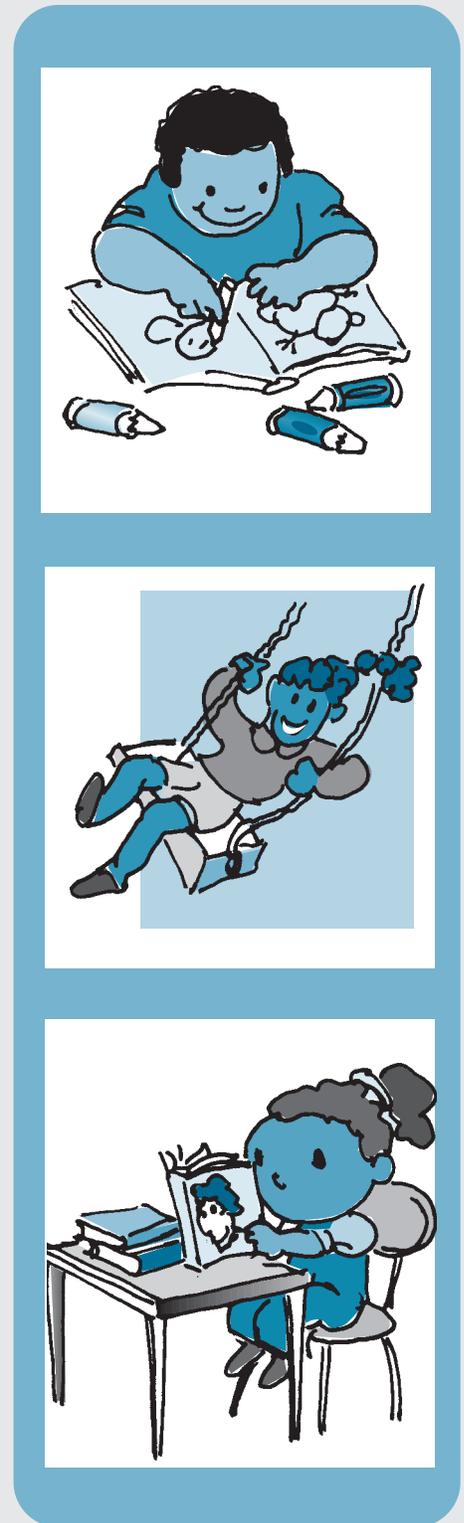


# Preschool Special Education



# Learning Outcomes and Indicators for Kindergarten Participation

August 2003



The University of the State of New York  
The State Education Department  
Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities  
<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov>



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August 2003

Dear Parents and Preschool Personnel:

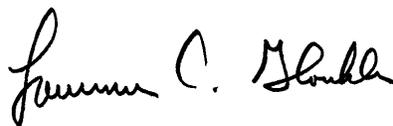
The early years of a child's life are crucial to learning and skill development. It is essential that families and school personnel understand what preschool children need to know and achieve in preparation for kindergarten. *The Preschool Special Education Learning Outcomes and Indicators for Kindergarten Participation* was developed as a part of the Quality Indicator Study conducted by MAGI Educational Services for the State Education Department. It was designed to assist parents and educators to better understand the developmental process for young children.

This publication describes student performance indicators according to major areas of development, such as cognitive development and motor skills. These learning outcomes and indicators, based on the New York State learning standards, are designed to help guide the preschool curriculum, instruction (including the provision of supports and services) and on-going assessment of preschool students with disabilities. It is important that families and staff work together as partners to effectively assist preschool students with disabilities in achieving these learning outcomes.

In communities throughout New York State, families have demonstrated their commitment to being actively involved in the education of their preschool children and preschool educators have repeatedly proven their dedication to provide effective learning experiences for their young students. The State Education Department has initiated several activities to support the efforts of families and preschool staffs by developing early childhood guides, parent and preschool personnel training programs and other activities. The Department will continue to support such efforts to raise the knowledge, skills and opportunity of families and preschool personnel so that all children will come to school ready to learn.

If you have specific questions regarding the preschool learning outcomes and indicators, please direct your inquiries to the Research, Partnerships and Planning Unit at 518-486-7584. This publication is also available on the web at: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/home.html>

Sincerely,



Lawrence C. Gloeckler



The University of the State of New York • The State Education Department • Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) • Albany, NY 12234 • <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov>

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# Preschool Special Education Learning Outcomes and Indicators For Kindergarten Participation

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## INTRODUCTION

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Consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the New York State Education Department's goals require that special education students have greater access to the general education curriculum and meet higher learning standards. The Department has undertaken several reform efforts to raise the standards for student achievement. The special education reform efforts initiated by the Department have yielded some promising results but a wide gap continues to exist in State assessment results between the performance of students receiving special education services and their non-disabled peers. For example, on the Grade 4 English Language Arts examination for year 2001, 26 percent of students with disabilities scored at or above level 3 compared to 65 percent of general education students. Also in 2001, 39 percent of students with disabilities scored at or above level 3 on the Grade 4 Mathematics examination compared to 74 percent of general education students. Therefore, it is important to thoughtfully examine preschool learning outcomes and indicators to help preschool children attain critical developmental and school readiness knowledge and competencies. This will help prepare preschool students with disabilities to meet the elementary learning standards expected of all students.

***The Preschool Special Education Learning Outcomes and Indicators for Kindergarten Participation*** identifies performance indicators for preschool students with disabilities that are based on the learning standards, as well as on developmentally appropriate skills required of all preschool students. The indicators describe targets for all preschool students to know and be able to do when they enter kindergarten. Student achievement begins with good instruction. Teachers will need to develop and implement activities based on a task analysis of the indicators, and the goals and objectives of each student's individualized education program (IEP). Necessary supports and services will also need to be provided in accordance with the child's individual needs.

This document is the product of 18 months of research involving review and analysis of the most current information available and concurrent validation from more than 30 national, state and local reviewers including early childhood special education representatives from other state education departments and kindergarten teachers from school districts within New York State.

## DEFINING LEARNING OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

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*The Preschool Special Education Learning Outcomes and Indicators for Kindergarten Participation* was compiled for preschool administrators, teachers, parents and those interested in this important field. This document provides a comprehensive, yet reader-friendly, presentation of performance indicators to use in their work to help preschool special education students meet the learning standards. The indicators focus on student attainment of critical developmental and school readiness knowledge and competencies. Six broad domains are highlighted, including the outcomes in each area that research has shown to be associated with what preschool children with disabilities need to know and be able to do to successfully transition to kindergarten and general education programs. The domains are superimposed on child development. In actuality, children are learning and maturing across the domains throughout their growth and development. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that many of the learning outcomes and indicators are overlapping and intertwined and are not easily isolated as might be implied by a framework such as the one provided here.

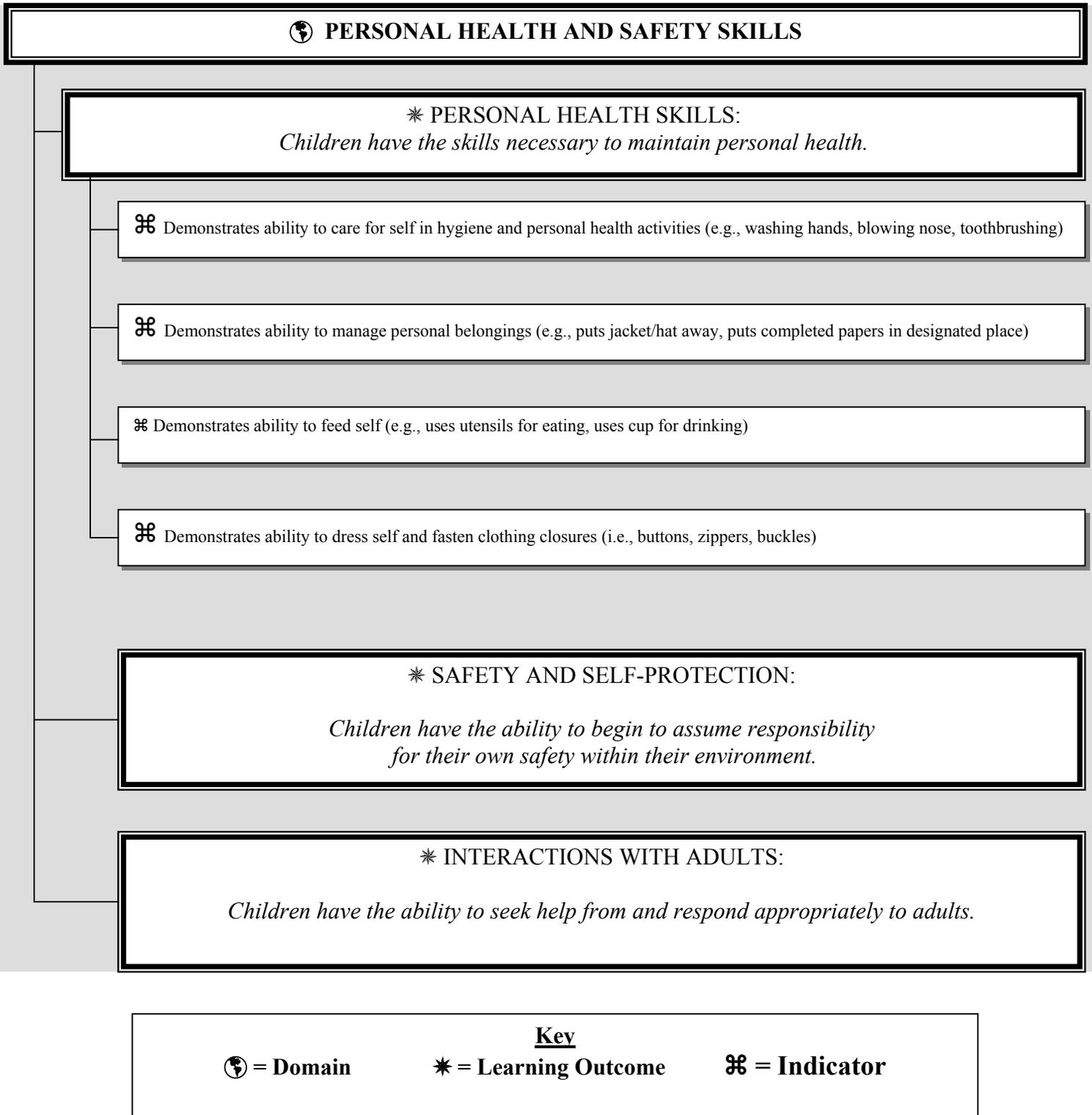
### Major Indicator Domains

The performance indicators for preschool children with disabilities receiving special education programs and services will assist preschool educators and parents/families to prepare these students for entry into kindergarten or school-age education programs. The indicators have been grouped into six major domains (🌐)

- 🌐 Personal Health and Safety Skills
- 🌐 Social and Emotional Development
- 🌐 Language Development and Communication Skills
- 🌐 Cognitive Development/Intellectual Abilities
- 🌐 Approaches to Learning
- 🌐 Motor Development

Each domain includes “learning outcomes” (\*), that is, functioning levels characteristic of the extensive knowledge and skills required in that domain, as well as the “indicators” of student performance at that level (⌘), that is, the ways a child can demonstrate that learning outcome in the classroom, the community, or the home. The relationship of these three key features of this product—domains, learning outcomes, and indicators—is pictured in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1**  
**Relationship Among Key Elements of Learning Outcomes and Indicators**



## How To Use This Document

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This document is an excellent companion to *Essential Elements of Reading* and *Early Literacy Guidance (Kindergarten - Grade 3)\**. A major purpose of developing *Preschool Special Education Learning Outcomes and Indicators for Kindergarten Participation* is to promote standards-based education in approved special education preschool programs. The use of the indicators in the implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) will promote student achievement. The focus on the learning standards means that preschool education administrators, teachers, and parents/families can use the indicators as a *working* tool to:

- better understand what students need to know and be able to do upon leaving preschool education;
- identify areas of strength, weakness, and opportunity in the professional development of all staff to meet the needs of preschool special education students;
- begin taking action to improve *access to* and *knowledge of* instructional best practices;
- improve the alignment of curriculum and instruction with the learning standards;
- re-assess the progress toward standards-based instruction at regular intervals.

Administrators, teachers and parents can use this document in a variety of ways as discussed below.

*Administrators may use the learning outcomes and indicators to:*

- ✓ define a shared vision of student learning among staff, parents and other stakeholders;
- ✓ orient new staff/beginning teachers to increase their *knowledge of* and *expectations for* student performance;
- ✓ provide ongoing executive/school board development. Two or three learning outcomes per meeting could be introduced with time for explanation, questions and discussion;
- ✓ provide professional development to increase the knowledge and skill levels of preschool special educators in designing and implementing learning activities aligned with the indicators;
- ✓ establish a process for ensuring that the outcomes and indicators are applied whenever program improvements are being considered;

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\* See footnote 1 on page 18 to obtain copies of these documents.

- ✓ identify and implement best practices aligned with the outcomes and indicators;
- ✓ increase the awareness of related service personnel (e.g. physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language) to the student performance indicators so they can better align their delivery of services with classroom instruction;
- ✓ develop recommendations to executive/advisory boards or school boards for program improvement;
- ✓ create a common language and focus for transition planning with all partners;
- ✓ discuss the outcomes and indicators at parent meetings, sharing a few each month and encouraging questions and discussion.

*Teachers may use the learning outcomes and indicators to:*

- ✓ continuously assess student skills and progress;
- ✓ set high expectations for student learning;
- ✓ focus the topics for a study group and gather recommendations for improvement based on the input of the group;
- ✓ determine the priority learning outcomes and indicators for the staff and create an action plan to implement the priorities;
- ✓ develop a curriculum for all students;
- ✓ design activities parents can do at home with their child.

*Parents may use the learning outcomes and indicators to:*

- ✓ support and help their children reach these outcomes and indicators;
- ✓ monitor their child's progress;
- ✓ set high expectations for student learning;
- ✓ have a common focus and language in communicating with the preschool staff.

## PROVIDING NEEDED SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

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For some preschool children with disabilities, the attainment of the learning outcomes and indicators presented in this document may be limited without the thoughtful and individualized use of supports and services. An individual child's need for support and/or services is determined by his/her abilities and individualized goals. The child's strengths/needs identified on the IEP and the learning outcomes and indicators need to be linked with the necessary support services. In this way the child can be prepared to participate in kindergarten to the maximum extent possible and achieve to his/her best ability.

There are three general categories of supports and services that can be provided for students with disabilities:

- a) supplementary aids and services and/or program modifications or supports— These are aids, services and other supports to enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled students (e.g., written materials in Braille, modification of curriculum, behavior management plan).
- b) specialized equipment or assistive technology devices and/or services— The equipment or device is any piece of equipment, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability (e.g., built-up grips, paper stabilizers, voice synthesizers). An assistive technology service helps a student use the equipment or device.
- c) supports for school personnel on behalf of the student— These are supports that help staff more effectively work with a student (e.g., information on a specific disability, training in American Sign Language, training in specific positive behavioral interventions).<sup>1</sup>

In tailoring the individual supports and services for each child, the goal is to facilitate the child's progress toward his/her IEP goals and the learning outcomes and indicators. Providing supports and services allows students with disabilities to be prepared for general education instruction. In designing these supports and services it is important to create a challenging learning environment. In summary, supports and services are determined by the individual child's strengths and areas of instructional need; these supports and services are not provided based on labels or categories of disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from NYS Education Department *Sample Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Guidance Document*, December, 2002.

## PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS FOR KINDERGARTEN PARTICIPATION

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### PERSONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY SKILLS

*Included in this domain are the skills necessary to meet personal needs, social responsibility or participation in developmentally appropriate situations. Development in this domain relates to the child's ability to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.*

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES

\* **PERSONAL HEALTH SKILLS:** *Children have the skills necessary to maintain personal health.*

- ⌘ Demonstrates ability to care for self in hygiene and personal care activities (e.g., washing hands, blowing nose, toothbrushing)
- ⌘ Demonstrates ability to manage personal belongings (e.g., puts jacket/hat away, puts completed work or papers in designated place)
- ⌘ Demonstrates ability to feed self (e.g., uses utensils for eating, uses cup for drinking).
- ⌘ Demonstrates ability to dress self and fasten clothing closures (e.g., buttons, zippers, buckles)

\* **SAFETY AND SELF-PROTECTION:** *Children have the ability to begin to assume responsibility for their own safety within their environment.*

- ⌘ Demonstrates caution within the environment and around potentially dangerous objects (e.g., careful around stairs, school parking lots, scissors, sharp pencils)
- ⌘ Demonstrates awareness and ability to follow basic health and safety routines (e.g., fire drill, caution around strangers, knows first and last name and where he/she lives for identification purposes)

\* **INTERACTIONS WITH ADULTS:** *Children have the ability to seek help from and respond appropriately to adults.*

- ⌘ Responds to and makes verbal or other greetings at appropriate times
- ⌘ Seeks help when appropriate
- ⌘ Responds to teacher direction or suggestion
- ⌘ Responds appropriately to adult approval/disapproval (e.g., holds an adult's hand when crossing the street)

## 🌐 SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*This domain includes the development of self-esteem and meaningful social interaction. Important components of this domain are the abilities to interact with adults and peers, express feelings and emotions, develop self-awareness and self-worth and demonstrate self-regulation and coping strategies.*

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

\* **SELF-AWARENESS/SELF CONCEPT:** *Children have a sense of personal identity and awareness of connectedness to others and they are able to recognize their abilities and value themselves.*

- ⌘ Identifies self by specific abilities, characteristics and preferences (e.g., by gender, age, as part of a family (son, sister) or group (classmate, Joe's friend))
- ⌘ Demonstrates growing confidence by expressing satisfaction with accomplishments ("Look at what I did!") or ability to conduct a task ("I am good at \_\_\_\_.")
- ⌘ Accepts responsibility for age-appropriate tasks (e.g., putting toys away, hanging up coat)
- ⌘ Demonstrates ability to relay basic information about cultural background, disability, morals and values, home life and uniqueness as an individual

\* **SELF-REGULATION:** *Children are able to exercise appropriate control in independent and group activities.*

- ⌘ Selects and completes a self-directed activity
- ⌘ Follows familiar rules and routines
- ⌘ Demonstrates the ability to change from one task to another on request (e.g., "Put away the toy now and come listen to a story.")
- ⌘ Takes turns during activities with other children
- ⌘ Follows a direction when given in the context of a group
- ⌘ Able to sit calmly, listen and work with other children
- ⌘ Able to focus on group or independent task to completion

\* **COPING/PROBLEM-SOLVING:** *Children are able to address challenges using appropriate social and coping skills.*

- ⌘ Attempts to solve problems independently, however, seeks adult assistance when he/she encounters a challenging situation (e.g., can not zip coat, lost a toy, has a disagreement with a peer).
- ⌘ Tells another child when he/she is bothered by that child's behavior (e.g., "Stop pushing me."; "Do not use all the blue blocks.")
- ⌘ Demonstrates skills to persist or respond effectively to frustrating tasks, situations
- ⌘ Demonstrates the ability to relay basic self-advocacy information about needs that are imperative for academic and social success (e.g., "Please say it again. I did not hear you.")

\* **SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:** *Children interact with adults and peers.*

- ⌘ Participates in conversations with familiar adults and peers (e.g., engaging in communication that involves several exchanges of thoughts or ideas)
- ⌘ Establishes relationships with peers (e.g., making the effort to sit by another child, holding hands with another child when going to library)
- ⌘ Engages in play with other children
- ⌘ Adapts to new situations and individuals
- ⌘ Cooperates in group activities and sharing materials with other children
- ⌘ Shows respect for other children and adults (e.g., taking turns, letting them finish a sentence/activity or asks to join them)
- ⌘ Ceases or changes activity when told “no” or presented with an alternative by teacher or peer
- ⌘ Demonstrates a strong sense of family and home

\* **EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS:** *Children have a sense of their own feelings and an ability to express empathy for others.*

- ⌘ Displays and describes an extensive array of feelings such as sad, happy, angry, or scared
- ⌘ Offers assistance to peer who appears to need help (“I’ll help you with that.”)
- ⌘ Demonstrates sensitivity to the feelings of others (e.g., recognizing a child may be hurt/sad when he/she is crying)

\* **PLAY/CREATIVE EXPRESSION:** *Children have the ability to engage in a variety of activities to express ideas and feelings and to explore their own creativity.*

- ⌘ Participates in a variety of music activities, including singing, finger plays, games and performances
- ⌘ Uses different art media in a variety of ways for creative expression
- ⌘ Participates in dramatic play activities (e.g., role-playing characters, family members, teacher, engaging in symbolic/imaginative play)
- ⌘ Explores toys and learning materials in a variety of ways

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

*This domain encompasses the development of receptive language skills and the expression of information, thoughts and ideas.*

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

\* **RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE:** *Children have the ability to understand and comprehend communication.*

- ⌘ Demonstrates understanding of simple and multi-step directions (e.g., “Find the book and bring it to me. ”, “Put the toys away and then get your coat.”, “Get the ball and kick it to Joey.”)
- ⌘ Understands conversations and stories (e.g., answering/asking questions about information communicated to them, or demonstrating through actions that they have an understanding)
- ⌘ Demonstrates understanding of location, size and temporal concepts (e.g., top/bottom, before/after, large/small)

\* **EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION :** *Children have the ability to use language for expression and to communicate with others.*

- ⌘ Uses a diverse and extensive vocabulary consisting of words that are a reflection of experiences and cultural background
- ⌘ Uses language to communicate information (e.g., ideas, experiences, opinions)
- ⌘ Uses speech or an expressive mode of communication (e.g., augmentative device) that is easily understood by others
- ⌘ Demonstrates ability to converse with peers and adults (e.g., engaging in an exchange of several thoughts or ideas, tells about a past event)
- ⌘ Uses simple, compound and complex sentences throughout conversational interchanges
- ⌘ Seeks information by asking questions: usage of “why,” “what,” “when,” “where,” “how,” and “who”
- ⌘ Uses eye contact, gestures and facial expression appropriately when communicating with others

## 🌐 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT/ INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES

*This domain encompasses the ability to demonstrate memory, reasoning and judgment, concept development and discrimination of objects, letters, and numbers. Included in this domain are various aspects of literacy, mathematical and scientific concept development.*

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

\* **LITERACY CONCEPTS<sup>2</sup>:** *Children have emerging literacy skills such as beginning letter recognition and phonological awareness, story comprehension and use of writing materials.*

- ⌘ Demonstrates knowledge of introductory phonological awareness skills such as rhyming
- ⌘ Retells a simple story after listening to it
- ⌘ Comprehends basic plot and characters (e.g., recognizing that there is a beginning, middle and end to the story, describing how a character in a story feels, responding to events in the story)
- ⌘ Uses pictures to help understand /predict what will occur in the story
- ⌘ The child invents his/her own story
- ⌘ Shows an interest in a range of preschool-level texts such as alphabet books, stories, poems
- ⌘ Uses a writing utensil and pretends to write a note
- ⌘ Shows interest in sharing writing and drawing with others
- ⌘ Sequences a three-part picture story in proper order
- ⌘ Distinguishes between print and pictures and words to show awareness of printed words
- ⌘ Shows increasing awareness of print in the classroom, home and community settings (e.g., recognizes own name, signs and symbols for stop, exit, hospital)

\* **PRE-MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS:** *Children have knowledge of quantitative concepts, spatial relationships and sequencing. Children show interest and the ability to apply measuring, categorizing and sequencing in real-life situations.*

- ⌘ Counts with one-to-one correspondence
- ⌘ Demonstrates understanding that numbers represent quantity (e.g., getting three pencils from the desk, putting one cup by each seat at the table)
- ⌘ Counts in sequence
- ⌘ Associates concepts, quantities and written numerals in meaningful ways (e.g., identifying which group of objects has “more” and “less.”)

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<sup>2</sup> The New York State Education Department publication *Early Literacy Guidance Prekindergarten –Grade 3* (2002) expands on this area of early literacy competencies. In addition, *Essential Elements of Reading* by the State Education Department helps teachers include elements in their instructional strategies that are the foundations of literacy. See the reference list for instructions to obtain a copy of this publication.

- ⌘ Demonstrates an understanding of a sense of time (e.g., eat breakfast in morning, go to sleep at night)
- ⌘ Demonstrates the ability to recognize, describe, compare, and name common shapes and their attributes
- ⌘ Demonstrates the ability to match, sort, and put in a series, and regroup objects according to one or two attributes such as size, color, or shape

\* **PRE-SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS:** *Children have knowledge of the process of examining natural phenomena and investigating properties of their environment. Children show an awareness of using gathered information to solve problems and gain understanding of real life events and experience.*

- ⌘ Uses senses to observe and examine natural phenomena and observe processes of natural events
- ⌘ Demonstrates the ability to collect, describe, and record information through a variety of means
- ⌘ Makes predictions, explanations and generalizations based on past experiences

## 🌐 APPROACHES TO LEARNING

*This domain encompasses children's development of curiosity and active engagement in their surroundings. Children demonstrate engagement and persistence with problem solving and reasoning.*

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

\* **CURIOSITY AND CREATIVITY:** *Children have an innate motivation to master and control their environment. Children demonstrate an eagerness to know and initiative in pursuing the unknown.*

- ⌘ Demonstrates curiosity on a topic (e.g., asking questions about new experiences, or about areas of interest)
- ⌘ Uses imagination and creativity to combine materials and/or equipment in new ways
- ⌘ Explores new classroom activities
- ⌘ Asks questions to extend his/her understanding

\* **PROBLEM SOLVING AND REASONING:** *Children have the ability to combine previous experiences to form new ideas. Children demonstrate the ability to develop and follow through on plans.*

- ⌘ Transfers knowledge from a topic to help him/her understand new information in another area (e.g., growing a plant from a seed relates to plants and trees in the environment)
- ⌘ Develops the organizational skills necessary to accomplish complex tasks (e.g., trying different ways to use materials to create an art project, developing strategies to use tape, glue or other classroom materials for completing a project)
- ⌘ Persists with a variety of activities or projects to completion

## 🌐 MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

*This domain encompasses motor functioning; including muscle control, body coordination and locomotion. Fine and gross motor skills as well as perceptual motor functioning are key elements of this domain.*

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

\* **GROSS MOTOR SKILLS:** *Children have the ability to maintain their position and move freely about in their environment for physical fitness, recreation and personal well being.*

- ⌘ Demonstrates balance and control for ball skills (e.g., throwing, catching and kicking)
- ⌘ Plays games involving physical activity (e.g., movements for walking, running, jumping, marching, galloping)
- ⌘ Demonstrates the ability to participate in playground activities
- ⌘ Safely negotiates stairs, curbs and uneven surfaces

\* **FINE MOTOR SKILLS:** *Children have the ability to use eye-hand coordination, strength and motor control to use age-appropriate tools and utensils effectively.*

- ⌘ Demonstrates eye-hand coordination to perform fine motor skills (e.g., stringing beads, building with blocks, completing puzzles)
- ⌘ Maintains stability in sitting/standing to use two hands together for activities of daily living (e.g., grooming, dressing, feeding)
- ⌘ Demonstrates the ability to use classroom tools with supervision (e.g., scissors, stapler)
- ⌘ Demonstrates the ability to use writing, drawing, painting and coloring instruments
- ⌘ Demonstrates ability to use various types of technology (e.g., interacting with software programs, using switches, touch screens)

\* **SENSORY PROCESSING AND MOTOR PLANNING SKILLS:** *Children have the ability to process sensory information and to coordinate movements.*

- ⌘ Demonstrates the ability to plan and execute movements with developmentally or age appropriate speed, coordination and accuracy
- ⌘ Demonstrates a tolerance to a variety of textures, sounds, sights, tastes and visual stimuli presented within the child's environment

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<sup>2</sup> This document may be obtained from the New York State Education Department's web site at <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/home.html>

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