



**Bright  
& Early**  
NORTH DAKOTA

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# Curriculum Alignment Worksheet

## Background

The Bright & Early ND Curriculum Alignment Worksheet helps your program reflect on how well your curriculum supports children's development according to the [North Dakota Early Learning Standards: Birth to Kindergarten](#), often referred to as the 'Standards'. Bright & Early ND does not require programs to use a specific curriculum. Rather, curricula should be aligned with the Standards and reflect the values and philosophy of the program inclusive of the children and families served.

Curriculum is more than enjoyable activities. It's everything you do. It includes things such as learning experiences and activities, interactions, materials used to enhance the environment, and routines.

## Purpose

Aligning your curriculum with the Standards ensures that your program plans and implements effective teaching practices to promote positive learning outcomes for children in all developmental domains. Aligning your program's curriculum with the Standards will be a process that takes time and teamwork. Each of the sections will be scored accordingly to the [Bright & Early ND Curriculum Approval Rubric](#).

## What Does Alignment Mean?

Alignment means identifying the elements that correspond between two things. In this worksheet, alignment refers to lining up elements of your curriculum with the North Dakota Early Learning Standards: Birth to Kindergarten. This process allows you to see how the Domains and Sub-Domains in the Standards are reflected in your curriculum.

## Why Is It Important?

The Standards provide a common set of expectations for children's learning and development. The Standards provide a framework for what children should know and be able to do from birth to kindergarten.

A curriculum guides content and effective teaching practices that support all children's development and learning. Aligning your curriculum with the Standards ensures that your program implements teaching practices that promote children's development and learning in areas that research shows are important for success in school, work, and life!

## Before You Begin

Before aligning your curriculum with the North Dakota Early Learning Standards: Birth to Kindergarten, your program must understand their purpose. The Standards present a continuum of learning and development in the following domains: Approaches to Play and Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Language, Communication, and Literacy; Mathematics and Logical Thinking; Scientific Reasoning; Social Studies; Creative Arts; and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development.

The Standards promote the understanding of early learning and development; provide comprehensive and a coherent set of expectations for children's development and learning; and guide the design and implementation of curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices with young children.



# Program Information

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Created: \_\_\_\_\_

Ages Served (select all that apply):      Infants      Toddlers      Preschool

## Curriculum Details

Bright & Early ND does not require programs to use a specific curriculum. Rather, curricula should be aligned with the Standards and reflect the values and philosophy of the program inclusive of the children and families served. Please select the type of curricula that you will be aligning.

**My program uses a comprehensive, published curricula.**

| Curriculum Name | Edition | Publisher(s) | Copyright Year | Website Address |
|-----------------|---------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
|                 |         |              |                |                 |
|                 |         |              |                |                 |
|                 |         |              |                |                 |

**My program uses a comprehensive, self-designed curricula.**

These are curricula developed by early learning programs for use in their own programs and are not available for purchase. If you are aligning a self-designed curricula for review, please provide details below:

**My program uses a bundle of curricula.**

This can include multiple published curricula, or a combination of published and self-designed curricula, when reviewed together, are comprehensive of the Standards. For the published parts of the bundle, please provide details below:

| Curriculum Name | Edition | Publisher(s) | Copyright Year | Website Address |
|-----------------|---------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
|                 |         |              |                |                 |
|                 |         |              |                |                 |
|                 |         |              |                |                 |
|                 |         |              |                |                 |

For the self-designed parts, please provide details below:

# Curriculum Alignment

In the following sections, your program will reflect on how your curriculum supports children's development according to the Standards.

The Standards are organized into the following elements: Domains, Sub-Domains, Goals, Developmental Progressions, and Indicators.

**Domains** are broad areas of early learning and development from birth to 5 years that are essential for school and long-term success. They are as follows:

- Approaches to Play and Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language, Communication, and Literacy
- Cognition
- Social Studies
- Creative Arts
- Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development


Each Domain is related to and influences the others. Because areas of early learning become more differentiated as children get older, some Domains for preschoolers are captured differently than they are for infants and toddlers.

**Sub-Domains** are categories or components of development within a Domain. For example, for the Social and Emotional Development Domain, Sub-Domains include relationships with adults, relationships with other children, emotional functioning, and belonging.

Since the Standards are inclusive of all children, birth to Kindergarten, they incorporate a developmental progression of learning and skill development. Please note, you may see the following terms throughout this worksheet and the Standards.

- **Emerging Skills** is used for the youngest infant age group when specific skills, behaviors, or concepts have not yet emerged or are not yet observable.
- **Continued Growth** is a stage in the process of growing. These are noted throughout the document and labeled as Continued Growth in the Developmental Progression.

See the sample below (*ND Early Learning Standards: Birth to Kindergarten, page 63*).

| Developmental Progressions    |             |              |   |  |
|--|-------------|--------------|---|--|
| Birth–9 Months   | 8–18 Months | 16–36 Months | 36–48 Months  | 48–60 Months   |
| Emerging Skills  |             |              | With support, may be able to tell one or two key events from a story or may act out a story with pictures or props. | Retells two or three key events from a well-known story, typically in the right temporal order and using some simple sequencing terms, such as first ... and then. |
| <b>Indicators</b>  |             |              |   |  |
| By 60 Months:  |             |              |   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-tells or acts out a story that was read, putting events in the appropriate sequence, and demonstrating more sophisticated understanding of how events relate, such as cause and effect relationships.</li> <li>• Tells fictional or personal stories using a sequence of at least two or three connected events.</li> <li>• Identifies characters and main events in books and stories.</li> </ul> |             |              |   |  |

# Directions

For each Domain, you will select two Sub-Domains, of your choice, to showcase. Using the tables provided, share examples on how your curriculum supports the selected Sub-Domain in the following areas:

- **Experiences:** Guided by your curriculum, describe a planned activity or experience that supports children's learning in the selected Standard Sub-Domain.
- **Interactions:** Describe how you enhance interactions to help all children make progress in the selected Standard Sub-Domain.
- **Environment:** Guided by your curriculum, describe changes you make to the environment to support children's learning in the selected Standard Sub-Domain?
- **Routines:** Share an example how you support children's development in the selected Standard Sub-Domain during routines such as mealtime, transitions, diapering and toileting, etc.

## Example

### Domain VII: Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

Pages 108-120 in the ELS

*Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development is foundational to children's learning in all areas because it permits children to fully explore and function in their environment.*

#### Sub-Domains

- Perception
- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition

#### Sub-Domain: Fine Motor

|   | Experiences   | Interactions  | Environment  | Routines   |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months | Singing songs that have different hand motions, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and "The Wheels on the Bus." Starting slowly with younger children to give them time to try to control and coordinate movements. | Using self- and parallel talk to describe how children use their hands when reaching for, touching, grasping, and playing with; for example, "You are working hard to pick that puzzle piece up and make it fit in the puzzle." | Offer a variety of toys and materials that support fine motor development. For example; rattles and shakers, stacking cups, clutch balls, simple puzzles, large peg boards, etc. | At mealtimes, we provide finger foods that allow infants to use and practice their pincer grasp. We offer spoons and forks to toddler to practice eye-hand coordination. |
| <b>PRECHOOL</b><br>36 months to 60 months   | Each day we provide activities that require hand-eye coordination and precise placement of small objects. For example; lacing small beads into necklaces, bracelets, long ropes, etc.                                   | We encourage children's efforts in completing fine motor tasks by providing feedback; for example, "You're working hard to make your necklace. These beads are smaller than what you used before."                              | During daily free play, children have access to art materials, puzzles, interlocking building materials, and manipulatives.  | At mealtimes, we provide utensils for serving and eating, small pitchers for pouring water or milk into cups, small broom and dust to clean up after meals.              |

# Domain I: Approaches to Play and Learning

Pages 16-29 in the ELS

*Approaches to Play and Learning focuses on how children learn. It refers to the skills and behaviors that children use to engage in learning.*

## Sub-Domains

- Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation
- Cognitive Self-Regulation
- Initiative and Curiosity
- Creativity

| Sub-Domain:                                 |             |              |             |          |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |             |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |             |              |             |          |

| Sub-Domain:                                 |             |              |             |          |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |             |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |             |              |             |          |

# Domain II: Social and Emotional Development

Pages 30-45 in the ELS

Positive social and emotional development in the early years provides a critical foundation for lifelong development and learning.

## Sub-Domains

- Relationships with Adults
- Relationships with Other Children
- Emotional Functioning
- Sense of Identity and Belonging

| Sub-Domain:                                 |             |              |             |          |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |             |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |             |              |             |          |

| Sub-Domain:                                 |             |              |             |          |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |             |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |             |              |             |          |

# Domain III: Language, Communication, and Literacy

Pages 46-65 in the ELS

Communication is fundamental to the human experience, and language and literacy are essential to children's learning.

## Language Sub-Domains

- Attending and Understanding
- Communicating and Speaking
- Vocabulary
- Emergent Literacy

| Sub-Domain:                                 |             |              |             |          |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |             |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |             |              |             |          |

| Sub-Domain:                                 |             |              |             |          |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |             |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |             |              |             |          |



# Domain III: Language, Communication, and Literacy Cont.

Pages 46-65 in the ELS

Communication is fundamental to the human experience, and language and literacy are essential to children's learning.

## Literacy Sub-Domains (*Preschool Only*)

- Phonological Awareness
- Print and Alphabet Knowledge
- Comprehension and Text Structure
- Writing

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                 |              |             |          |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences     | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months | Emerging Skills |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |                 |              |             |          |

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                 |              |             |          |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences     | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months | Emerging Skills |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |                 |              |             |          |

# Domain IV: Cognition

Pages 66-92 in the ELS

Cognitive development includes reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and thinking skills that help young children understand and organize their world.

## Sub-Domains (Infant/Toddler Only)

- Exploration and Discovery
- Memory
- Reasoning and Problem Solving
- Emergent Mathematical Thinking
- Imitation and Symbolic Representation and Play

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                  |              |             |          |
|---|------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences      | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |                  |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         | Continued Growth |              |             |          |

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                  |              |             |          |
|---|------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences      | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |                  |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         | Continued Growth |              |             |          |

# Domain IV: Cognition Cont.

Pages 66-92 in the ELS

Cognitive development includes reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and thinking skills that help young children understand and organize their world.

## Sub-Domains (Preschool Only)

### Mathematics Development

- Counting and Cardinality
- Operation and Algebraic Thinking
- Measurement
- Geometry and Spatial Sense

### Scientific Reasoning

- Scientific Inquiry
- Reasoning and Problem Solving

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                 |              |             |          |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences     | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months | Emerging Skills |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |                 |              |             |          |

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                 |              |             |          |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences     | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months | Emerging Skills |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |                 |              |             |          |

# Domain V: Social Studies

Pages 93-99 in the ELS

*Social Studies is understanding family life, the impact of culture, and how to live and work together for the good of the community and themselves.*

## Sub-Domains

- Concepts of Time
- Citizenship
- Identity and Culture

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                 |              |             |          |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences     | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months | Emerging Skills |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |                 |              |             |          |

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                 |              |             |          |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences     | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months | Emerging Skills |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |                 |              |             |          |

# Domain VI: Creative Arts

Pages 100-107 in the ELS

Children are encouraged to learn in, through, and about the arts by actively engaging in the processes of creating, participating in, performing and responding to quality arts experiences.

## Sub-Domains

- Music
- Dance & Movement
- Visual Arts
- Dramatic Play

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                 |              |             |          |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences     | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months | Emerging Skills |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |                 |              |             |          |

| Sub-Domain:                                 |                 |              |             |          |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences     | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months | Emerging Skills |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |                 |              |             |          |

# Domain VII: Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

Pages 108-120 in the ELS

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## Sub-Domains

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- Gross Motor
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| Sub-Domain:                                 |             |              |             |          |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |             |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |             |              |             |          |

| Sub-Domain:                                 |             |              |             |          |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
|   | Experiences | Interactions | Environment | Routines |
| <b>INFANT/TODDLER</b><br>Birth to 36 months |             |              |             |          |
| <b>PRESCHOOL</b><br>36 to 60 months         |             |              |             |          |

# Resources & References

National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning (n.d.). Implementation Guide-Introduction to the ELOF Implementation Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/elof-01-intro-implementation-toolkit.pdf>

North Dakota Early Learning Standards: Birth to Kindergarten, August 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/1540/FINALFINALEarlyLearningStandards7NOV2018.pdf>