Building a Strong Foundation for School Success

The Kentucky Early Childhood Standards

Parent Guide for Children Three and Four

This document is designed to support families in understanding and using the document, Building a Strong Foundation for School Success: Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards (Summer, 2003).

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A complete and detailed list of the early childhood standards can be found at **http://kidsnow.ky.gov**

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Submitted to the Kentucky Department of Education by a subgroup of the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards Workgroup.

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- The parents who took the time to review the Parent Guides. Their insights and helpful feedback improved the quality and usefulness of this document.

Rena Hallam and Beth Rous, Editors

Important People in my Child's Life

Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Notes: _____

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If you have concerns about your child's development, contact your local school district.

Building a Strong Foundation for School Success

The Kentucky Early Childhood Standards: Helping at Home

In 2003, Kentucky released the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards. These standards were developed to help early childhood programs across the state understand appropriate expectations for young children from birth to age five. Using the standards as a guide, programs can improve the quality of their services by providing children with appropriate experiences that support their overall growth and development.

Parents and other family members play an important role in supporting their child's growth and development. When a child is cared for by someone outside the home, like in a child care or preschool program, it is also important that family members and the person(s) caring for the child share information about the child on a regular basis. Sharing ideas about what your child needs, how the day or evening went, and exciting events in your child's life can help both you and your child's caregiver provide the best care for your child.

The Kentucky Early Childhood Standards can provide a method for helping you and your child's caregiver talk about your child. This document can assist you in understanding the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards and how you can support your child's growth and development in partnership with your child's caregiver. This brochure provides information about the child standards, what the standards mean, and examples of some ways you can help your child develop important skills.

There are several ways you can use this document. As a family, you can use the information to:

- Help you understand how your child is growing and learning.
- Help you plan special activities for your child that can assist growth and learning.
- Think about your typical day and how you can use your family routines to support your child's growth and development.

With your child's caregiver, you can use this document to help you:

- Talk with your child's caregiver about the skills they are working on with your child.
- Share ideas about how you can work together to help your child develop new skills.
- Develop learning goals and plans for your child.
- Make sure that all areas of your child's development are being addressed.

arts & humanities

Standard –
Participates and shows interest in a variety of visual arts, dance, music and drama experiences.

Your child's experiences with visual arts, music, dance and drama.

What does it mean?

- Opportunity to engage in many types of creative art processes.
- Developing skills in creating various types of art, dance, music, and drama.
- Opportunities to participate in the creative art process through many activities that involve art (painting, drawing), music, dance, and drama (theater, dramatic play, puppets).

What are some things you can do?

- Provide many different types of art opportunities for your child, including painting, play-doh, and drawing. Provide your child with a variety of art materials (markers, paint, glue, blank paper, etc.) and space to engage in "messy art".
- Comment on and display your child's art. Be sure to let her know how special these creations are.
- Expose your child to art created by others – take her to museums and talk about the pictures, look at picture art books together and talk about them.
- Offer your child experiences with a wide variety of music, including jazz, country, and classical. Sing along and dance with your child. Encourage your child to attend to and describe the music.
- Sings songs with movements together, such as "I'm a Little Teacup" or "Itsy-Bitsy Spider".
- Attend different types of dance performances with your child and talk about these experiences.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play with musical instruments.
- Provide props for your child's pretend play such as dress up clothes or play kitchen set. Pretend with your child and play different roles with them.
- Encourage your child to put on plays, puppet shows, and other types of performances for you and your family.
- Use difference voice inflections as your read with your child. Help them act out the characters after a story is finished.

english/ language arts

Standard 1 –
Demonstrates general skills and strategies of the communication process.

Your child's communication skills include the ability to express himself/herself, as well as understand others.

What does it mean?

- Ability to use gestures or symbols, such as pictures, to communicate with others.
- Ability to talk with others including expressing feelings and asking questions.
- Use of simple sentences to express themselves.
- Learning more and more words to describe and understand the world around them.

What are some things you can do?

- Encourage your child to draw to depict his experiences.
- Respond to your child's gestures or movements.
- Have conversations with your child throughout the day. Be sure to listen and respond to his statements and questions. Introduce new words when appropriate.
- Patiently answer your child's questions even if you have answered them many times before.
- Ask your child about his feelings. Provide him words if he doesn't have the vocabulary needed to express his emotions. In addition to words like "happy" and "sad", use words like "frustrated", "relieved", and "angry."
- Ask your child questions about their environment. "Why do you think that happened?" or "What do you think will happen next?"
- Model correct grammar when you talk with your child. Although your child will make grammatical errors, you do not need to correct him directly, but rather model the appropriate grammar.

english/ language arts

Standard 2 –
Demonstrates general skills and strategies of the listening and observing process.

Your child's communication skills include the ability to listen to others and learn by observing.

What does it mean?

- Ability to listen and understand the speech of others.
- Ability to follow simple directions.
- Ability to watch and listen and understand what is being said.

What are some things you can do?

- Have conversations with your child. Be sure to ask what, when, where, why, and how questions.
- Ask your child questions about what they see around them.
- Provide new experiences for your child to observe and learn new words, like a trip to the airport or the children's museum.
- Let your child help with simple chores. Your child can help put their toys in a basket, put their shoes in the closet, and help put the towels in the cabinet.
- Talk to your child as you work around the house. "I am going to put the clothes in the washing machine. Can you help me put them in?"

english/ language arts

Standard 3 –
Demonstrates general skills and strategies of the reading process.

Your child's increasing skill and interest in books, letters and sounds.

What does it mean?

- Enjoys and participates in storybook reading.
- Beginning to understand the basic concepts of pre-reading including learning that reading is left to right, top to bottom, front to back and that words have meaning.
- Know about and able to identify some letters of the alphabet.
- Pays attention to how words sound, including rhyming and playing with words.

What are some things you can do?

- Read to your child every day. Make reading part of your bedtime routine. Be sure to cuddle with your child and make reading together enjoyable for both of you.

- While reading to your child, ask your child questions about the story, the pictures, and what he thinks will happen next. Talk about the events in the story. If there are people, places, or events in the story that relate to your everyday experiences, talk about these connections. For example, when reading "The Hungry Little Caterpillar", talk about the story as well as those times that you have seen caterpillars outside or have eaten similar foods.

- Provide your child with a wide variety of books. Take him to the library and let him choose different types of books and stories.

- Use books-on-tape as a way to read stories in a different way. Typically, you can check these out from the library. Help your child to learn to use the book and tape, and follow the instructions.

- Encourage your child to read to you. Ask your child to look at the pictures and tell you the story.

- After you have read a story, act it out with your child with each of you playing different roles. Talk about the events in the story with your child and do art activities together that illustrate events in the story.

- Read yourself. Children are more likely to read if they see their family members and caregivers reading the newspaper, magazines and books.

- Talk to your child about the letters of the alphabet but make it fun! Use alphabet books, puzzles, or just the letters in your child's name. Talk about the letters that you see in your environment – on signs, books, and notes that you write.

- Have fun rhyming with your child. Sing rhyming songs and read rhyming books together.

english/ language arts

Standard 4 –
Demonstrates competence in the beginning skills and strategies of the writing process.

Your child begins to use crayons and other writing utensils with increasing skill.

What does it mean?

- The understanding that writing is an important part of communication. Letters and words have meaning and can be used to let other people know things.
- Early abilities to write, which begins with scribbles and eventually leads to the ability to write letters and words.

What are some things you can do?

- Encourage your child to write. Provide many different types of writing supplies to make writing interesting – different types of paper, markers, pencils, etc. Don't worry if she isn't writing all the letters right yet. Those scribbles are good practice for all of the writing she will be doing later on in school.

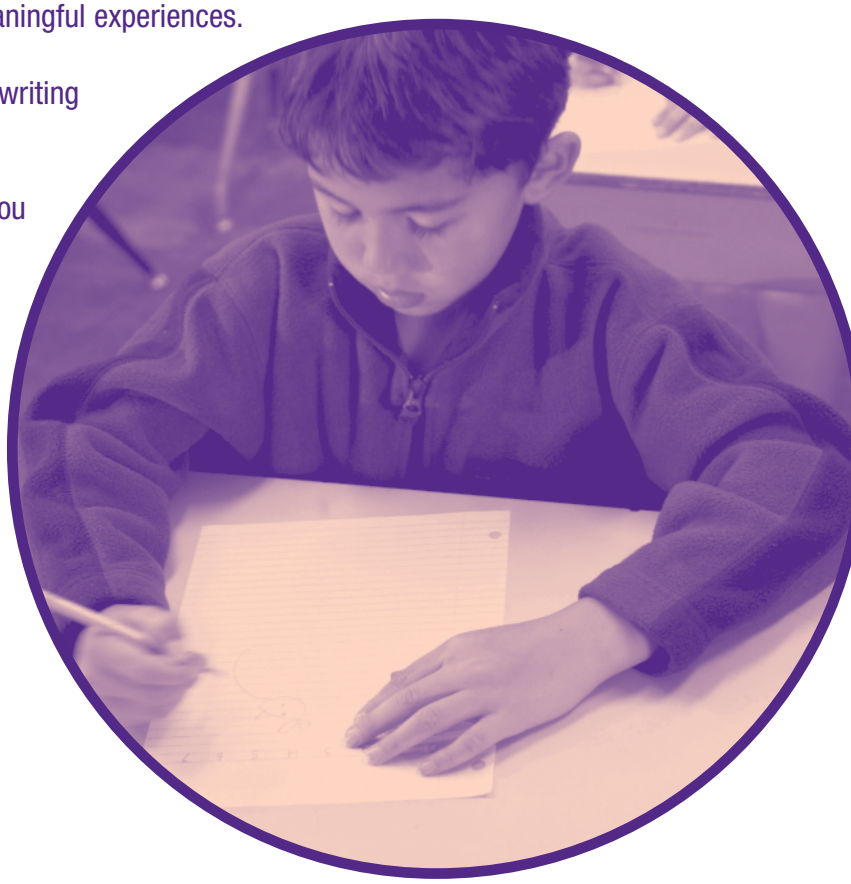
- Ask your child what her writing means. Often times children will tell you their intention and then you can record their meaning next to their scribbles.

- Give your child something to write about. Making a birthday card for Grandmother or writing a note for the teacher are meaningful experiences.

- Encourage and praise your child for her writing efforts. Be sure to display her work.

- Comment on the writing and print that you see in your home – on cereal boxes, recipes, and on the computer. Point out and read this print to your child as you are going throughout your day.

- Encourage your child to write her name. Help with the spelling as needed, and you can write it out as well.



health education

Standard –
Demonstrates health/mental wellness in individual and cooperative social environments.

Your child is learning about self-care routines, such as handwashing. It also includes your child's social skills including getting along with others and playing together.

What does it mean?

- Ability to care for some of their own needs, such as handwashing and eating healthy foods.
- Developing relationships with other children, including the ability to play together and to work together in a group.

What are some things you can do?

- Assist your child (if needed) in meeting his basic health needs like toothbrushing and handwashing.
- Provide opportunities for your child to make reasonable choices. "Would you like apples or peaches with your lunch today?"
- Plan things together with your child. Talk about how you will spend your day and what is going to happen next. Plan trips together, such as to the library or church.
- Provide your child with opportunities to play with other children. Be sure to supervise these play experiences and help children resolve their own conflicts that may come up. Help children use words to solve their problems rather than hitting or pushing.
- Talk to your child about his friends. Provide opportunities for your child to spend time with his selected friends.
- Model cooperation for your child and talk about how we help our friends and family. Encourage your child to be helpful and assist others. For example, picking up their toys when playing at a friends house or helping to do the laundry at home.

mathematics

Standard –
Demonstrates general skills and uses concepts of mathematics.

Your child's growing understanding of numbers, shapes, and patterns in their daily environment.

What does it mean?

- Understanding numbers and how they can be used for counting.
- Understanding shapes and how things are organized in space.
- Making comparisons and recognizing patterns and the very beginning understanding of measurement.

What are some things you can do?

- Count with your child during daily activities. Count the number of towels to be folded or the number of cookies you need for your friends.
- Have your child help with activities at home like setting the table.
- While playing with your child, provide opportunities for her to make comparisons. For example, ask your child who has the most paper or who has the least amount of juice, etc.
- Point out numbers in your environment and talk about how they are used.
- Talk about shapes with your child as well. Concentrate on shapes that occur in your home (the door is a rectangle and the window is a square). Shape books can also be fun!
- While talking with your child, use words that deal with spatial relationships like "under", and "over" as well as words that deal with time like days of the week, yesterday, or tomorrow.
- Play matching games with your child. Games like "Memory" help your child to build her matching skills.
- Encourage your child to describe objects and sort them. For example, sorting pennies and nickels into different piles or sorting the blue and red cars into different play garages.
- Provide your child with opportunities to explore measuring - using measuring cups and scales can be enjoyable and a learning experience. Also let your child "measure" things in fun ways. For example, "how many shoes long is your bed?" or "how many hops does it take to get to the kitchen?"

physical education/ gross & fine motor skills

Standard –
Demonstrates basic gross and fine motor development.

Your child's ability to move his/her body. It includes moving large muscles, such as walking and running, as well as gaining control of small muscle movements, such as scribbling and cutting.

What does it mean?

- Coordination skills that help your child run, jump, and skip.
- Use of hands and fingers to do small tasks, such as button, grasp, zip or write.

What are some things you can do?

- Provide daily opportunities for your child to play outside. Take him to the park and encourage him to climb on the play structures, with your supervision.
- Provide your child with opportunities to play with balls, ride trikes and bikes, and play outdoor games that include hopping, skipping, and galloping.
- Provide daily opportunities for your child to develop small muscles in activities such as creating things with play doh, legos, and scissors and paper.
- Encourage your child to dress himself, including zippers, buttons, and snaps. Provide assistance when needed.

s c i e n c e

Standard –
Demonstrates scientific ways of thinking and working (with wonder and curiosity).

Your child's growing understanding of the natural world and how to solve problems. This includes curiosity about how objects in their environment work as well as how living things grow and thrive.

What does it mean?

- Fostering your child's growing understanding of the world around them.
- Supporting children's natural curiosity about how things work.
- Ability to solve simple problems.

What are some things you can do?

- Provide many different rich experiences for your child. Spend time with them in the garden, at the grocery store, outside going for a walk, and at the petting zoo. Talk about these experiences and encourage your child's curiosity.

- Ask your child about similarities and differences in their environments. Ask them about their favorite colors as well as similarities and differences in their toys and art supplies.

- Help your child in finding answers to their questions about nature and how things work ("What's thunder?" or "How do we make ice?"). Use dictionaries, the internet, or books as ways to answer these questions.

- Provide your child with opportunities to play with and examine a wide variety of tools, such as magnets, scales, and magnifying glasses.

- Encourage your child to go out and explore nature. Take walks, catch bugs, and dig in the dirt. Talk to your child about these experiences, encourage them to ask questions and help them in finding answers to these questions. Have children document these experiences through drawing or writing. For example, "draw a picture of the bugs that you found in the dirt last night."

social studies

Standard –
Demonstrates basic understanding of the world in which they live.

Your child's understanding of the roles of the people in the environment (family, community helpers, etc.) as well as your child's understanding of time.

What does it mean?

- Ability to identify family, friends and strangers.
- Understanding time as related to the past, present and future.
- Understanding that people come from different places.
- Ability to understand simple rules.

What are some things you can do?

- Spend time with your child reflecting on their past and future experiences. Talk about what they did at grandma's house last week and their plans for a play date with a friend the next week.

- Point out changes in the environment to your child and talk about them with your child – talk about the changing leaves in the fall and the heat in the summer.

- Introduce your child to maps. Let her play with your maps and help her draw maps of her world, like a map of her room or a map to the backyard.

- Expose your child to money and its function. Have her help you pay for the groceries at the grocery story and play with "fake money" in her room.

- Set reasonable limits for your child and help your child to follow the limits. Help your child understand that their behavior has consequences. "You'll need to pick up the blocks that you've knocked off the table."

- Help your child understand and follow the rules in different settings. For example, "We use quiet voices in the library."

- Provide predictable routines for your child. Predictability helps your child to understand what is going to happen next.

- Have conversations with your child about your family. Drawing pictures of family members and talking about the relationships that exist such as father, mother, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, etc.

- Use everyday opportunities to talk about how people are the same and different. Consider differences in food choices (I like pizza and you love hamburgers.) as well as differences in skin color, language, and ability.