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
200 West Baltimore Street, 10th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

MSDE Copyright © 2016

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Program Administration

- **1.1 Program Philosophy**
- **1.2 Program Personnel**
- **1.3 Program Continuity**
- **1.4 Program Accountability**

II. Program Operation

- **2.1 Environment (Birth – 6 years)**
- **2.2 Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 36 Months)**
- **2.3 Curriculum (3 to 6 years)**
- **2.4 Instruction (3 to 6 years)**

III. Home and Community Partnerships

- **3.1 Partnerships (Birth – 6 years)**

**** 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

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.

Required Evidence

❒ Written philosophy and mission statement

Best Practices Rationale

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.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: October 29 2024

__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

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

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.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Process for program evaluation and timeline
- ☐ Copies of completed annual program evaluation
- ☐ Program goals for on-going improvement

Best Practices Rationale

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.

The results of the program evaluation are used throughout the year to ensure program accountability.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: Oct. 29, 2024

__ 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. 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.
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	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: Oct. 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met	__ 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

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.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Staff Evaluation Policy and timeline
- ☐ Completed annual staff evaluation tool
- ☐ Individual staff development plan
- ☐ Copies of staff observations

Best Practices Rationale

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.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met	__ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

Standard

Program Personnel

1.2.5 Qualification: Child Care Teacher Licensed Child Care/Head Start

Indicator:	Best Practices / Rationale:
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. Educators are provided job descriptions that reflect expectations in: building relationships with children and families; implementing curriculum; instructional and assessment strategies; and professionalism.
Required Evidence to Upload: **Licensed Child Care/Head Start:** The Director and All Child Care Teachers must hold: • Maryland Child Care Credential at level 5 or higher; or an Administrator Credential at level 2 or higher or a current certificate from the State of Maryland for teaching in early childhood education. • Job Description • Maryland Accreditation Staff Qualification Form **Public School:** All Prekindergarten Teachers must hold: • State of Maryland Teaching Certificate in early childhood education OR pursuing residency through the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program, which includes early childhood course work, clinical practice, and evidence of pedagogical content knowledge. • Job Description • Maryland Accreditation Staff Qualification Form	**Required Observable Evidence:** none

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __ Partially Met X Fully Met	__ Not Met __ Partially Met __ Fully Met

Standard

Program Personnel

1.2.4 Qualifications: Assistant Child Care Teacher Licensed Child Care/Head Start

Indicator:	Best Practices / Rationale:
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. **Public School** – Assistant Teacher and/or Paraprofessional working with the Classroom Teacher must have a high school diploma and meet Maryland ParaPro requirements.	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. 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.
Required Evidence to Upload: **Licensed Child Care/Head Start:** **All Assistant Child Care Teachers must hold:** • CDA Certificate or Maryland Child Care Credential at level 2 or higher • Job Description • Maryland Accreditation Staff Qualification Form **Public School:** **All Assistant Teachers and/or Paraprofessionals must hold:** • CDA Certificate or Associate Degree • Job Description • Maryland Accreditation Staff Qualification Form	**Required Observable Evidence:** none

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29 2024	Date: _____
Not Met Partially Met X Fully Met	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
1.2.5 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. 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.
Required Evidence ❒ Lesson Planning Policy ❒ Evidence of Planning Time ❒ Professional Development Opportunities	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ 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

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.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Agendas and minutes of transition/articulation meetings between classrooms
- ☐ Evidence of communication with families regarding transition within the program

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __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

1.3.2 Transition and Continuity of Services *between* Licensed Child Care/Head Start and Local Public School

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.

Required Evidence

- ❒ Written transition plan and activities
- ❒ Evidence of transition activities between Local Public School and Licensed Child Care/Head Start

Best Practices Rationale

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:

- 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

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __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

1.3.3 Schedules and Routines

The program documents daily routines and schedules to support continuity of learning.

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

Best Practices Rationale

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)

Program Note

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: October 29, 2024

__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

__ 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

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.

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

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: October 29, 2024

__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating

Date: _____

__ 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

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.

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

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024
__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met

Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: _____
__ 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
1.3.6 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. 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)
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.	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met	__ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

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: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __ Fully Met	__ 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. 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.
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	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met	__ 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(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	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024 __ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	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.
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	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)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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
2.1.2(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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024 __ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	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
2.1.2(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) 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)
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	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024 __ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	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
2.1.2(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. 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)
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	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

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.

Required Evidence

- Instructional materials are authentic, accurate, and reflect positive images and information about diverse groups
- The environment reflects customs, traditions, structure and songs relevant to the culture of children, families, and staff

Best Practices Rationale

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)

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

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.

Required Evidence

- Evidence of collaboration among children
- Activities accommodate various learning styles and are accessible to all children
- Activities that promote an understanding and value of diversity in all its forms
- Characters in books and social stories used to help children understand social interactions, situations, and expectations relevant to children's personal lives

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met	__ 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
2.1.4 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. 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)
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	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024 __ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	Date: _____ __ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

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

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.

Required Evidence

- Learning experiences are interesting and appropriately challenging
- A variety of materials are used for children to engage in learning that fits within the curriculum
- Opportunities for practicing skills are integrated across the curriculum
- The needs of the individual child are balanced with the needs of the group
- Evidence of learning experiences occurring in all domains

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

2.3.2 Social Foundations

Children are provided opportunities to engage in playful learning to support social foundations skills.

Required Evidence

- Age appropriate classroom rules written in positive terms are posted
- Intentional activities that promote appropriate behavior such as:
  - Class meetings/circle time discussions
  - Small group interactions
  - Paired activities
  - Role playing
  - Small group problem solving
- Educators use visual cues and social stories to support conflict resolution and self-regulation strategies
- Educators model positive social interactions with all children and adults
- Educators have respectful interactions with children

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024
__ Not Met __Partially Met X 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

2.3.3 Executive Function

The development of approaches to learning and executive function skills facilitate and support the process of learning.

Required Evidence

- Visual cues to guide children's choices and decisions in social situations
- Visual cues to help children plan their play and work
- Opportunities to engage in play such as:
  - Role playing
  - Turn taking
  - Rule making
  - Making choices

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

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.

Required Evidence

- Teaching staff model and elicit standard English and complete thoughts
- Opportunities for children to listen and respond to daily read-aloud
- Opportunities for children to increase vocabulary through listening activities
- Opportunities for children to participate in individual and small group discussions
- Opportunities for children to speak to inform, to question, to retell, and to dramatize using complete thoughts
- Opportunities for children to participate in process drama

Best Practices Rationale

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)

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

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.

Required Evidence

- Educators model and implement age appropriate reading strategies, e.g. fingerplays, rhyming, picture matching, phonics and phonemic awareness activities, and comprehension strategies
- Classroom library contains 2-3 books, of various genres, per child.
- Educators intentionally use functional and environment print
- Children are provided opportunities for choral reading
- Children are given feedback to promote the development of reading foundational skills
- Children are provided opportunities to read for enjoyment

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

2.3.4(c) Language Arts: Writing

Daily writing instruction includes opportunities to write for a variety of intentional purposes.

Required Evidence

- Children are provided opportunities for intentional writing to express ideas
- Educators model writing during shared writing, class book creation, language experience charts, and dictation
- Writing center with varied materials are available daily
- Variety of writing materials available in all learning centers
- Child generated books are displayed and available to children

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

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.

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

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

2.3.6 Science

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

Required Evidence

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

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)

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

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.

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

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)

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024
__ Not Met __Partially Met X 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

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.

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

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.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met	__ 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

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.

Required Evidence

- 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.)
- Educators provide guidance and practice in the healthy habit of hand-washing.
- Educators intentionally implement indoor and outdoor learning centers that include activities and/or games promoting movement skills
- Educators provide appropriate modifications and accommodations for children with disabilities

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ Not Met __Partially Met __Fully Met

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

2.4.1 Learning Through Play
Daily activities include time for free and guided play to provide learning opportunities that are integrated across domains.

Required Evidence

- Learning centers/Interest areas reflect domains of learning
- Children are provided daily opportunities for children to choose where to play
- Children are provided daily opportunities for children to choose materials for play
- Materials are easily accessible to children

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

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.

Required Evidence

- Learning centers/Interest areas are accessible to all children
- Daily schedule provides adequate time for children to immerse themselves in independent learning exploration
- Appropriate equipment, manipulatives and materials are accessible
- Children are engaged in independent learning activities
- Authentic objects and props are utilized by children daily

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

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.

Required Evidence

- Educators provide topics/discussions relevant to young children's interests and needs
- Educators provide hands-on learning opportunities
- Classroom activities reflect children's prior experiences

Best Practices Rationale

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.

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

2.4.4 Instructional Strategies
Instruction is based upon children's individual needs, interests, strengths, and learning styles.

Required Evidence

- Educators provide opportunities and activities that meet children's needs:
  - Cooperative learning experiences
  - Exploratory learning centers
  - Differentiated tasks
  - Scaffolding
- Educators implement strategies that encourage higher level thinking skills such as
  - Open-ended, higher level questions, and investigation
  - Cooperative learning strategies
  - Problem solving strategies
- Balance of educator-directed and child-initiated experiences
- Multiple and flexible means for children to express and engage in learning

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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

2.4.5(a) Management Strategies: Transitions

Instruction incorporates management strategies which facilitate logical and organized transitions and routines.

Required Evidence

- Wait time is limited for children during transitions
- Educators use a variety of strategies to signal a transition is approaching
- Educators use a variety of behavior management strategies that result in positive learning behaviors (e.g., acknowledging positive behavior of children, avoidance, ignoring, etc.)
- Children know routines
- Visual schedule is posted to assist children with daily routines

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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
2.4.5(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. 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)
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	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024 __ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	Date: _____ __ 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. 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)
Required Evidence ❒ Registration/Enrollment materials ❒ Parent/Family Handbook ❒ Evidence of ongoing family communication	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024 __ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	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
3.1.2 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. 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)
Required Evidence ❒ Evidence of family education and outreach containing information about child development and learning ❒ School readiness materials shared with families	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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. 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)
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	

Program Notes

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2004	Date: _____
__ Not Met X Partially Met __Fully Met	__ 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

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.

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

Best Practices Rationale

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.

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

Initial Self-Appraisal Rating	Final Self-Appraisal Rating
Date: October 29, 2024	Date: _____
__ Not Met __Partially Met X Fully Met	__ 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
3.1.5 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 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)
Required Evidence ❒ Newsletters regarding community resources ❒ Community Resource Directory available to parents ❒ Evidence of partnerships with community programs and businesses	
Program Notes	
Initial Self-Appraisal Rating Date: October 29, 2024 __ Not Met X 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

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.

Required Evidence

- ☐ Completed parent survey
- ☐ Evidence parent survey results shared with parent advisory committee; Program/School Improvement Team; and/or governing body

Best Practices Rationale

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.

Program Notes

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