

Florida School Readiness Program:

Curriculum Approval Specifications

2014-2015

Office of Early Learning
Florida Department of Education

Form OEL-SR-7102 (March 2014)
6M-4.710, F.A.C.

This document was developed by the Florida Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and is incorporated by reference in Rule 6M-4.710, Florida Administrative Code.

For further information, please contact:

Office of Early Learning
250 Marriott Drive
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

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I. Florida’s School Readiness Program

A. Background

Section 1002.82(2)(l), Florida Statutes (F.S.), requires the Office of Early Learning (OEL) to, “Adopt a list of approved curricula that meet the performance standards for the school readiness program and establish a process for the review and approval of a provider’s curriculum that meets the performance standards.” Beginning July 1, 2014, providers offering the School Readiness Program will be required to use a developmentally appropriate curriculum that is aligned to the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards as described in Rule 6M-4.710, Florida Administrative Code. Once a curriculum has been approved by OEL, it remains approved until the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five dated August 2012, are revised. If a vendor cannot support the approved curricula package, the curriculum title will be removed from the approved list.

This document provides instructions and information for the approval of comprehensive curricula for use in the School Readiness Program by OEL.

B. Review Criteria

The following criteria will be used for the review of curriculum submitted for approval:

- I. The curriculum content provides age appropriate activities that challenge children’s abilities and aligns with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five.
- II. The curriculum content and materials provide age appropriate character development experiences.
- III. The curriculum is developmentally appropriate.
- IV. The curriculum is comprehensive.

A description of each of the criteria is below.

I. Curriculum Content

The curriculum content provides age appropriate activities that challenge children’s abilities and aligns with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five.

The first five years of life is a period of rapid development for young children. Recent research supports that every child is born with well-developed senses and reflexes. Beginning at birth, young infants are able to form relationships with adults, develop trust, and explore the world. With adequate nutrition, an appropriate environment, and nurturing by responsive adults, young children become actively engaged in exploration and in learning about their environments. Each child’s special temperament and family context ensure that, while development will follow a somewhat predictable sequence, the child’s development will be unique.

School Readiness Program curricula must be aligned with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five, as incorporated by reference into Rule 6M-4.710, Florida Administrative Code. The Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to

Five are grounded in Florida's conviction that children's early experiences are directly related to later success in school, in the workforce, and in life.

Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five were developed in collaboration with experts in the field of early learning and are based on the following principles which incorporate their collective knowledge about child development and best practices.

- The first five years is a period of rapid growth and development.
- Nurturing and responsive relationships are the foundation of health, growth, and development.
- Consistency and continuity of experiences promote development.
- Developmental milestones occur in a somewhat predictable order, but each child develops at a unique pace.
- Children learn in many ways and in multiple settings.
- Adults can provide intentional and appropriate experiences that enhance children's learning.

The performance standards address the age-appropriate progress of children in the development of school readiness skills. The performance standards for children from birth to five years of age in school readiness programs are integrated with the performance standards adopted by the Department of Education for children in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education program under s. 1002.67, F.S. The domains of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards include the following: Physical Development; Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Communication; Cognitive Development and General Knowledge. Each domain is divided into sub-domains that focus on specific areas. **The Standards themselves are found within these sub-domains.**

II. Developmentally Appropriate

The curriculum is developmentally appropriate.

School Readiness Program curricula must be developmentally appropriate. Developmentally appropriate curricula include activities and practices that cover the following characteristics:

- A. Age appropriateness (what most children of a given age can do).
- B. Individual appropriateness (each child's skills, interests, and characteristics).
- C. Social and cultural appropriateness (children's families, cultures, and communities).

School Readiness Program curricula must be designed to enhance the age-appropriate progress of children in attaining the performance standards adopted by the OEL. An age-appropriate curriculum must be designed to be generally age-appropriate by addressing the age ranges covered by the curriculum (e.g. infants, toddlers and/or preschool children).

In addition to being age-appropriate, School Readiness Program curricula must be individually appropriate. An individually appropriate curriculum is one which remains flexible enough to support modification for individuals who have skills at either end of a developmental continuum. An individually appropriate curriculum meets individual children where they are in terms of development and helps teachers to reach challenging but achievable goals that will support children's development and learning.

Finally, a School Readiness Program curriculum must help young children achieve goals that are developmentally and educationally significant. The curriculum does this by including learning experiences (like play, small group, large group, interest centers, and routines) that reflect what is known about young children in general and about these children in particular, as well as about the sequences in which children acquire specific concepts, skills, and abilities, building on prior experiences.

In order to demonstrate that a curriculum is developmentally appropriate, a School Readiness Program curriculum must be research based. A curriculum is based on research when its design is based on evidence that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically relevant for the children who will experience the curriculum. In other words, the curriculum has been created based on studies that employed experimental or quasi-experimental methods to determine the effectiveness of instructional strategies, programs, or practices for young children and it is organized around principles of child development and learning, and has standardized training procedures and materials to support implementation.

Listed below are examples of the characteristics that comprise a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on research.

- Promotes young children's school readiness in the areas of language and cognitive development, early reading and mathematics skills, socio-emotional development, physical development, and approaches to learning.
- Is based on scientifically valid research and has standardized training procedures and curriculum materials to support implementation.
- Is comprehensive and linked to ongoing assessment, with developmental and learning goals and measurable objectives.
- Is focused on improving the learning environment, teaching practices, family involvement, and child outcomes across all areas of development.
- Is aligned with the Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards.

III. Comprehensive Curriculum

The curriculum framework is comprehensive.

A comprehensive core curriculum is one that contains a mix of instruction and practice activities sufficient to build strong skills in each of the five domains of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five.

Curriculum reviewers assess whether or not a curriculum implements these best practices. Implementation of these best practices is not required for approval as a School Readiness Program curriculum, but is encouraged by OEL.

The curriculum framework is comprehensive; is responsive to children's individual strengths and needs, including hands-on experiences; links directly to children's immediate and long-term goals; addresses adaptations for children with special needs and is inclusive in all areas of development and learning; addresses diversity including English Language Learners in all areas

of development and learning; is aligned with ongoing assessment; and materials are readily available or can be found in most developmentally appropriate early learning environments. If additional materials are needed, they can be found in most developmentally appropriate early learning environments. Examples of such materials include blocks and play dough.

Specifically, a curriculum framework enables teachers to

- A. Promote active engagement and learning.
- B. Individualize and adapt practices for each child based on current data.
- C. Provide opportunities for children's learning within daily routines.
- D. Ensure collaboration and shared responsibilities among families and professionals.

The elements for a curriculum framework recommended by researchers include the following:

A. Activities and Instruction Element

- 1) The curriculum framework includes activities and instructional practices.
- 2) The activities and instructional practices are accessible to all children.
- 3) The activities and instructional practices are developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically responsive.
- 4) The activities and instructional practices address all areas of development and learning.
- 5) The activities and instructional practices are tiered.
- 6) The activities and instructional practices are responsive to children's individual strengths and needs.
- 7) The activities and instructional practices include multiple and varied embedded learning opportunities.
- 8) The activities and instructional practices include hands-on experiences.
- 9) The activities and instructional practices are presented in a variety of daily events.
- 10) The activities and instructional practices link directly to children's immediate and long term goals.
- 11) The classroom schedule and environment is arranged to support the activities and instructional practices.

B. Overall Curriculum Framework

- 1) The curriculum framework is acceptable to all key stakeholders.
- 2) The curriculum framework represents the program's mission, philosophy, and values.
- 3) The curriculum framework is comprehensive and integrated.
- 4) The elements of the curriculum framework are dynamic and flexible.
- 5) The curriculum framework includes positive physical and social environmental supports.
- 6) Implementation of the curriculum framework is a collaborative effort.

C. Digital Curriculum Programs or Components

Submission of digital curriculum programs or curriculum that includes digital components is encouraged.

IV. Submissions for School Readiness Curriculum Approval: General Description

A. Submissions

OEL will accept for review and approval submissions of comprehensive early childhood curricula for birth to five year old children that address the five domains of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five. In order to be considered comprehensive, the materials submitted must “stand alone” and cover the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five in all five domains.

B. Comprehensive Core Curricula

A school readiness approved curriculum must cover all five domains of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five. Development of many skills requires explicit instruction in the particular skill area, strategies or steps to follow, and scaffolding of instruction by the teacher. The curriculum must provide explicit, systematic instruction, assessment, and intervention that leads to children’s growing proficiency at each stage of skill development. To support success in learning, a school readiness curriculum should include clear presentation and explanations of the following:

- Purposes, goals, and expected outcomes.
- Concepts, processes, rules, information, and terms.
- Models, examples, questions, and feedback.

The overall instructional design should include the following:

- A clear “road map” or “blueprint” for teachers to get an overall picture of the program with clearly stated goals and objectives.
- Resources to help the teacher understand the rationale for the instructional approach and strategies utilized in the program (e.g., articles, explanations in the teacher manuals, references, reliable websites).
- A coherent instructional design.
- Explicit instruction.
- Consistently systematic and intentional instruction.
- A logical organization to the materials so that it is clear how the curriculum proceeds over the course of the program (day, week, month, year).
- Consistent ‘teacher friendly’ instructional routines.
- Student materials aligned with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five.
- Examples of constructive feedback.
- Scaffolding with specific instructions.
- Differentiated instruction.
- Guidelines and materials for flexible grouping.
- Enrichment activities for advanced children.
- Guidelines for use with diverse populations such as English Language Learners and children with disabilities.
- Components that foster intrinsic motivation in children; (Approaches to Learning domain).
- Ample opportunities for practice.

C. Learning Opportunities in the School Readiness Classroom

In order to provide Florida's children with a high-quality, developmentally appropriate learning opportunity, several things are of critical importance.

Children need one-on-one interactions with classroom teachers and classmates each day. Through one-on-one interactions with children, teachers scaffold children's activities and can provide feedback and support. Additionally, they build rapport and a trusting relationship. When children are given many daily opportunities to interact with classmates, they begin to develop skills in negotiating, turn-taking, and cooperative play.

The curriculum used in a school readiness classroom should include active learning experiences that are child-initiated, as well as those planned and initiated by the teacher. As stated previously, the curriculum should be developmentally appropriate, meaning that it is appropriate for birth to 5-year-old children and can be modified for individual children who have skills throughout the developmental continuum (i.e., individually appropriate). Also, when planning and implementing the curriculum the teacher should take into account the children's personal knowledge, often related to culture (culturally appropriate), and then use this information to build on their strengths and skills.

Throughout the course of the day, the curriculum should include instruction in varying formats, such as large group, small group, and learning centers. Teachers have a very distinct role in facilitating and scaffolding the activities of the classroom, but it is not developmentally appropriate for young children to spend extended amounts of time in teacher-directed activities. Children's attention spans will grow over the year and will be longer when engaged by an enthusiastic, invigorating teacher.

As part of active learning within a school readiness classroom, children should be engaged in many hands-on experiences throughout the day. Children should not learn about concepts through paper and pencil activities, work sheets, or coloring pages. Learning occurs when the child is engaged in the activity (teacher or child-directed), and a child's attention span tends to be longer in activities and topics that are of interest to the child.

Early literacy skills are critical to children's success in K-12, and curricula used in School Readiness classrooms must be designed to prepare a student in this area. There is a large body of empirical research in the area of emergent literacy, specifically phonological awareness and letter knowledge, which shows that daily attention to these skills, as little as twenty minutes a day, can make a huge impact on children's emergent literacy skills.

Research shows that young children learn best through hands-on, intentional learning experiences (e.g., "play with a purpose") that have been planned by knowledgeable teachers. When young children explore things directly with their senses and practice new skills through play, they are learning in ways that are meaningful to them at their stage of development.

V. Process and Criteria for Evaluation

Each curriculum submitted for approval will be reviewed by three trained reviewers that meet the criteria specified in the Policy and Procedures for Curriculum Approval. Each curriculum will be rated on the extent to which it meets the criteria specified in the Curriculum Evaluation Form (FORM SR-CURR5) and described below.

A. Content

A.1. Alignment with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five
Content must align with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five for each of the five domains. The Standards can be accessed at www.flbt5.com. This document includes the standards and benchmarks where applicable, by domain as well as related skills; descriptions of child skills; environmental considerations; supportive instructional strategies; and other information pertinent to the curriculum implementation of a School Readiness Program. Each domain will be scored separately. The following requirements apply to alignment with each of the five domains of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five:

- **Submitter’s Written Correlations** – Submitters are expected to complete the OEL written correlation form provided. This form provides information that identifies exactly where and to what extent the school readiness curriculum addresses each of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five and benchmarks (e.g., included in one or more activities, in-depth coverage across multiple activities and/or domains). If a particular standard is not addressed, the information provided should also indicate this. However, since the school readiness curriculum approval process is only for the review of comprehensive curricula, all five domains should be adequately covered, even if each individual standard may not be addressed directly.
- **Scope** – The content should address the appropriate age level(s) of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five for each domain and associated learning outcomes, including thinking and learning skills.
- **Completeness** – The content of the curriculum should be complete enough to “stand on its own,” without additional curriculum supports. To be useful for classroom instruction, the curriculum must be adaptable to the instructional goals of individual school readiness providers. There should be no major omissions in the required content coverage. The curriculum may include concepts and topics that enrich and extend children’s knowledge and learning, but should be free of unrelated facts and information that would detract from achievement of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five.
- **Curriculum Integration** – The curriculum should include integration across subject areas/domains, and over the course of the program year. Young children do not separate their activities and learning by subject area, and it is necessary that the curriculum should not be separated. Integration that allows children to be engaged, active learners provides a positive learning environment that builds the foundational skills needed.

A.1.a. Physical Development

Planned physical activities and exposure to a wide array of experiences are keys to the physical development of young children. Increased body control enables young children to become active partners in managing their own health, safety, and physical fitness. Because many health-related

behaviors (e.g., eating preferences, exercise patterns) are developed in childhood, it is vital that the adults who care for young children consciously promote physical development.

The following are four sub-domains to young children's physical development:

- Gross motor development – the use, refinement, and coordination of the body's large muscles.
- Fine motor development – the use, refinement, and coordination of the body's small muscles.
- Self-help – the child's capacity to accomplish health and self-care routines independently and interdependently with significant adults.
- Health – includes physical, dental, auditory and visual development as well as the nutritional, mental health and wellness needs of young children.

The Standards themselves are found within these sub-domains.

A.1.b. Approaches to Learning

As young children gain knowledge across the domains of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five, they also develop strategies that help direct that learning. The Approaches to Learning domain includes the following sub-domains:

- Eagerness and Curiosity - the desire of young children to engage with objects and people in their immediate environment.
- Persistence – the capacity to continue working on tasks that appear difficult or unsolvable.
- Creativity and inventiveness – the flexibility and imagination in using familiar materials to solve problems.

The Standards themselves are found within these sub-domains.

A.1.c. Social and Emotional Development

Young children's early relationships with parents and other caregivers become the framework for their future social and emotional development. Moreover, children construct knowledge about the world through their social exchanges, signifying the importance of social emotional development. For these reasons, early attachments are extremely important to children's overall health, development, and learning. The Social and Emotional Development domain includes the following sub-domains:

- Trust and emotional security – how children feel about themselves as well as how safe they feel in their environments and relationships with others.
- Self-regulation – the ability to manage one's own needs and emotions.
- Self-concept – developing a sense of themselves as increasingly competent and confident.

The Standards themselves are found within these sub-domains.

A.1.d. Language, Communication, and Emergent Literacy

Language, communication, and early reading and writing are critical to children's ability to learn, work, and play with others. Communication through oral language and the written word are essential in daily living. Language and communication skills impact all other areas of development and are essential for the development of cognition, logic, and reasoning skills. The Language, Communication, and Emergent Literacy domain includes the following sub-domains:

- Listening and understanding– receptive language.
- Communicating and speaking – expressive language.
- Early reading - recognizing and understanding the meaning of a set of language symbols that describe people, objects, feelings, events, relationships, and ideas.
- Early writing – the ability to express ideas and meaning through the use of symbols to represent language.

A.1.e. Cognitive Development and General Knowledge

Cognitive development refers to the skills and strategies that children use to explore and learn about their worlds and solve challenges and problems. General knowledge is the collection of information that children gain through interaction with adults, other children, and materials. The Cognitive Development and General Knowledge domain includes the following sub-domains:

- **Exploration and discovery** – learning about their worlds by using their senses and reflexes.
- **Concept and memory** – learning the relationships between objects and experiences.
- **Problem-solving and creative expression** – ability to meet immediate needs.

3 & 4 year-olds contain additional sub-domains:

- **Mathematical thinking**
- **Scientific thinking**
- **Social studies**
- **The Arts**

A.2. Accuracy of Content

Content must be accurate in historical context and contemporary facts and concepts.

- **Objectivity** – Content that is included in the materials should accurately represent the domain of knowledge and events. It should be factual and objective. It should be free of mistakes, errors, inconsistencies, contradictions within itself, and biases of interpretation. It should be free of the biased selection of information. Materials should distinguish between facts and possible interpretations or opinions expressed about factual information. Visuals or other elements of instruction should contribute to the accuracy of the text or narrative.
- **Representativeness** – The selection of content should not misrepresent the domains of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five. It should include the generally accepted and prevalent theories, major concepts, laws, standards, and models used within prekindergarten education.
- **Correctness** – Presentation of content should be free of typographical and visual errors. It should include correct grammar, spelling, linguistics, terminology, definitions, descriptions, visuals, graphs, sounds, videos, and all other components of the school readiness curriculum.

A.3. Relevance of Content

Content must be up-to-date for the academic discipline and the context in which the content is presented.

- **Dates or editions** – Copyright dates for photographs and other materials and editions should suggest sufficient currency of content. Copyright dates and editions serve as

indicators about currency. However, neither the copyright date nor the edition guarantees currency. Subsequent editions should reflect more up-to-date information than earlier editions. Informed examination of the text, narrative, and visuals contained in the materials provides the most direct information about currency of the materials.

- **Context** – Text or narrative, visuals, photographs, and other features should reflect the time periods appropriate for the objectives and the intended learners. Sometimes context should be current, for example, a photograph used to show stages of human growth and development will be more relevant when the clothing, hairstyles, and activities reflect present-day styles. Sometimes context should be historical, for example, illustrations and photographs of historical events should reflect the historical time period. Sometimes context should be both current and historical.

For example, historic images alongside modern ones would convey changes in styles over time. At all times the context should be relevant to the learner, to the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five, and to the concept presented.

A.4. Multicultural Representation

Portrayal of gender, ethnicity, age, work situations, and various social groups must include multicultural fairness and advocacy.

- **Multicultural fairness** – Through balanced representation of cultures and groups in multiple settings, occupations, careers, and lifestyles, the materials should support equal opportunity without regard for age, color, gender, disability, national origin, race, or religion. It is not the number of pages devoted to diversity, equity, or work roles, but the substance of what is stated and portrayed that matters most. For this reason, it can be misleading to count the number of pages or illustrations devoted to a social issue or group. It is more important to focus on the integration of social diversity throughout a school readiness curriculum. In addition to balanced representations, the portrayal of individuals and situations must exclude biases and stereotypes. These portrayals must promote an understanding and appreciation of the importance and contributions of diverse cultures and heritage.
- **Multicultural advocacy** – The understanding and appreciation of multiple cultures extends beyond fair representation. It involves embracing a multicultural context, not just through pictures, but through information about ways to honor differences and deal with conflicts, promote a positive self-image for members of all groups, and provide for the development of healthy attitudes and values. Effective treatment of multicultural issues requires consideration of the age and ability levels of children and whether or not it is appropriate to include multicultural issues in the study of a particular topic. Overall, however, materials should reflect both multicultural fairness and advocacy.

B. Presentation

B.1. Comprehensiveness of Teacher and Student Resources

The curriculum must include features to maintain learner motivation. Resources must be complete enough to address the targeted learning outcomes without requiring the teacher to prepare additional teaching materials for the classroom beyond those available in a typical preschool classroom.

Materials should contain support for children in completing instructional activities and assessments and for teachers in implementing all of the instructional elements. A variety of components can accomplish this purpose. Typically, materials will include outlines and strategies for teaching, media supplements, learning activities and projects.

All curricula will likely include activities that use additional materials that are not a part of the curriculum, such as play dough, blocks, or puppets, which are typically available in a school readiness classroom. Activities of this sort should explain in detail, possibly with illustration, the material(s) needed to include alternate ways of making or substituting the material.

The major components generally expected for teacher and student resources are listed below.

B.1.a. Comprehensiveness of Teacher Resources

Resources must be complete enough to address the targeted learning outcomes without requiring the teacher to prepare additional teaching materials for the classroom beyond those available in a typical preschool classroom.

Materials should contain support for children in completing instructional activities and assessments and for teachers in implementing all of the instructional elements. A variety of components can accomplish this purpose. Typically, materials will include outlines and strategies for teaching, media supplements, learning activities, and projects.

All curricula will likely include activities that use additional materials that are not a part of the curriculum, such as play dough, blocks, or puppets, which are typically available in a school readiness classroom. Activities of this sort should explain in detail, possibly with illustration, the material(s) needed to include alternate ways of making or substituting the material.

B.1.b Comprehensiveness of Student Resources

Student materials could include a variety of materials, such as children’s trade books, manipulatives, posters, games, puzzles, CDs or computer software, puppets, and other props. Formats may include print, audio, visual, computer, or other media, but *should not include work sheets and ditto-type activities, as they will not facilitate optimal progress for children*. The student resources should be complete, labeled correctly, and have easy to follow directions. Review and practice activities might include participation activities such as role-playing activities and opportunities for hands-on practice. Review works best as a logical extension of content, goals, objectives, and lessons, with increased similarity to real-life situations. Review activities should require children to recall or apply previously taught knowledge and skills. Frequent short reviews over time or space improve learning more than a concentrated review after a longer period of time.

B.2. Alignment of Instructional Components

All components of an instructional package must align with each other, as well as with the curriculum. All components of an instructional package—teacher’s edition and materials, any student materials, and supplementary materials—must be integrated and interdependent and must correspond with each other. For example, support materials in the teacher’s edition should align

with student activities or projects. They must match in content and progression of instructional activities across the five domains of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five and over the course of the program year.

B.3. Organization of Instructional Materials

The structure and format of materials must have enough order and clarity to allow children and teachers to access content and explicitly identify ideas and sequences. Providing an explicit and teachable structure can double the amount of information remembered. Clear organization allows teachers to discriminate important pieces of information through skimming, reading, or browsing. Clear organization may be accomplished through a combination of features, but generally not through one feature alone.

B.3.a. Access to Content

Some features help in searching and locating information, such as a table of contents; menu or map of content; directions on how to locate information; an index for quick reference; goals and/or objectives, outlines, lists, or checklists for major sections; bibliographies and lists of resources; glossaries for quick access to major terms; introductions, key concepts and themes, visual cues, illustrations, labeled examples, and labeled reviews or summaries.

B.3.b. Visible Structure and Format

At-a-glance features should signal the organization of content. The following features are desirable:

- Theme or unit titles and/or frames; headings and subheadings.
- Typographic cues such as bold, italics or changes in size of type.
- Divisions of content such as borders, boxes, circles, highlighting, visual signposts, icons, or color cues.
- Diagrams, labels, and visuals placed near the related content; and numbering of pages and other components.

Objectives or a content outline may serve a similar purpose by introducing main ideas, providing guideposts to use in searching for key information, or serving as a checklist for self-assessment. Certain types of brief narrative sections also contribute to clear organization. For example, the statement of a clear purpose with content organized around main ideas, principles, concepts, and logical relationships supports the unity and flow of information. Introductions also play a major role when they include anchoring ideas, a list of key points, or conceptual schemes such as metaphors. Summaries also can assist children in understanding the logical order of topics presented.

B.3.c. Logical Organization

The pattern of organization of the content should be consistent and logical for the type of domain or topic. Patterns of organization may include compare and contrast, time sequence, cause-effect or problem-solution-effect, concrete to abstract, introduction-review-extension (spiral structure), simple-to-complex, whole-part or part-whole, generalization-examples-review-practice, and conflict-inside view-structure.

B.4. Readability of Instructional Materials/Language Style

Narrative and visuals should engage children in an activity as well as in understanding of the content. Language style and visual features can influence the readability of materials. A popular tool for assessing readability has been the use of a *readability formula* of one type or another. However, these formulas tend to focus only on a few *countable* characteristics of language style such as the length of words, sentences, and/or paragraphs. Other features are more important in establishing readability, such as:

- Organized, coherent text.
- Language and concepts familiar to the teacher.
- Language that clarifies, simplifies, and explains information.
- Transition words such as “yet,” “also,” “next,” “for example,” “moreover,” or “however”.
- Other phrases that create logical connections.
- Words with concrete and specific images.
- Active rather than passive voice.
- Varied sentence structures and avoiding both choppy sentences and unnecessary words.
- Specific questions or directions to guide student attention to visuals or key information.

B.5. Pacing of Content

The amount of content presented at one time or the pace at which it is presented must be of a size or rate that allows children to perceive and understand it. It is important that materials contain “bite-size” chunks or blocks of information. The chunks should not be so large, nor the pacing so fast, as to overwhelm children. Neither should the chunks be so small, nor the pacing so slow, as to bore them

B.6 Ease of Use of Materials

B.6.a. Use

Materials must be designed for practical use in the classroom and school environments. They must be easy to identify and store. Teachers and children must be able to access and use the materials. Some of the factors influencing their ease of use include number of components, size of components, packaging, and quality of materials, equipment requirements, and cost to purchase or replace components.

The best choice about weight, size, and number of volumes depends on several factors, such as the organization of the content, how well separate volumes may fit time periods for instruction, and the ages of children. Technical production requirements, such as page limits or different types of bindings, may lead to multiple volumes.

Examples of classroom use include repeated copying of consumable materials and repeated use of other materials by children over time. Technology-rich resources should work properly without the purchase of additional software and run without error. Electronic media for student use should be encoded to prevent accidental or intentional erasure or modification. As with textbooks, electronic media should allow teachers to easily access and interact with them without extensive supervision or special assistance.

The physical and technical qualities of materials should match with the resources of School Readiness Programs. Materials such as videos, software, CD-ROMs, internet sites, and transparencies may serve instructional purposes well, but have little value unless they can be implemented with the program's equipment. Submitters should include training, in-service, and consultation to help in effective use of the materials.

B.6.b. Durability

Children and teachers should be able to have materials that will be durable under conditions of expected use. For example, boxes, books, or other materials should not fall apart after normal classroom use. The packaging and form of materials should be flexible and durable enough for multiple uses over time. Durability includes considerations such as:

- High-quality paper, ink, binding, and cover.
- Back, joints, body block, and individual pages.
- Worry-free technology that runs properly, with easy to hear, see, and control audio and visuals.
- Teaching materials that have been tested for use in real-world classrooms.
- The submitter's guarantee for replacement conditions and agreements for reproduction needed to effectively use the materials.

C. Implementation Strategies

C.1. Motivational Strategies

The curriculum must include features to maintain learner motivation.

C.1.a. Expectations

Materials should positively influence the expectations of children. Examples include

- Positive expectations for success.
- Novel tasks or other approaches to stimulate intellectual curiosity.
- Meaningful tasks related to student interests, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels.
- Activities with relevance to the student's life.
- Thought-provoking challenges such as paradoxes, dilemmas, problems, controversies, and questioning of traditional ways of thinking.
- Challenges that are neither too difficult to achieve nor so easy that children become bored.
- Hands-on tasks in a concrete context, and images, sounds, analogies, metaphors, or humorous anecdotes.
- Variety, including the opportunity for children to ask their own questions, set their own goals, and make other choices during learning.

C.2. Guidance and Support

The curriculum must include guidance and support to help children safely and successfully become more independent learners and thinkers.

C.2.a Level

The type of guidance and support that helps children to become more independent learners and thinkers is sometimes referred to as *scaffolding*. Scaffolding is a solid structure of support that can be removed after a job has been completed. As children gain proficiency, support can diminish, and children can encounter more complex, life-centered problems. Information and activities should provide guidance and support at the level that is needed—no more and no less. Too much can squelch student interest, and too little can lead to failure.

Guidance and support can be accomplished by a combination of the following features:

- Organized routines
- Advance organizers or models such as
 - simplified views of information
 - visual representations of new information during initial instruction
 - questions to focus on key ideas or important features
 - explanations of how the problems were solved
 - analogies, metaphors, or associations to compare one idea to another
 - prompts or hints during initial practice
 - step-by-step instructions.
- Feedback that fosters and supports the learning of skills.
- Simulations with features for realistic practice.
- Opportunities for children to do research, and to organize and communicate results.

C.3. Active Participation of Children

C.3.a. Activities

The curriculum must engage the physical and mental activity of children during the learning process. The curriculum should include organized activities of periodic, frequent, short projects that are logical extensions of content, goals, and objectives.

C.3.b. Child Responses

Projects and activities should include questions and application activities during learning that give children opportunities to respond. Active participation of children can be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, information and activities might require children to

- respond orally or through drawing and emergent writing;
- create visual representations (block structures, emergent writing, puppet shows, dramatic play scenarios, drawings, two- and three-dimensional artwork);
- generate their own questions or examples;
- think of new situations for applying or extending what they learn;
- complete discovery activities;
- add details to concepts from prior knowledge;
- form their own analogies and metaphors;
- practice lesson-related tasks, procedures, behaviors, or skills;
- choose from a variety of activities.

VI. Character Development (OPTIONAL)

Researchers state that children are born with the moral feelings of fairness, duty, sympathy, and self-control. However, they are also born self-centered and their families need to help them in developing their moral sense. This is accomplished by caregivers who have a clear sense of purpose, enforce their directives, and convey their messages simply, firmly, and consistently. Through discipline, caregivers encourage children to behave in ways that caregivers approve, children become aware of their obligation to comply with legitimate authority, and children learn to respect the rights of others.

The curriculum content and materials provide age appropriate character development experiences.

Character is the competency to know right from wrong and to regulate one's own actions. Character constitutes the ethical estimate of an individual and refers to the aspect of personality that brings about accountability. In other words, character provides the structure of internal law. As a consequence, children become ethically sound by adopting adult values of kindness, fairness, and respect, experiencing empathy and sympathy for others, and forming personal standards of right and wrong.

School Readiness Program curricula must provide for character development which includes opportunities in the classroom for

- Teachers and children to share the structure that leads the child to new patterns of behavior and thought.
- Teachers to share habits of hospitality, compassion, and generosity that are extended to the larger community.
- Teachers to direct training in role taking.
- Teachers' use of instruction and reasoning instead of use of power.

Appendix A
Form SR-CURR 5 Curriculum Evaluation
Office of Early Learning
SCHOOL READINESS CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE

Curriculum Developer: _____ Name of Curriculum: _____
Reviewer's Code: _____ Date of Review: _____
Age Group: _____

Scoring: A curriculum submitted for review, must score at least a (1) in each criteria area as determined by 70% or more of reviewers in order to be eligible for placement on the list of approved curricula.

CRITERIA		RATING VALUE		
A. CONTENT		2: Exceeds – Curriculum thoroughly addresses the criterion. 1: Meets – Curriculum meets the criterion. 0: Does Not Meet – Curriculum does not meet the criterion.		
		Notes:		Rating Value:
A.1.	Alignment with Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five – How well does the content align with each domain of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Correlations</i> • <i>Completeness</i> • <i>Scope</i> • <i>Curriculum Integration</i> 			
A.1.a.	I. Physical Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gross Motor Development</i> • <i>Fine Motor Development</i> • <i>Self-Help</i> • <i>Health & Wellness</i> 	2	1	0
A.1.b.	II. Approaches to Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Eagerness and Curiosity</i> • <i>Persistence</i> • <i>Creativity and Inventiveness</i> • <i>Planning and Reflection</i> 	2	1	0
A.1.c.	III. Social and Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trust and Emotional Security</i> • <i>Pro-social Behaviors</i> • <i>Self-Regulation</i> • <i>Self-Concept</i> • <i>Relationship</i> • <i>Social Problem Solving</i> 	2	1	0

CRITERIA		RATING VALUE		
A. CONTENT		2: Exceeds – Curriculum thoroughly addresses the criterion. 1: Meets –Curriculum meets the criterion. 0: Does Not Meet – Curriculum does not meet the criterion.		
		Notes:		
		Rating Value:		
A.1.d.	IV. Language, Communication, and Emergent Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Listening and Understanding</i> • <i>Communication and Speaking</i> • <i>Early/Emergent Reading</i> • <i>Early/Emergent Writing</i> • <i>Vocabulary</i> • <i>Sentences and Structure</i> • <i>Conversation</i> 	2	1	0
A.1.e.	V. Cognitive Development and General Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exploration and Discovery</i> • <i>Concept Development and Memory</i> • <i>Problem-Solving and Creative Expression</i> • <i>Mathematical Thinking</i> • <i>Scientific Thinking</i> • <i>Social Studies</i> • <i>The Arts</i> 	2	1	0
A.2.	Accuracy of Content – Is the content presented accurately?	2	1	0
A.3.	Relevance of Content – Is the content up-to-date for the academic discipline and the context in which the content is presented?	2	1	0
A.4.	Multicultural Representation – Is the portrayal of gender, ethnicity, age, work, situations, and various social groups been fair and unbiased?	2	1	0

CRITERIA		RATING VALUE			
B. PRESENTATION		2: Exceeds – Curriculum thoroughly addresses the criterion. 1: Meets –Curriculum meets the criterion. 0: Does Not Meet – Curriculum does not meet the criterion.			
		Notes:		Rating Value:	
B.1.	Comprehensiveness of Teacher and Child Resources		2	1	0
B.1.a.	Comprehensiveness of Teacher Resources – Do resources address the targeted learning outcomes without requiring the teacher to prepare additional teaching materials for the classroom beyond those available in a typical early learning environment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Components and materials are easy to use • Materials support lesson planning, teaching, and learning • Suggestions for adapting instruction • Guidelines and resources provided to implement and evaluate learning • Resources provided to use in classroom activities 		2	1	0
B.1.b.	Comprehensiveness of Child Resources – Are the child resources complete? Are directions easy to follow? Are there included review and practice opportunities to help children recall or apply previously taught knowledge and skills?		2	1	0

CRITERIA		RATING VALUE		
B. PRESENTATION		2: Exceeds – Curriculum thoroughly addresses the criterion. 1: Meets –Curriculum meets the criterion. 0: Does Not Meet – Curriculum does not meet the criterion.		
		Notes:		
		Rating Value:		
B.2.	Alignment of Instructional Components – Do the components of the instructional package align with each other, as well as with the curriculum? Does the content and progression of the instructional activities correspond within instructional components across the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards domains and over the course of the year? Are the materials provided by the submitter/developer integrated and interdependent with each other?	2	1	0
B.3.	Organization of Instructional Materials			
B.3.a.	Access to content – Are there features to help search and locate information in texts?	2	1	0
B.3.b.	Visible structure and format – Do texts include at-a-glance features to signal organization of the content?	2	1	0
B.3.c.	Logical organization – Is the pattern of organization of the content consistent and logical?	2	1	0
B.4.	Readability of Instructional Materials/ Language Style – Do the narratives and visuals engage children in an activity/lesson appropriate to the child’s abilities? Do the language style and visuals guide children understanding of the content?	2	1	0
B.5.	Pacing of Content – Does the amount of content presented at one time or the pace at which it is presented of a size or rate that allows children to perceive and understand it?	2	1	0

CRITERIA		RATING VALUE			
B. PRESENTATION		2: Exceeds – Curriculum thoroughly addresses the criterion. 1: Meets –Curriculum meets the criterion. 0: Does Not Meet – Curriculum does not meet the criterion.			
		Notes:		Rating Value:	
B.6.	Ease of Use of Materials				
B.6.a.	Use - Are the print and other media formats of the materials easy to use and replace?		2	1	0
B.6.b.	Durability - Will the materials be durable for multiple uses over time?		2	1	0

CRITERIA		RATING VALUE			
C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES		2: Exceeds – Curriculum thoroughly addresses the criterion. 1: Meets –Curriculum meets the criterion. 0: Does Not Meet – Curriculum does not meet the criterion.			
		Notes:		Rating Value:	
C.1.	Motivational Strategies				
C.1.a	Expectations – Do the materials positively influence the expectations of children?		2	1	0
C.2.	Guidance and Support - Do the materials provide guidance and support to help students safely and successfully become more independent learners and thinkers?		2	1	0
C.2.a.	Level – Does the curriculum use appropriate scaffolding features to help children become more independent learners and thinkers?		2	1	0
C.2.b.	Adaptability – Does the guidance and support have adaptability for children’s developmental differences and various learning styles?		2	1	0
C.3.	Active Participation of Children – Do the materials engage the physical and mental activity of children during the learning process?		2	1	0
C.3.a.	Activities – Do the curriculum activities engage children physically and mentally, including organized activities and logical extensions of content, goals, and objectives?		2	1	0
C.3.b.	Child Responses – Do projects and activities include opportunities for children to respond and actively participate?		2	1	0

OPTIONAL CRITERIA		RATING VALUE	
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT		1: Meets –Curriculum meets the criterion. 0: Does Not Meet – Curriculum does not meet the criterion. Rating Value:	
1.	Character Development	1-Yes	0-No
	Does the curriculum infuse appropriate character development experiences to support the emotional and ethical development of children? The values within character development include kindness, honesty, responsibility and respect.		

