. Another child points to the band-aid on another's knee and the teacher says, "That's right. You got a band-aid for your friend when she fell on the playground."

**Teaching Practices that Support Social-Emotional Skills**

1. The social-emotional environment is predominantly positive (respectful, relaxed, and happy) and responsive to the many different social-emotional needs of children.
   - The teacher responds to children in a way that matches their temperament – (a smile and a wave to a hesitant child, a firm hand on the shoulder along with a quiet “hello” for a child who is easily distracted)

2. Teachers develop a supportive teaching and caring relationship with children responsive to their individual culture, language and abilities.
   - As a child enters the classroom in the morning, the teachers greets her using the home language of the child.
• Teachers take time to listen to children and respond when they ask for help.

3. Teachers provide the same or equivalent opportunities for children to develop positive, meaningful and equitable relationships with others.
• The classroom is arranged in a way that ensures all children can participate socially – lunch tables accommodate children sitting at different levels, housekeeping corner provides props that will engage a variety of children in order to support friendship development.
• As children are moving into centers in the classroom, the teacher provides support to be sure that all children choose a center and are socially engaged with the other children in that center.

4. Teachers encourage children to express their social and emotional needs in their own way (e.g. using words, using sign language, using picture symbols, using facial expressions).
• No example needed

5. Teachers encourage children to recognize and respond to their own feelings in appropriate ways.
• A circle time may be devoted to children sharing stores about a time when they were happy, angry, scared, etc.
• Teachers use natural opportunities during the day to help children to respond appropriately to a playmate who is sad, angry, frustrated, etc.

6. Teachers consistently address negative behavior, though the consequences may vary according to a child’s skills and needs.
• If one child hits another, for one child the consequences may be that he needs to go talk to his playmate and work out their disagreement, another child may be told that is not acceptable, and the appropriate response is reviewed with the child either by telling or demonstrating.

7. Teachers clearly communicate appropriate rules and expectations for children with consideration for family expectations.
• A teacher may know that some parents allow corporal punishment at home, but she helps them to understand why this is not allowed in the classroom.
• Some families may expect their child to speak only when asked a question, but the teacher helps them to understand that in the classroom children are encouraged to talk and share ideas and opinions because they will learn more.

8. Teachers support children to develop positive replacements for socially unacceptable behaviors.
• The teacher explains that yelling at a friend is not acceptable behavior, but telling your friend why you are angry in a calm voice, using appropriate words is a good idea.
• The teacher may notice one child making fun of another child, and she may reinforce appropriate behavior by modeling the use of kind words when talking to or about other children.

**Teaching Practices that Support Language/Literacy Concepts and Skills**
1. Teachers use interesting and varied words to create a vocabulary-rich environment.
   Example:
• The children have been interested in music. The teacher uses a variety of words to describe how to make music, for example strum, blow, and ring. After playing some of the classroom instruments, the teacher asks children for their words.

2. Teachers engage children in conversations that encourage them to use language to get information, give information, and explore ideas.
   (no example needed)

3. Teachers acknowledge and support a child’s home language while at the same time teaching children the predominant language of the classroom.
   Example:
   • The teacher has one child in the class whose home language is not English. The child is learning English and can make her needs known. She invites the child's mother to the classroom to read a book that is in the child's home language. Then she reads the same book in English. Together they teach the children some of the key words in both languages.

4. Teachers provide information and ask questions at varied levels so that all children can understand.
   Examples:
   • The teacher introduces children to new words, for example the verb "slide," to children by demonstrating the meaning of the word, showing them how "slide" differs from "roll."
   • When the teacher uses a complex sentence, she says the same information again using two shorter sentences.
   • When reading a new book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, the teacher stops before turning the page and says, "What will it eat next?" At the end of the book, the teacher might ask a more complicated question, "Why do you think it turned into a butterfly?"

5. Teachers integrate writing into routines, play and across learning areas so that children can gain an understanding of the uses of print.
   Example:
   • The teacher helps children write their names for turn-taking with a preferred big wheel, list ingredients for a soup they will make, and write a note to the janitor to get the table with the wobbly leg fixed.

6. Teachers make writing a naturally occurring part of each day and an explicitly taught skill.
   Example:
   • Children sign in when they come to the classroom in the morning, write what they do during learning centers, and write in their journals in a daily basis.

7. Teachers provide a variety of print materials, including storybooks, non-fiction, picture books, reference books, and magazines, throughout the day.
   (no example needed)

8. Teachers read and re-read favorite books focusing not only on the sounds in the words but also on meanings.
   Example:
   • The teacher reads one of the children's favorite books, *One Fish Two Fish, Red Fish Blue Fish* each day for two weeks. The first day she tells the story to the children, showing them the pictures and answering questions about events or ideas. The next day she writes one of the key words from the book on the board, such as fish, and talks
about the letters and their sounds that are in the word. When she reads the story again, the children read the word as she comes to it. Each day she reminds them of what they learned the day before and then reads the story focusing on a different word, letter-sound relationship, or part of the book.

9. Teachers plan activities to support children’s storytelling skills.
   
   Example:
   - Teachers ask children to tell stories about what they did earlier in the morning so to practice their language skills and recall. Children can do this individually or in a group by making pictures of what they did and talking about it, using communication boards, or referring to the classroom daily schedule.
   - Teachers help children tell their own stories or retell stories from books by using questions such as: What did you do first?" or "And what happened then?

Teaching Practices that Support Cognition and General Knowledge
1. Teachers provide children with materials, games, books, and computer programs that specifically support exploration and investigation of math, science, and other learning areas. (no example needed)

2. Teachers regularly provide activities for children to learn math and science concepts and skills. (no example needed)

3. Teachers use thinking aloud, prompting, conversations, games, etc. to enable each child to acquire thinking skills (recall, logical thinking, prediction, planning, problem solving).
   
   Example:
   1. The teacher says to a group of children, "I would really like a chance to swing, but all of the swings are full. What should I do? Can you tell me?"
   2. The teacher uses thinking aloud when she says to a child, "We need to water the plants in the room. I can't find the watering can. Let's see, where did I have it last time? It wasn't in the bathroom and it wasn't in the book corner. Oh, I think we put it in the water table. Let's go see."

Teaching Practices that Support Approaches to Learning
1. Teachers provide ongoing instruction to children to support their learning of positive approaches to learning, such as increased attention span, persistence, initiative, problem solving, curiosity, and creativity. (delete?)

2. Teachers prompt and model the desired approaches (showing initiative, increased attention span or persistence) to encourage children’s initial attempts.
   - The teacher prompts a child to put two more pieces in the puzzle, or the teacher asks a question about the picture in the puzzle to expand the child’s engagement with the activity.
   - The teacher provides a challenging situation so that the children have to use problem-solving skills to complete the activity.

3. Teachers reinforce children's attempts and successes at demonstrating curiosity, persistence, and/or increased attention span.
• A child who stays with an activity (like putting their toys away) is able to choose the music that is played during lunch (or something that would be rewarding to that particular child).
• A child who starts and finishes a puzzle (that was a bit challenging) is recognized by the class for his/her accomplishment.

2. Teachers gradually increase the difficulty or newness of the materials/lesson to increase children’s persistence and/or initiative.
• At the playdough table, the teacher provides extra tools that help children to make more intricate, imaginative creations.
• During group exercise, the teacher starts by having children jump on two feet, then they hop on one foot, and then they hop on one foot across the room to pick up a ball (or they move across the room using whatever supports they may need).

3. Lessons and activities routinely include new and challenging elements that engage children.
• In the housekeeping corner, some of the furniture remains the same, but other elements like dress-up clothes or play materials are changed to support a variety of themes.
• On the science table the children may often use a magnifying glass or tweezers, but the objects they’re exploring will change in order to engage and challenge them in new ways.

4. Teachers balance teacher-directed and child-directed activities, providing children with opportunities for children to take initiative in exploring their environment and to manage their time appropriately.
• If the children are participating in a teacher chosen art activity, then they have their choice of drawing utensils (pencils, crayons, markers, etc.).
• If the activity is child-directed, then the teacher assigns roles to children knowing that this may challenge them to think in new ways or to try new ways of doing things.

Teaching Practices that Support Physical Health and Well-Being
5. Teachers collect and maintain health history information about the child.
• Teachers have a completed health history form for the current school year for each child.
• Critical health information such as food allergy, diabetes, and asthma triggers are posted in a way that maintains the child’s privacy.

6. Teachers understand the importance of physical development and regularly provide opportunities for children to participate in movement activities (e.g. running, jumping, climbing, hopping)
• Structured physical activity (i.e., games, dancing, exercises) occurs for at least 30 minutes/day.
• Unstructured physical activity occurs for at least 60 minutes/day.

7. Teachers understand the importance of self-help skills (washing hands, using the toilet, brushing teeth, feeding self) and regularly provide opportunities for children to practice these skills.
• Bathrooms are easily accessible, stocked with soap and have a hand drying option.
• Hand washing posters are at all sinks.
• Tooth brushes are stored so children can reach them independently.
• Flatware is provided with each meal.
• Children prepare their own snack.
8. Teachers explain and support the rules to insure the health and safety of children.
   • Fire and tornado evacuation maps are posted.
   • Classroom and outdoor rules, in child-friendly terms, are posted.
   • Explanation of importance of rules given when a rule is not followed.

9. Program provides nutritious snacks and meals.
   • Fresh fruits and/or vegetables are provided at meals and snacks.
   • Limited amounts of processed meats are served.
   • Portions are consistent with caloric needs of young children.
   • Cookies and other sweets are offered no more than once a week.

IV. Family Involvement Practices

The design of family involvement practices supports the equitable access and engagement of all families in the full range of experiences including ongoing communication, learning opportunities, and program involvement activities.

Family Partnerships

10. Program staff communicates information such as social and behavioral expectations, safety policies and procedures, etc. to all children and families.
    • Families are informed that children who have a fever must stay home.
    • Families know that “n” is a rule in the classroom.

11. Program staff communicates with all families on a regular basis, using appropriate language and different ways to reach all families (phone call, email, conversation).
    • Materials sent home to families are written simply and are free of jargon.
    • The teacher sends notes home to inform families of successes and challenges their children experience.

12. Program staff shares information with families in ways the family can understand depending on their literacy levels, languages, cultural experiences and life circumstances.
    • Information to be shared with families is written at a 3rd grade reading level.
    • When a family event is announced (such as a potluck) and you know there are families who may be unfamiliar with this term, then an explanation is included in the announcement.

13. Program staff involves families in decision making about the program.
    • Families are consulted before making changes in program guidelines, such as the hours of operation.
    • Parent representatives may be involved in staff hiring decisions.

14. Program staff provides families with multiple opportunities (for example, parent committees, field trips, classroom volunteer, at-home) and supports (e.g., transportation and child care) to insure that all families are able to participate.
    • No example needed.

15. Program staff implements common family involvement practices whenever possible and do not segregate or stigmatize any families.
    • If families are expected to volunteer in the program, then some parents volunteer at home or transportation is arranged for those who want to work in the classroom.
Parents as Teachers
16. Teachers provide families with opportunities, information, and materials that help them to support their child’s learning and development.
   • Families are invited to participate in a workshop on positive discipline.
   • On a weekly basis, the teacher informs families of what the children will be learning and offer suggestions for how parents can support their child’s learning at home.

17. Teachers work with families to help them to understand and respond to their children’s individual behavioral styles (shy, aggressive, outgoing, etc.)
   • Teacher provides information about what characteristics children with different behavioral styles may display, along with three suggestions for helping children to express themselves in more appropriate ways, and helpful ways to respond to the behavioral style their child displays.
   • Teacher explores with the family the benefits and challenges imposed by their child’s behavioral style.

18. Teachers help families to identify opportunities to read to their children and provide appropriate reading materials (if needed).
   • A lending library is established in the classroom or child care center so that parents have reading materials available to them.
   • Teachers provide ideas/suggestions for good times during the day to read to children.
   • The teacher talks to the parent about specific events that may be easier or more meaningful to children if they’ve had an opportunity to explore it beforehand by reading about it (i.e., a new sibling, going to the doctor, the first day of school).

Community Supports
19. Program staff shares information about available social, health, and family/adult education (e.g., GED classes, ESL classes, family literacy, parenting) services.
   • No examples needed

V. Healthy, Safe, and Engaging Environments - The design of the physical environment enables all children to have access and equitable opportunities for full participation in all program activities. The design of health and safety program components ensures all children, regardless of health status or condition, ongoing access to early education by minimizing interruptions to their learning due to illness and injury.

Safe and Accessible
1. Program staff carries out health and safety policies and practices that reflect national health and safety standards.
   • Health and safety policies are written and followed including; exclusion of ill children, emergency response, cleaning and sanitation of food preparation and eating areas, playground safety,

2. Classrooms and other spaces are clean, in good repair, and free of health and safety hazards.
   • Floors and walls are clean, free of cracks, and cleaned on a regular basis. Furniture has a stable base and has no sharp edges or pinch points.
   • Playground equipment is anchored securely with adequate fall zones and fall surfaces.

3. There is enough room for children to move, play and work freely.
   • No examples needed
4. The physical space and room arrangement allow all children easy access to all areas and materials regardless of body size, mobility, or use of assistive devices.
   - Carpeting does not restrict movement.
   - Shelving can be reached by a variety of children and does not prevent children from moving around.

5. The physical design does not set apart any children; separate spaces and/or activities that segregate children or call undue attention to their “differences” are not used.
   - At circle time, everyone sits in the circle (using comparable seating arrangements).
   - During snack time, everyone sits at the table. (with accommodations if needed)

Engaging Environment

1. The physical environment allows children to interact and engage with each other within all activities.
   - There is enough room in the different centers in the classroom to allow 2-4 children to play together.
   - Some areas of the room have comfortable furnishings that encourage children to sit and talk and play together.

2. Toys and materials encourage children to talk to and play with one another.
   - The teacher chooses toys like board games that require two or more children to play together.
   - The teacher provides activities like painting a mural to encourage children to talk, problem solve and work together.

3. Materials and equipment vary in difficulty (physical and conceptual) to accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
   - There are regular crayons and crayons with large knob handles to allow a variety of children to work on the mural.
   - There are puzzles with 4 pieces and puzzles with 25 pieces, and some of the puzzles are a simple picture of an animal, some are a more complex scene including a number of different objects.

4. The physical design is sensitive to the demands placed on each child, including their motor skills, attention span and fatigue, and the need for assistive devices and personal assistance.
   - Toys are stored on shelves that children can reach from a seated or standing position.
   - At fitness circle, a chair is available for children who can do 2, but not 10 jumping jacks
   - Small toys that children can play with quietly are available during circle time for those children who have difficulty attending for longer periods of time.

5. Activities and materials reflect a variety of cultural backgrounds and experiences.
   - There are dolls in the classroom that reflect the skin colors of the children.
   - The foods chosen for snack time reflect a variety of cultures (Mexican, Middle Easter, Asian, etc.)

6. Children spend most of their time engaged in active learning
   - The classroom is set up so that even when children are waiting to wash their hands before lunch, they have access to books or similar materials.
• At circle time children have opportunities to move their bodies, answer questions, tell stories or actively participate in some way.

7. Teachers provide a balance of individual, small group and large group activities.
   • A child may work alone on a puzzle
   • A small group of children may work together on painting a mural
   • The whole class may work together on picking up the classroom at the end of the day.

VI. Transition Practices - The design of transition practices provides a framework for helping all children and families move comfortably and successfully from the preschool setting into the public school/kindergarten setting.

Transition Planning
1. Program staff makes an effort to get to know kindergarten staff in receiving schools.
   • The preschool teacher calls a kindergarten teacher to ask her to come and talk to the children about going to school

2. Program staff shares information about their program with receiving schools.
   • The preschool teacher may share the highlights of her curriculum so that the kindergarten teacher has a picture of what the children have been learning
   • The preschool teacher tells the kindergarten teacher what a typical day may look like so that the kindergarten teacher can adjust her schedule to make it easier or more familiar for the children coming into her classroom.

3. Program staff works with schools to carry out a formal plan for transitions.
   • Teachers are willing to share information knowing that it will benefit the children and families

Inform Families
1. Program staff informs families in the spring of the need to register for kindergarten.
   • This information is shared with families using whatever opportunities make sense – a casual conversation, a note home, an article in the child care newsletter, email messages sent to families, etc.
   • Teachers find opportunities to remind families how important it is to register their children before the end of the year (in the Spring).

2. Program staff encourages parents to attend all kindergarten registration events at the school (e.g., open house/back-to-school night).
   • Program staff volunteers to attend kindergarten registration events with families.
   • Program staff makes sure that families have all of the information they need about registration events (location, time, expectations of what will be happening, anything they need to bring with them, etc.) so they are more comfortable attending.

3. Program staff collaborates with kindergarten staff to provide opportunities for kindergarten staff to meet with parents and share information.
   • The kindergarten teacher is invited to visit the pre-kindergarten setting to meet with children and parents and talk about school.
   • Children go to visit their potential school accompanied by parents and program staff.
4. Program staff provides parents with a story about going to school to read to their children.
   • Books about going to kindergarten are loaned out to parents.
   • Books are provided to parents free of charge (subsidized by a local business).

5. Program staff discusses the transfer of records with parents and provides “release of information” forms.
   • Parents sign a release of information form.
   • Parents know what information will be shared and why it will be shared (how it will be helpful to the future teacher).

Inform Schools

1. Program staff informs kindergarten teachers about incoming children and families.
   • The transition plan specifies when this information will be shared (three months before the end of the year?).
   • Children's relevant records are transferred to the school or next placement in which a child will enroll
   • OR
     • Kindergarten teachers have access to detailed information (e.g., parent questionnaires, home visits, interviews) about incoming children that helps them get to know the children and their family settings.

2. Programs carry out an established procedure for transferring children’s records to receiving schools in a timely manner.
   • There are timelines that specify when records will be transferred.

3. Program staff shares assessment information and expertise they may have in working with the children and families in their program.
   • Information such as a child’s strengths and needs is shared.
   • Specific interests of the child are shared so that the child will be successfully engaged in their new environment.
   • Teachers are willing to talk with kindergarten teachers about a child’s specific behavioral or learning difficulties.

4. Program staff shares information in a manner that is respectful of children and families of all ability levels, health statuses, and racial, cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds.
   • Staff uses respectful language when describing a child or their specific needs.
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