

Early Childhood Generalist Standards

Fourth Edition

for teachers of students ages 3–8

*National Board Certification
Promotes Better Teaching,
Better Learning, Better Schools*

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Preface

About the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (National Board) is a not-for-profit professional organization, created and governed by practicing teachers and their advocates. The founding mission of the National Board is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by

- maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do;
- providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards; and
- advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification into American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

Recognized as the “gold standard” in teacher certification, the National Board believes higher standards for teachers means better learning for students.

Founded in 1987, the National Board began by engaging teachers in the development of standards for accomplished teaching and in the building of an assessment—National Board Certification—that validly and reliably identifies when a teacher meets those standards. Today, there are 25 certificate areas that span 16 content areas and four student developmental levels. The essence of the National Board’s vision of accomplished teaching is captured in the enduring document *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*, at the heart of which are the Five Core Propositions:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

The National Board believes that board certification should become the norm, not the exception, and should be fully integrated into the fabric of the teaching profession. In other professions, such as medicine, engineering, and architecture, board certification has helped to create a culture of accomplished practice and is a major reason why those professions are held in such high regard by the public. Those professions did what teaching must now do: strengthen the coherent pipeline of preparation that begins in pre-service and continues through board certification and beyond, with each step engineered to help teachers develop toward accomplished. More than 110,000 teachers had achieved board certification by 2014, a number which represents the largest group of identified teaching experts in the country. Given the size of the teaching workforce, however, this sizable number represents fewer than 3 percent of teachers.

For most children that means they go through their entire schooling without being taught by a board-certified teacher. Each teacher who pursues board certification helps to close this gap, strengthening the profession and the quality of teaching and learning. In a world where board certification is the standard that all teachers aspire to and most achieve, students experience accomplished teaching throughout their schooling, unleashing their potential.

About the Standards

Every child deserves an accomplished teacher—one who is qualified to equip students with the skills to succeed in a global community. The core mission of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is to create field-specific standards for accomplished teaching that are grounded in the Five Core Propositions and that articulate the actions that accomplished teachers employ to advance student learning. Each standards document represents a professional consensus on the attributes of practice that distinguish accomplished teaching in that field. Many school systems use the standards as the basis for ongoing professional development, and many colleges and universities incorporate the standards into their undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs.

Standards are developed and revised by a committee of 12–15 members who are representative of accomplished professionals in their field. A majority of standards committee members are practicing Board certified teachers. Other committee members are experts in academic content and child development, including teacher educators, researchers, and other professionals in the relevant field. Standards are disseminated widely for public comment and subsequently revised as necessary before adoption by the National Board’s Board of Directors.

Throughout the development of both the standards and the certification process, the National Board ensures broad representation of the diversity that exists within the profession; engages pertinent disciplinary and specialty associations at key points in the process; collaborates closely with appropriate state agencies, academic institutions, and independent research and education organizations; and establishes procedures to detect and eliminate instances of external and internal bias.

National Board Standards and certifications are defined by the developmental level of the students and by the subject or subjects being taught. Teachers select the subject area that makes up the substantive focus of their teaching. They may choose Generalist certificates if they do not focus on one particular subject area in their practice. The four overlapping student developmental levels (listed below) indicate the age of the majority of their students.

- Early Childhood (EC)—ages 3–8
- Middle Childhood (MC)—ages 7–12
- Early Adolescence (EA)—ages 11–15
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood (AYA)—ages 14–18+

About Certification

National Board Certification® is a voluntary, standards-based process designed for teachers to transform the Five Core Propositions into practice. In order to be eligible for certification a teacher must

- Hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution¹;
- Have a minimum of three years' teaching experience at the early childhood, elementary, middle school, or high school level; and
- Where it is required, hold a state teaching license.

The assessments, aligned with the Five Core Propositions and the standards, are designed so that teachers demonstrate their practice by providing evidence of what they know and do. The evidence-based assessment honors the complexities and demands of teaching.

In 2014, the National Board initiated revision of the assessment to make the process more flexible, affordable, and efficient for teachers. In all certificate areas, candidates for National Board Certification are now required to complete four components: three portfolio entries, which are submitted online, and a computer-based assessment, which is administered at a testing center. Teachers develop portfolio entries that require analysis of their practice as it relates to student learning and to being a reflective, effective practitioner. Designed to capture what a teacher knows and is able to do in real time and in real-life settings, the portfolio consists of description, analysis, and reflection focused on student learning that is captured on video and in student work samples. The process requires teachers to reflect on the underlying assumptions of their practice and the impacts of that practice on student learning.

Teachers also demonstrate content knowledge by responding to open-ended and multiple choice questions delivered at a secure testing site. The assessment center component complements the portfolio, validates that the knowledge and skills exhibited in the portfolio are accurate reflections of what a candidate knows, and provides candidates with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills not sampled in the portfolio.

Assessments are based on the standards and are developed for every certificate area by educators who specialize in the same content and student developmental level as the candidates. Educators who are themselves practitioners in the certificate area score the submitted portfolio entries. They must successfully complete intensive training and qualify for scoring on the basis of their understanding of National Board Standards and scoring guidelines.

¹ Candidates registering for the Career and Technical Education certificate are required to hold a bachelor's degree only if their state required one for their current license.

Foundation of National Board Certification for Teachers

Five Core Propositions

The National Board framework for accomplished teaching was established in its 1989 publication, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*. The Five Core Propositions serve as the foundation for all National Board standards and assessments, defining the level of knowledge, skills, abilities, and commitments that accomplished teachers demonstrate. Teachers embody all Five Core Propositions in their practices, drawing on various combinations of these skills, applications, and dispositions to promote student learning.

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Accomplished teachers base their practice on the fundamental belief that all students can learn and meet high expectations. They treat students equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish one student from another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice based on observation and understanding of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, language, family circumstances, and peer relationships. They view students' varied backgrounds as diversity that enriches the learning environment for every student.

Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They consult and incorporate a variety of learning and development theories into their practice, while remaining attuned to their students' individual contexts, cultures, abilities, and circumstances. They are committed to students' cognitive development as well as to students' ownership of their learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem, motivation, character, perseverance, civic responsibility, intellectual risk taking, and respect for others.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organized, linked to other disciplines, and applied to real-world settings. While maintaining the integrity of disciplinary methods, content, and structures of organization, accomplished teachers develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students so they can think for themselves.

Accomplished teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey and reveal subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and draw upon pedagogical and subject matter understandings to anticipate challenges,

modify their practice, and respond to students' needs. They also demonstrate a commitment towards learning about new strategies, instructional resources, and technology that can be of assistance. Their instructional repertoire and professional judgment allow them to generate multiple paths to knowledge in the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve their own problems so they can continue exploring and advancing their understanding.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

Accomplished teachers view themselves as facilitators of student learning within dynamic instructional settings. They create, enrich, maintain, and alter learning environments while establishing effective ways to monitor and manage those environments and the student learning that occurs within them. They possess a comprehensive knowledge of instructional methods, know when each is appropriate, and can implement them as needed. They use instructional time constructively and efficiently, customizing physical layout, resources, and instructional methods. They enlist the knowledge and support of a wide range of stakeholders to provide their students with enriched opportunities to learn. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of pedagogical approaches they may take, as well as the suitability of these approaches for particular students.

Accomplished teachers know how to engage students in varied settings and group configurations. They create positive and safe learning environments that guide student behavior and support learning, allowing the schools' goals for students to be met. They are adept at setting norms for social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students and value student engagement, supporting them as they face and learn from challenges.

Accomplished teachers assess the progress of individual students as well as that of the class as a whole. They apply their knowledge of assessment to employ multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding. They use the information they gather from monitoring student learning to inform their practice, and they provide constructive feedback to students and families. They collaborate with students throughout the learning process and help students engage in self-assessment.

4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

Accomplished teachers possess a professional obligation to become perpetual students of their craft. Committed to reflective learning, they are models of educated persons. They exemplify the virtues they seek to inspire in students—curiosity, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences—and the capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth: the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives, to be creative and take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation.

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter, and instruction, and their understanding of their students to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are not only grounded in established theories, but also in reason born of experience. They engage in lifelong learning, which they seek to encourage in their students.

Accomplished teachers seek opportunities to cultivate their learning. Striving to strengthen their teaching and positively impact student learning, teachers use feedback and research to critically examine

their practice, seek to expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas and theories.

5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

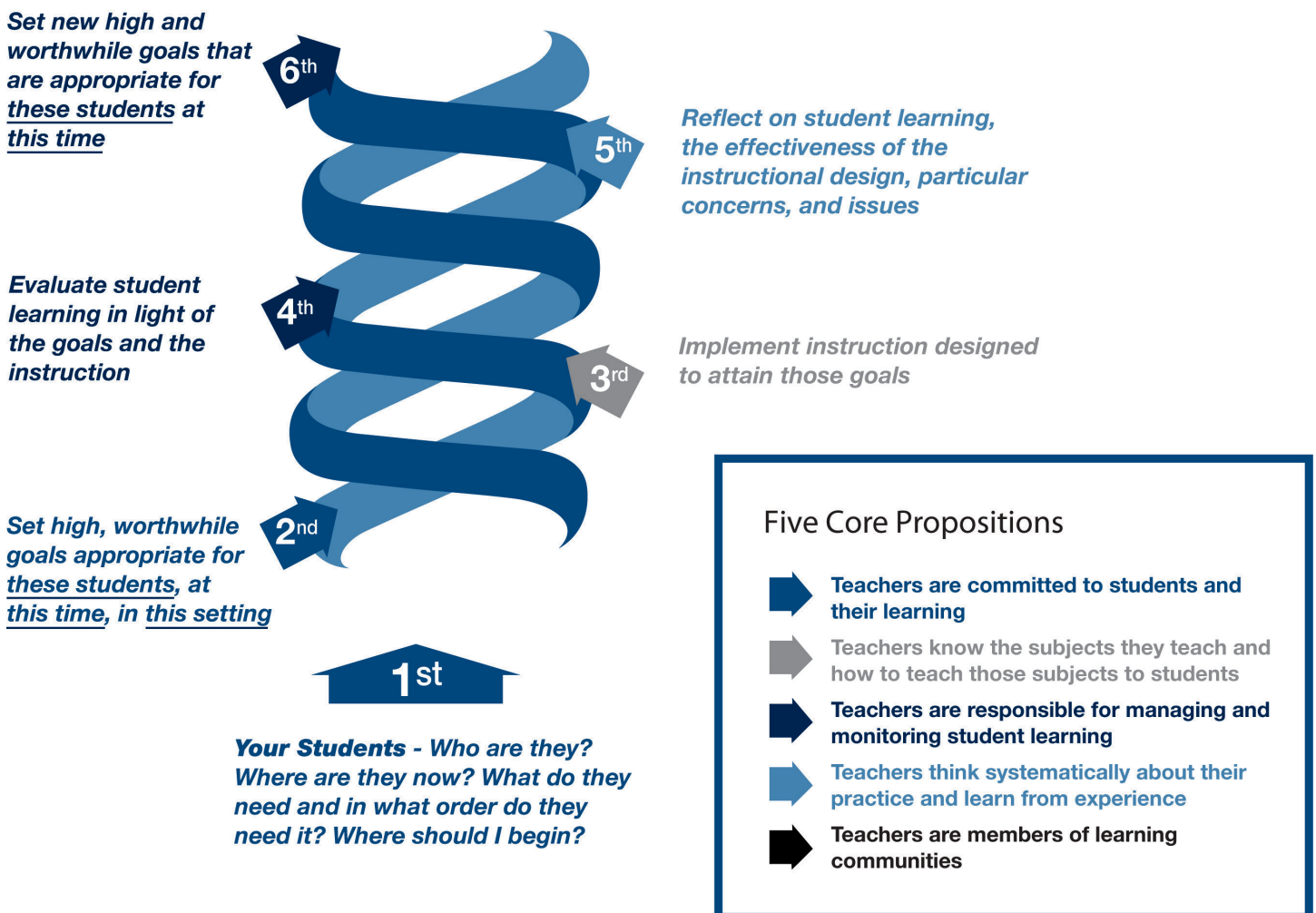
Accomplished teachers participate actively in their learning communities to promote progress and achievement. They contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on policy decisions, curriculum development, professional learning, school instructional programs, and other functions that are fundamental to the development of highly productive learning communities. They work collaboratively and creatively with families and the community, engaging them productively in the work of the school and cultivating students' connections with the opportunities, resources, and diversity they afford.

Accomplished teachers can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives and their knowledge of student needs. They are knowledgeable about and can advocate for specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit, and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Architecture of Accomplished Teaching

The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching provides a view of how the use of the Five Core Propositions and the standards that are developed from them result in student learning. As depicted in the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching illustration, shown below, one strand represents teaching practice as grounded in the Five Core Propositions, while the other strand represents the teacher’s impact on students and their learning.

The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching: What is underneath the surface?



The National Board program certifies accomplished teachers who positively influence student learning through effective teaching practice. The process includes the core propositions for all teachers, a common set of accomplished teaching standards specific to the content field and students’ developmental levels, and a set of evidence-based assessments specific to the field that certify what accomplished teachers know and do.

Standards

Introduction

Early childhood teachers share an enormous responsibility—to guide young children as they enter the world of formal education and to instill a lifelong love of learning. Each year, teachers in early intervention programs, childcare centers, and prekindergarten programs welcome three- and four-year-old children to the community of learners, while other early childhood professionals open the doors of kindergarten and primary-grade classrooms. Accomplished teachers demonstrate their deep commitment to the development and learning of young children by facilitating the transition from the world of home and family to the educational system.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are intrigued by the ways young children think and the ways in which they perceive their world. These teachers value the delightful and refreshing ways young children express themselves. Their love of teaching is enriched by children’s curiosity and the enthusiasm young children bring to their explorations and daily discoveries. Accomplished teachers respond enthusiastically to the diversity of young children across many dimensions—including their abilities, talents, interests, and cultures.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that children have begun to make sense of the world long before they arrive at school. They build on what children understand about themselves and the world around them, while encouraging them to develop skills, knowledge, and inquiry approaches that expand their capacity for learning. They nurture young children’s experiments with language, sounds, and images as they build their expressive repertoires. Knowing children learn through manipulating materials and interacting with their peers and teachers in carefully-planned environments, accomplished teachers strategically and creatively use play as a vehicle to enhance young children’s development and learning. They also encourage children to expand their worlds to include new friends, experiences, and a whole range of never-before-experienced emotions and feelings. They encourage children to take pride in their abilities to demonstrate new skills.

As professionals, accomplished early childhood teachers are skilled in orchestrating cohesive communities of young learners. They work to create a productive, safe, joyful, and enriching learning environment in which young children with often vastly differing backgrounds, abilities, and needs work together successfully. They work to help children gain the knowledge, skills, habits, and dispositions toward learning that are essential for later success in school and in life.

High quality early childhood education is widely recognized as vital to the educational development—and future success—of all children. Far from being ignored, early childhood education is subject to both great scrutiny and increasing expectations. As a result, the work of early childhood generalists is more challenging than ever. Accomplished teachers hold high expectations for all children’s learning and development. They are cognizant of the scope and scale of academic standards for young children and

are experts at providing children with developmentally appropriate experiences aimed at helping them meet these expectations. They work to enhance their own assessment practices and at the same time advocate for appropriate limits on the types and uses of mandated or standardized testing. They work to inform and influence policy makers with respect to such topics as licensing requirements and providing reasonable funding.

The contexts in which early childhood teachers work are rapidly evolving. Understanding of how children develop content knowledge continues to grow. Educational standards at the national, state, and local levels continue to shift. Children are more linguistically and culturally diverse. Families have increasingly different structures and many are enduring increasing economic pressures. At the same time schools and other educational agencies are required to do more with less funding. This context makes it essential for the accomplished teacher to be skilled in learning about the cares, concerns, and capabilities of each child, as well as ways of collaborating with all families to effectively support learning and development. This context requires constant attention to research on child development and the subject matter that is taught, as well as how these relate to the curriculum and resources that can facilitate development and learning.

Perhaps more than their peers in other educational positions, the early childhood generalist sees the work of teaching as a holistic enterprise; an intricate combination of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions focused on the learning and development of children. This integrated foundation allows accomplished teachers to meet the needs of young children who grow and develop at different rates and to respond effectively to groups of boys and girls who—while the same age—are at vastly different points in their development. Whether teaching three-year-olds in a child development center or eight-year-olds in the third grade, these teachers are skilled at responding to the varying developmental levels and interests to advance all children's learning and development.

The articulation of standards for accomplished early childhood teaching requires the parsing of professional work. As in previous editions of these standards, this version fractures the holistic nature of teaching in order to provide ways to describe the core components of craft, artistry, proficiency, and understandings—both broad and deep—that contribute to the complex work that is accomplished teaching. In some cases the components of teaching embodied in the standards are the same as in previous editions, but in other cases new distinctions are made to better capture components of the work.

It is crucial that standards attend to what accomplished early childhood teachers know about the whole child, the facets of child development, and the subject matter that children need to learn about. Accomplished teachers can use insights into the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral/ethical dimensions of child development in many contexts and for an array of purposes. Because they are responsible for introducing children to school subjects, they must demonstrate substantial knowledge and skills across all areas of the curriculum. They draw on this wide range of subject matter knowledge and pedagogy to plan and implement high quality early childhood programs.

Likewise, standards for early childhood teaching must embody the centrality of family-school partnerships and commitments to equity and diversity. Accomplished teachers realize that they are role models in everything they do. They model fair and equitable behavior and embrace cultural diversity. They appreciate and respect individual differences and understand the unique needs and contributions of each member of the learning community. In addition, accomplished teachers value, initiate, and maintain respectful and reciprocal relationships with families and community partners. Teachers foster mutually

beneficial relationships between children and the community. Accomplished early childhood teachers involve parents and families as active partners in children's total development and learning.

Standards for accomplished early childhood teachers should call attention to the masterful ways in which teachers design learning environments and engage in cycles of assessing, planning, and implementation. Accomplished teachers are purposeful. With clear goals in mind, they systematically plan for the learning and development of young children. They employ multiple modes of assessment to appraise what children know and use that information to set challenging yet attainable goals. They design, implement, and adjust learning activities in ways that help children achieve those goals. These routines enable teachers to influence each child's development and learning in multiple contexts and across different spans of time, from the activity and lesson to the unit and month.

The inclusion of reflection and professionalism in these standards is also necessary because they are foundational to the work of the accomplished early childhood teacher. Accomplished teachers take very seriously their professional responsibilities to the children they teach, to children's families, to their colleagues, and to the future of their profession. They are leaders, collaborators, and advocates to improve early childhood programs, practices, and policies. Accomplished teachers engage in purposeful and systematic reflection on their teaching to enhance their professional knowledge and skill and to benefit young children's development and learning.

The standards articulated here resonate with the second edition of Early Childhood Generalist Standards published in 2000. As in that edition, the third and fourth editions focus on accomplished teachers' knowledge of and commitment to the learning and development of the whole child. They express the key roles that partnering with families, attention to diversity, and professional reflection play in teaching. However, these standards also differ from the second edition in two key ways. First, multiple standards have been refocused and elaborated. Accomplished teachers' professional responsibilities are described with greater specificity. There is more emphasis on the importance of establishing reciprocal relationships with families and the community. Acknowledging the increasing emphasis of academics in early childhood education, these standards go into greater depth on subject matter knowledge for accomplished teachers, noting that accomplished teachers know and use foundational ideas of different academic subjects, the way children think about subject matter, and pedagogies that facilitate subject matter learning. At the same time these standards more strongly reflect the contribution of play to the learning of young children. Second, the current standards make the components of the teaching process more explicit by articulating them in separate standards—Managing the Environment for Development and Learning, Planning for Development, and Learning and Implementing Instruction for Development and Learning. These standards will serve to focus greater attention on the routines, processes, and resources that teachers use to support the learning and development of children.

Accomplished teachers will see themselves and their work in these standards. They will recognize the child-centered nature of the enterprise; the collaboration with diverse families; the physical, social, and political contexts in which they work; and the impressive array of content that they make available for children's learning. Even though the work will be recognizable, this does not mean that accomplished teachers believe they have finished growing and refining their practice as professionals. Driven by the desire to better serve the needs of young children and families, they will use the standards articulated here as tools to support systematic reflection. They welcome the challenges posed by improving teaching over time. They do this because they know that accomplished teaching is not something that is permanently achieved, but rather is a constant work in progress. In a larger sense, they do this because they genuinely care for the children they

teach and know that their work will substantially impact society through the impact they make on the lives of each child and each family.

Developing High and Rigorous Standards for Accomplished Practice

Early Childhood Generalist Standards describes what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The standards are meant to reflect the professional consensus at this point about the essential aspects of accomplished practice. The deliberations of the third and fourth edition committees were informed by various national and state initiatives on student and teacher standards that have been operating concurrently with the development of NBPTS Standards. As the understanding of teaching and learning continues to evolve over the next several years, these standards will be updated again.

An essential tension of describing accomplished practice concerns the difference between the analysis and the practice of teaching. The former tends to fragment the profession into any number of discrete duties, such as designing learning activities, providing quality explanation, modeling, managing the classroom, and monitoring student progress. Teaching as it actually occurs, on the other hand, is a seamless activity.

Everything an accomplished teacher knows through study, research, and experience is brought to bear daily in the classroom through innumerable decisions that shape learning. Teaching frequently requires balancing the demands of several important educational goals. It depends on accurate observations of particular students and settings, and it is subject to revision on the basis of continuing developments in the classroom.

The paradox, then, is that any attempt to write standards that dissect what accomplished teachers know and are able to do will, to a certain extent, misrepresent the holistic nature of how teaching actually takes place. Nevertheless, the fact remains: Certain identifiable commonalities characterize the accomplished practice of teachers. The standards that follow are designed to capture the knowledge, artistry, proficiency, and understandings—both deep and broad—that contribute to the complex work that is accomplished teaching.

The Standards Format

Accomplished teaching appears in many different forms, and it should be acknowledged at the outset that these specific standards are not the only way it could have been described. No linearity, atomization, or hierarchy is implied in this vision of accomplished teaching, nor is each standard of equal weight. Rather, the standards are presented as aspects of teaching that are analytically separable for the purposes of this standards document but that are not discrete when they appear in practice.

Standard Statement—This is a succinct statement of one vital aspect of the practice of the accomplished early childhood generalist. Each standard is expressed in terms of observable teacher actions that have an impact on students.

Elaboration—This passage provides a context for the standard, along with an explanation of what teachers need to know, value, and do if they are to fulfill the standard. The elaboration includes descriptions of

teacher dispositions toward students, their distinctive roles and responsibilities, and their stances on a range of ethical and intellectual issues that regularly confront them.

In addition, throughout the document are examples illustrating accomplished practice and demonstrating how decisions integrate various individual considerations and cut across the standard document. If the standards pull apart accomplished teaching into discrete elements, the examples put them back together in ways more clearly recognizable to teachers. Because the National Board believes there is no single “right” way to teach students, these examples are meant to encourage teachers to demonstrate their own best practice.

Early Childhood Generalist Standards Statements

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has organized the standards for Accomplished Early Childhood Generalists into the following ten standards. The standards have been ordered to facilitate understanding, not to assign priorities. They each describe an important facet of accomplished teaching; they often occur concurrently because of the seamless quality of accomplished practice. These standards serve as the basis for National Board Certification in Early Childhood/Generalist.

Standard I: Using Knowledge of Child Development to Understand the Whole Child

Accomplished early childhood teachers use their knowledge of child development to understand young children and to foster each child's development and learning.

Standard II: Partnering with Families and Communities

Accomplished early childhood teachers work reciprocally with families and community partners to support each child's development and learning and to advocate for young children and their families.

Standard III: Fostering Equity, Fairness, and Appreciation of Diversity

Accomplished early childhood teachers embrace diversity. They model and nurture treating others with equity, fairness, and dignity.

Standard IV: Knowing Subject Matter for Teaching Young Children

Accomplished early childhood teachers integrate the foundational ideas of the subjects they teach, the ways young children think about these ideas, and effective approaches to support each child's learning.

Standard V: Assessing Children's Development and Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers use assessment to support and guide young children's development and learning.

Standard VI: Managing the Environment for Development and Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers organize and manage the environment to promote young children's development and learning.

Standard VII: Planning for Development and Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers plan for children's development and learning by setting developmentally appropriate goals and designing learning activities to achieve those goals.

Standard VIII: Implementing Instruction for Development and Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers skillfully implement strategies and use resources to support young children's development and learning.

Standard IX: Reflecting on Teaching Young Children

Accomplished early childhood teachers engage in systematic reflection on their teaching to enhance their professional knowledge and skill and to benefit young children's development and learning.

Standard X: Exemplifying Professionalism and Contributing to the Profession

Accomplished early childhood teachers are leaders, collaborators, and advocates in improving early childhood programs, practices, and policies.

Standard I

Using Knowledge of Child Development to Understand the Whole Child

Accomplished early childhood teachers use their knowledge of child development to understand young children and to foster each child's development and learning.

Accomplished early childhood generalists possess the deep knowledge of child development essential for high-quality teaching and learning. They use theories of growth and development to understand the individual children in their classroom and to inform their practices. Teachers¹ know that child development is a complex and dynamic mosaic of change that varies from child to child. Teachers view children holistically; they understand that all developmental domains are interrelated and that changes in one domain may affect changes in another. Their understanding of the phases of early childhood development makes accomplished teachers keenly attentive to the multiple ways young children communicate their knowledge, needs, and capacities. Accomplished teachers honor young children as capable and inquisitive learners, and they respect the ways in which growth and development may differ from one child to another.

Accomplished early childhood teachers analyze research demonstrating the relevance of early childhood education to all domains of child development, including social, cognitive, linguistic, physical, emotional, and ethical. They understand the important aspects of each domain, the full range of stages and behaviors within each domain, and the factors that promote or inhibit development. Teachers seek out relevant research in child development and apply that knowledge to meet all children's needs.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that early childhood is the critical foundational period of learning and development that sets the stages for future development. They know that research continues to evolve, giving insights into how the brain functions in young children. Teachers know the factors that influence brain chemistry and development, such as nutrition, the environment, and trauma; and they provide stimulating activities to enhance children's health, learning, and

¹ All references to teachers in this document, whether or not stated explicitly, refer to accomplished early childhood generalists.

behavior. Accomplished teachers nurture young children's curiosity, problem solving, autonomy, caring, risk taking, persistence, and humor.

In the remainder of this standard, the domains of child development are discussed separately, although accomplished teachers are aware that, in fact, they are intertwined.

Fostering Physical Development

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand the ways in which physical development can have positive and negative impacts on all areas of young children's growth and development. They know that physical development is characterized by change, growth, and maturation of the body. Physical development encompasses physical growth, fine- and gross-motor development, and sensory development. Teachers know that young children's growth and development are affected by such factors as health, nutrition, exercise, and sleep, and teachers know that the degrees to which children receive adequate rest and nutrition are expressed through their levels of energy and alertness. Accomplished teachers are advocates for the health and well-being of all young children.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize the stages and signs of healthy physical development in young children. They are alert to evidence of physical problems that may detract from a child's ability to learn, such as hearing or vision problems, illness, neglect, abuse, poor nutrition, dental problems, lack of sleep, and any possible exceptionalities. They know which physical difficulties or limitations may indicate more serious problems. Teachers understand that young children receive information from their bodies and the environment through their senses, including touch, smell, hearing, vision, taste, and proprioception, which is the sensing of temperature and body position. Accomplished teachers understand that the way children gather and process sensory information influences their ability to interpret information and perform such tasks as planning physical actions, performing steps in sequence, and completing tasks in a coordinated manner. When appropriate, teachers consult with families¹ and, if necessary, refer children to specialists for evaluation. For example, if a child consistently fails to respond to the teacher when the teacher is speaking behind the child, the teacher might ask the parents if the child exhibits the same behavior at home and perhaps ask about the child's health history. If it seems likely that the child has a hearing problem that requires intervention, the teacher would assist as appropriate.

Accomplished teachers use their knowledge of children's physical development to structure learning experiences and environments in ways that are suitable to each child's sensorimotor and cognitive development. Teachers understand the importance of classroom furniture that is child-sized; of daily schedules arranged to provide opportunities for longer, active-movement times balanced with shorter, quiet times; and of manipulative centers that provide aid in children's small-motor

¹ The term family is used throughout this document to refer to people who are the primary caregivers, guardians, or significant adults in the lives of children.

development. They plan periods of large-motor, vigorous exercise, knowing that such activity promotes brain, lung and organ development. Early childhood generalists take responsibility for designing the entire range of learning experiences to support healthy physical development, weaving movement activities throughout the curriculum and the day. When possible, they collaborate with physical education and health education specialists to extend opportunities for children's well-being and development.

Fostering Cognitive Development

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that early childhood is a critical period in cognitive development. Teachers understand how children are thinking at a given phase in their development and know how to help them move to the next level of reasoning. Teachers know that most young children benefit from material presented through multiple modalities. Teachers use their knowledge of each child's assets and needs to create learning experiences that are accessible to all children. In the case of a child who has difficulty maintaining attention during cognitive tasks, the teacher might intersperse cognitive tasks with periods of intense physical activity; whereas with children who learn cognitively best in a consistently quiet, still environment, the accomplished teacher would take a different approach.

Accomplished early childhood generalists recognize the foundational nature of brain development that takes place in the early years, and they are particularly aware of the degree of change that occurs in children prior to age three. Teachers understand that the brain is a dynamic organ that is shaped by experience; learning not only causes the growth of neurons, but also alters the physical structure and organization of the brain. Teachers recognize that research on the brain, mind, and human cognition is constantly progressing, and they cautiously strive to understand how such research can best inform educational actions. Accomplished teachers apply strategies and information from confirmed brain research to heighten the likelihood of children's success. For example, they build on children's prior knowledge and readiness and, recognizing the pivotal importance of a child's ability to attend to learning, they plan a variety of ways to help young children focus their attention and increase its duration.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that cognitive development includes the thought processes of memory, reasoning, decision-making, problem-solving, and creative thinking. Teachers know that children's ability to acquire, apply, analyze, and generalize information develops through experiences over time. Teachers are keenly aware of the influence that prior knowledge and experiences have on children's cognitive development, and they do not assume that all children share similar background experiences. For example, although nursery rhymes have long been a useful tool for developing children's phonological awareness and fluency in reading, teachers do not assume that all children have become familiar with nursery rhymes at home. Accomplished teachers assess children's prior knowledge,

build upon the skills children bring to school,¹ and facilitate experiences that foster cognitive development.

Accomplished early childhood teachers apply knowledge of the influences that affect cognitive development when working with young children. They know that factors such as the home environment, heredity, health issues, culture and language, nutrition, and the larger community can affect a child's cognitive development. Teachers know that some negative influences can be ameliorated by providing certain experiences while others cannot. Even though some factors are beyond the teacher's control, accomplished early childhood generalists differentiate and individualize experiences to help all children move forward and achieve their fullest potential.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that purposeful teaching builds on young children's prior knowledge and experiences, natural curiosity, imagination, and creativity to help them understand concepts about a range of disciplines. Teachers provide adequate time, rich materials and resources, and rigorous and appropriate expectations to support children's learning. Under teachers' guidance, young children learn to recognize patterns, understand relationships, construct complex ideas, and establish connections among disciplines. Teachers know that metacognition is within the reach of young children and is crucial to processing and making sense of information. Teachers help children plan activities, carry them out, and then reflect on them. Accomplished teachers choose tasks that build on the principles of inquiry in order to help children make predictions, experiment, synthesize information, reach conclusions, and make generalizations. Inquiry-based activities encourage children's autonomy and sense of responsibility for their own learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that young children construct knowledge through playful exploration and then become ready to focus their attention on specific dimensions of materials. For example, three-year-olds will spontaneously explore a given object set before them, whereas eight-year-olds are more likely to approach the object with a conscious plan for exploration. Knowing that brain research suggests the use of patterning to help children learn, teachers give children ample practice time to comprehend challenging material. Young children learn to develop cognitive strategies such as organizing, reasoning, explaining, and reflecting when they can share their thinking with other children, teachers, and parents. Accomplished teachers use questions and feedback during social interactions with children so they can reflect and make sense of their learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers value the social aspects of young children's construction of knowledge. Guided by their knowledge that initially young children can do more in collaboration with others than they can do alone, teachers intentionally plan opportunities for children to work together, as in center time and group work, and set realistic expectations for young children's independent performance. Teachers also

¹ The term school is used throughout this document to refer to all early childhood educational programs, including early childhood centers, child development centers, daycare centers, preschool centers, and elementary schools.

know the value of teacher support, interaction with older children, and appropriate scaffolding in young children's knowledge construction.

Accomplished early childhood teachers solicit the wisdom of the classroom community and build upon it. They nurture children's respect for one another's ideas. Teachers create a psychologically safe climate for children's learning by helping children realize that making mistakes is part of learning. Accomplished teachers orchestrate an environment in which young children build the confidence and competence that will prepare them for a life of acquiring and applying knowledge.

Fostering Language Development

Accomplished early childhood generalists understand how language develops and realize that early childhood is a particularly critical time for language acquisition. Teachers understand that language development is a complex process that proceeds through distinct stages. They understand, for example, that receptive language develops before expressive language. They stay attuned to the changing body of knowledge about young children's language acquisition and use this knowledge to plan successful learning experiences.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize the varying levels of language proficiency among the children in their classroom, and they differentiate teaching to meet each child's needs. They recognize typical and atypical patterns of development, and they know when it is appropriate to consult with families or to refer children to specialists for evaluation. For example, teachers know the difference between minor misarticulations and those speech patterns that interfere with children's fundamental ability to communicate. Teachers create learning experiences and a classroom environment that provide children with a variety of daily opportunities to use language to interact and socialize with others. Because they recognize that frequent opportunities to interact with mature speakers are critically important to children's language development, teachers engage in numerous conversations with children every day.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that communication is a tool that human beings use to meet their physical, social, and emotional needs. Effective communication skills are integral to children's self-expression, to their development of social relationships, and to their learning. Teachers help children understand that language allows them to organize and express their views and questions about the world, demonstrate their growing expertise, and communicate with other people.

Accomplished early childhood teachers have a clear understanding of how languages are acquired. They value the home languages of children who are language learners, and they understand that a child's native language is the foundation for literacy and learning. To the best of their ability, teachers seek ways to promote language learners' home language development at the same time that they advance children's ability to communicate in English.

The classrooms of early childhood teachers are inclusive places where varieties of language are accepted and where teachers model a variety of uses and means of oral, visual, and written language. Accomplished teachers understand that language development is influenced by such factors as home environment, including the home language and the frequency and nature of adult-child interactions, and health problems such as hearing challenges. Teachers understand that children from some homes may have heard fewer words and fewer positive affirmations than children from other homes. To help compensate for such circumstances, teachers intentionally expose children to enriched vocabulary and provide positive affirmations throughout the day.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize the interrelatedness of language to children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, which in turn may affect a child's self-esteem. Teachers recognize that young children may need support in such areas as building relationships, joining groups, and communicating wants and needs. Early childhood teachers are aware that problems with relationships can affect children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, and they actively work to help children with such concerns.

Fostering Social Development

Accomplished early childhood teachers view social development as an essential goal for young children. Teachers understand that young children are beginners at learning the social skills needed to interact competently in a multitude of settings, and they skillfully guide children as they develop their capacity to interpret social cues and adjust their conduct appropriately. Accomplished teachers help children understand interpersonal expectations in various social interactions, both through modeling and through explicit instruction. Teachers know the importance of facilitating young children's developing peer relationships and their interactions with adults beyond the realm of home and family.

Accomplished early childhood teachers help children move from being primarily concerned about themselves to being able to acknowledge the needs of others. They recognize that a critical developing skill for many young children is learning to exercise self-control, particularly in their interactions with other children and in public settings such as the classroom. Teachers help children develop empathy. For example, if a kindergarten child falls on the playground and, though unhurt, begins to cry, the teacher might encourage classmates to comfort the distressed child, both to show empathy and to help restore the play situation.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are keenly aware of the role that culture plays within the social domain. They help children appreciate cultural differences and learn how to behave appropriately in varied social environments. Teachers know that children's social behaviors are shaped by their familial experiences. For example, in some families and cultures, children may interact freely and openly with adults, much the same as they do with their peers, whereas in other families and cultures, children may be taught that such free and open interactions are a sign of disrespect. In certain cultures, some children may be taught not to look an adult directly in the

eye, whereas in other cultures, failing to look an adult in the eye when speaking is a sign of disrespect. Because many children must navigate widely divergent social expectations, accomplished teachers explain and model appropriate social skills and norms.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that social development is crucial to successful learning in groups and is a core component of success in work, family, personal, civic, and community contexts. Teachers know that social interaction is essential to children's linguistic and cognitive development, and they can express the importance of this aspect of development to families. Teachers also know that children from ages three to eight typically make significant gains in acquiring and applying skills in the social domain. Accomplished teachers make opportunities for children to learn from one another and encourage them to help one another in thoughtful ways.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are keenly aware of their responsibility for establishing a social climate that fosters learning and develops life skills for young children. They are skilled at setting norms for social interaction and intervening to assist children in resolving disputes. They model, recognize, and encourage such dispositions as respect, integrity, honesty, fairness, and compassion. They help children develop social knowledge about learning in groups, the behavioral expectations of peers and adults, the need to adapt to classroom and school rules and routines, and the norms of society at large.

Fostering Emotional Development

Accomplished early childhood teachers take responsibility for fostering young children's emotional well-being and development. Teachers know that for young children, the emotional domain develops in relationship to their increasing sense of self-awareness, identity, and autonomy. Children's ability to regulate their emotions in the academic setting is directly related to their sense of competence, their ability to express their feelings, and their evolving sense of belonging. Accomplished teachers help children learn to recognize their feelings and understand that their emotional states can alter their thinking. Teachers understand the importance of enhancing children's self-respect, resilience, and confidence and seek to promote autonomy, appropriate risk-taking, and constructive persistence.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that young children progress through stages of emotional development. They are familiar with the degrees to which children of different ages are able to identify emotions, express feelings, manage impulses, and exhibit appropriate behavior. Teachers recognize typical and atypical patterns of emotional development and regulation, and they know when it is appropriate to consult with families or to refer children to specialists for evaluation. Teachers understand that children at different ages have varying abilities to solve personal and social problems without giving up or losing control. Accomplished teachers promote positive behavior, and when discussing emotional issues with children, they use appropriate terminology for the developmental range.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are aware that many factors may affect a young child's emotional state, and they find creative ways to make the school environment a nurturing one. A teacher might ask parents to bring photographs of the family or a special toy for naptime to help a young child make the transition from home to preschool or kindergarten. Teachers are conscious of the fact that their words have an impact on young children and that the effect can be profound and lasting, either inspiring or impeding future progress. Teachers carefully monitor what they say to children, and they also attend to what children say to one another. By responding respectfully to children's interests and concerns instead of simply giving them directions, accomplished teachers make children feel valued and safe. Teachers know that children's emotions fluctuate and are alert to possible stressors. They competently analyze the reasons for children's behavior, even when those reasons are complex or covert. For example, one child may be misbehaving out of simple exuberance while another may be exhibiting similar behavior in order to be punished or to avoid a certain lesson. An accomplished teacher knows when a simple redirection or reminder is sufficient and when further observation or action is required.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that a child's emotional state is affected by people and events outside the school setting. Teachers help young children learn ways to maintain a positive identity despite sometimes negative words or actions on the part of others. They also help children deal with fear. For example, when a disaster or traumatic event occurs, the accomplished teacher allows children to express their feelings as needed and provides the necessary information to place the children at ease. Teachers responsibly seek out resources such as literature, support beyond the classroom, or expressive opportunities such as dramatic play, puppetry, drawing, and writing to help children make sense of the event and allay excessive anxiety. Accomplished teachers are skilled at recognizing the signs of emotional distress and addressing significant issues with the child and parents. Teachers know when to consult with other support systems and when to provide families with access to other resources.

Fostering Moral and Ethical Development

Accomplished early childhood generalists know that the field of ethics defines what is good for the individual and for the group and establishes the nature of what one should do in the interest of justice and fairness. Teachers understand the importance of young children's moral development and actively instruct children about ethics. Teachers help children develop a conscience, a sense of integrity, and the ability to delay gratification.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that young children have varying abilities to comprehend ethical issues and moral dilemmas depending on their developmental stages. They also have differing abilities to regulate their behavior based on their cognitive, emotional and social development. Teachers use teachable moments to help children develop the capacity to reflect on their actions, generate age-appropriate solutions to ethical problems, and exert self-control. Teachers

understand children’s common misconceptions about ethics. For example, a three-year-old child might think that a person who breaks an object by accident is just as culpable as one who breaks something on purpose, whereas an eight-year-old would be more likely to comprehend that intent makes a difference. Teachers help children progressively move to more sophisticated ethical judgments without expecting more of them than is reasonable at a given stage.

Accomplished early childhood teachers realize that many factors affect young children’s moral and ethical development. A child’s temperament, home culture, family structure, and socioeconomic level can all affect the child’s sense of right and wrong and ability to evaluate moral and ethical issues. Accomplished teachers are sensitive to differences between school policies and family viewpoints. For example, the school may have a policy of no hitting, but parents may disagree and encourage children to defend themselves physically in some situations. Accomplished teachers help children observe ethical norms in the school community without showing a lack of respect for the family’s values.

Accomplished early childhood teachers approach classroom management as a means to self-discipline and self-awareness. They help children understand that behaving ethically is not just a matter of automatically conforming to a set of rules but rather the complex act of considering how best to treat others and behave in a group. Accomplished teachers enable children to develop the ethical behaviors that will eventually make them successful, responsible adults.

Standard II

Partnering with Families and Communities

Accomplished early childhood teachers work reciprocally with families and community partners to support each child's development and learning and to advocate for young children and their families.

Accomplished early childhood generalists value, initiate, and maintain respectful and open relationships with families and community partners. Teachers are respectful of the varying types of families that are represented in their community, and they understand that parents' patterns of child-rearing, as well as their values and beliefs about education, may differ from their own. They understand that families and community partners play a vital role in young children's development and learning. Teachers actively seek information about each child's family, including the family's culture and parents' expectations for children. Teachers foster mutually beneficial relationships between children and the community by helping children access community resources and finding ways for children to give back to the community in turn. Teachers use knowledge of factors such as socioeconomic conditions, family supports and stresses, cultural values, and home language to help each child develop and learn. Teachers also help families support learning at home by keeping them informed about what is taking place at school and within the community. Accomplished teachers advocate for policies and opportunities that support the building of partnerships with families and communities.

Partnering with Families

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that the family-school relationship is continuous, reciprocal, evolving, and essential. They understand that when the parent-teacher partnership is strong, children flourish. Accomplished teachers understand that parents are the first teachers of young children and that their influence is profound and enduring. Teachers help family members understand that they are vital members of the educational team. Teachers employ multiple approaches to learn how parents perceive the child, how they interpret the child's behavior, the expert knowledge they have about their child, and what immediate and long-term goals they have for their child. Teachers intertwine each family's goals for children with instructional goals to achieve educational success. They encourage parents to be active partners in their child's learning and development. They respond to parents' questions and concerns, and they learn from parents' observations about children's

growth, development, behavior, and language. As a result, families and teachers learn together. Accomplished teachers act from the positive perspective that parents want their children to succeed.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use knowledge of each child's family culture and language to share information that families can use at home. They help parents understand how the home environment affects young children's learning and development. They encourage parents to engage in such activities as reading to and with children and supporting the completion of home learning activities. Teachers understand that some families do not find it easy to provide these supports, and in such cases teachers assume professional responsibility for seeking alternative approaches. For example, a teacher might invite community members or older children to come into the classroom to read one-on-one to children whose families are unable to engage in home storybook reading experiences. Teachers are knowledgeable about programs, community resources and educational events, websites, and materials that families can use to extend and complement classroom learning experiences.

Accomplished early childhood teachers view parents as essential and equal partners in decision-making, and they recognize the dependence of young children on their families. They know that parents' affirmation of the educational program is important to children's motivation and sense of well-being. Teachers also understand that the school's affirmation of the child's home culture and language is important to the child's well-being and to the ability of the home to support the child and the educational program. Partnering with families offers teachers the opportunity to learn crucial information about children and also about the resources families have to foster children's learning and development. Furthermore, families can volunteer and provide ideas, expertise, materials, and community connections. Accomplished teachers understand the importance of school-family events where children and their families participate together in activities. Teachers organize and implement family events that are based on parents' interests and needs and that are sensitive to cultural norms in terms of food served, activities planned, location, time, and need for translators and interpreters.

Understanding Families and the Community

Accomplished early childhood teachers are respectful of the types and varied structures of families in their community. They understand that parents' values and beliefs regarding education, as well as their styles of parenting, may differ from their own. They gauge parents' abilities, interests, and comfort regarding involvement in their child's education. They find a variety of ways to involve parents in their child's education, such as occasionally observing in the classroom, working as regular volunteers, or assisting in the creation of materials at home.

Accomplished early childhood teachers involve families in conversations about topics such as young children's approaches to learning, their interests and learning behaviors at home, and the family's view of how to motivate their child to learn at school. Furthermore, teachers are aware of families facing difficult situations such

as poverty, domestic violence, homelessness, incarceration, foster care, chronic illness, death, and transitions such as relocating, divorce, and remarriage. They understand that such factors may limit some parents' ability to participate in their child's education; for example, a parent who is working two jobs to support a child may not be able to volunteer in the classroom but may be able to contribute in other ways. Accomplished teachers help all families and their children feel included in the classroom community, whatever their circumstances.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize the complications and tensions that can arise when working with families. Communicating with and involving families are complex activities even when parents and educators speak the same language and share many opinions and values; cooperation is clearly more difficult when common ground is limited. Accomplished teachers seek to discuss openly with families significant differences in values, relationships, and routines. They recognize that by working together in equal and respectful partnerships, the home and school can solve problems over time.

Accomplished early childhood teachers collaborate closely with families of children with exceptional needs to ensure that children's needs are met and services received. Teachers are well informed about unique issues faced by such families. Accomplished teachers pay special attention to the parents of children with rare exceptionalities, respecting the fact that such parents may have more expertise in their child's needs and abilities than some education professionals. Teachers work with these parents to develop an appropriate educational program for their child.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand the powerful reciprocal relationship that exists between communities and schools. Teachers learn about the cultural and historical roots of the community that influence families, neighborhoods, and local organizations. They use this information to maximize the relevance of learning opportunities for children. Teachers are active in the community by patronizing local businesses, visiting community gathering places, participating in fundraising walks, or attending cultural events. These activities enable them to interact with an array of educational stakeholders, stay informed of current developments in their community, and connect the community with the educational program.

Communicating with Families and the Community

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that establishing reciprocal communication and relationships of trust with families of young children is essential to successful collaboration. Teachers understand that they are responsible for initiating family involvement, and they persevere if families are not responsive at first, seeking more effective approaches rather than assuming that some families are not interested in supporting their children's learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know the importance of the first contact with parents, and they set a positive tone at the outset in order to lay a solid foundation for future interactions. They make special efforts to seek out families that are less assertive

or open in expressing their views, and they strive to involve parents who might feel excluded or alienated from the school because of their own past educational or cultural experiences or because of language issues. Teachers facilitate two-way communication of information with parents as well as connecting families to one another, using tools such as home visits, surveys, newsletters, parent meetings, telephone calls, children's music performances, family dinners, websites, emails, or social networking sites.

Accomplished early childhood teachers place a priority on regular communication with parents about each child's progress. They continuously communicate what is happening in the classroom, why it is happening, and how families can get involved. Teachers are skilled at listening to, observing, and learning from family members. They solicit parents' goals and priorities for their children, reports of children's responses to program experiences and relationships, and information on how children function at home and in the community. Teachers celebrate children's progress with families and assist them when a child needs additional support. Teachers admit honestly when they are unsure how to resolve an issue or need assistance, and they are prompt and resourceful in resolving such issues. They use a number of methods to explain assessment procedures and results, including written reports, annotated samples of children's work, and formal conferences. They provide information in a language that families can understand, securing an interpreter when necessary.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that communicating with the community about education serves many important purposes. When community members know what children are learning and doing, they are empowered to be supportive in multiple ways. If members of the community hear that children are learning about "community helpers," they can volunteer to come in to talk about their roles in the community, share historically powerful stories of when they were assisted by a community helper, or generate ideas of ways in which the children and teacher could become involved with a neighborhood project. Accomplished teachers skillfully mix an array of communication techniques, ranging from posting flyers at community centers and libraries to creating websites, in order to relay information about teaching and learning. They also understand how communication with the community provides meaningful occasions for children to share what they have learned and their pride in their accomplishments. Accomplished teachers welcome inquiries, address them in a timely fashion, and actively welcome information shared by organizations in the community.

Helping Families Obtain Support and Services

Accomplished early childhood teachers exercise good judgment in working to meet the needs of families and young children. They understand their capabilities and limitations in responding to stresses and problems in the lives of families. They recognize situations in which a referral to other school professionals or community agencies is the most appropriate course of action, but they understand also the value, at times, of simply listening with empathy to a family's concerns. Accomplished teachers advocate on behalf of young children and their families by engaging colleagues and by networking for information and social support.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are familiar with the variety of services available from school systems, agencies, and informal neighborhood organizations. They are alert to evidence of children's and families' needs in areas such as health examinations and services, immigration, financial services, social and recreational opportunities, adult literacy and employment training, respite care and mental health services, income support or employment counseling, and services to children or adults with exceptionalities. Teachers are able to ask the right questions to gain the information they need to support parents in need of health and social services. For example, a teacher might help a family obtain a free immunization that a child needs to enter kindergarten.

Accomplished early childhood teachers plan and implement activities aimed at ensuring that young children and their families are comfortable making the transition from one educational program to the next. A preschool teacher might discuss kindergarten expectations with children and families, while a kindergarten teacher might introduce children to their next year's teacher, take children to visit the first grade classroom, or invite next year's teacher to speak to parents about upcoming experiences. Similarly, kindergarten and primary-grade teachers obtain a working knowledge of pre-kindergarten childhood programs in the community in order to understand issues facing children and families about to enter the elementary school setting. They learn about children's previous educational experiences at home as well as in organized programs.

Working Effectively with Family and Community Partners

Accomplished early childhood teachers are active advocates for children. They acknowledge family and community members as key stakeholders in early childhood programs, and they value and encourage shared decision-making. They invite participation by parents and other family members and community partners when forming committees and advisory groups. They explain the processes by which decisions are made in regard to various policies, such as those related to curriculum, resources, testing, or special programs. Teachers give families and community members the guidance they need to have their voices heard.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand ways that the presence of family and community members in the classroom can provide support to individual children and to the various cultural groups represented in the classroom. They actively solicit family members and other community members, including senior citizens, to serve as volunteers and collaborators. They offer a variety of options for involvement, such as recounting personal experiences to the class or working on school improvement efforts, and they ensure that the time the volunteer spends is productive. Accomplished teachers are comfortable coordinating the efforts of volunteers; consequently, volunteers feel welcomed in the classroom.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize that not all those who wish to assist in the classroom come well prepared with the skills necessary for working with young children. Therefore, teachers prepare and actively supervise those who

work alongside them. They anticipate problems such as volunteers gossiping about classroom events or using inappropriate language or disciplinary procedures. They prevent such problems by orienting and debriefing volunteers and observers and clearly explaining classroom norms and routines. Teachers ensure that volunteers understand and follow confidentiality requirements, and they facilitate the process by which all volunteers meet the local requirements for participation.

Accomplished early childhood teachers find creative and mutually beneficial ways to partner with collaborators outside the classroom. For example, teachers might have children regularly visit residents of a local nursing home, thus providing opportunities for both the children and the nursing home residents to develop relationships and to share life experiences through oral, written, and artistic means. Moreover, the visits provide opportunities to increase children's understanding of the experiences of elderly people.

Standard III

Fostering Equity, Fairness, and Appreciation of Diversity

Accomplished early childhood teachers embrace diversity. They model and nurture treating others with equity, fairness, and dignity.

Accomplished early childhood generalists are committed to teaching young children in ways that are fair and equitable. They have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to effectively promote the learning of all children and to address inequities. They model and teach behaviors and dispositions that are essential in a diverse society, and they actively monitor children's behavior to ensure that these skills and dispositions are practiced by all. Accomplished teachers empower children to treat others respectfully and to expect respectful treatment in return. Teachers are fair in their treatment of children and teach children to evaluate the fairness of their own actions. They realize that equitable learning opportunities often require the development of unique accommodations to allow for the full engagement of every learner, and they explain the rationale for such accommodations to children. Accomplished teachers appreciate and respect individual differences and understand the unique needs of each member of the learning community. Teachers view diversity in a community as a benefit that gives community members the opportunity to learn from and about each perspectives of others, and they sensitively guide children to a similar appreciation of diversity.

Demonstrating Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Accomplished early childhood teachers promote fairness, equity, and diversity. They are reflective, and this characteristic enables them to identify and challenge their own assumptions and biases. Their knowledge of human development and learning and their skill as careful observers of young children make them insightful about the diversity in their classroom. Teachers use their knowledge of the unique needs of each child to differentiate instruction in meaningful ways while pursuing the curriculum standards that all children need to achieve. Teachers understand the history of education with respect to the ways in which some learners have been treated inequitably in the past. They recognize that inequalities continue to exist in some learning communities, and they know the areas in which achievement gaps typically develop. They are sensitive to the fact that some communities are still in the healing process from a hurtful past, and they stay abreast of research on diversity issues and apply what they learn in ways that are equitable and effective.

Accomplished early childhood generalists have the knowledge, skills, and courage to promote fairness and equity in their classrooms. They adapt learning experiences and approaches to instruction in ways that ensure equitable participation. When young learners are given the opportunity to select experiences, teachers ensure that the available choices reflect diversity. For example, teachers might provide a range of different skin-tone crayons in the art center, dolls representing various races in the housekeeping center, or clothing from different cultures in the dramatic play area so that all children can make selections with which they can identify. Teachers confront issues of diversity proactively and ensure that each learner—regardless of race, nationality, ethnic group, primary spoken language, socioeconomic class, age, ability, exceptionalities, sexual orientation, family structure, or gender—has access to equal learning opportunities. For example, a teacher may plan a physical education activity such as a relay race by creating teams that are balanced in terms of gender, skill level, and exceptionality so that all children can participate and feel successful. Teachers skillfully guide children through courageous conversations about socially challenging issues, and they actively challenge prejudice, derogatory comments, and stereotypical perspectives. Accomplished teachers employ their skills beyond the classroom in order to effectively support equitable learning opportunities for children. For example, an accomplished teacher who is aware that a child is not receiving proper nutrition at home might discreetly find ways to provide that child with breakfast or might fill a backpack with food for the weekend. Teachers are adept at working within and beyond their immediate institution to secure resources necessary to ensure the learning of every child.

Accomplished early childhood teachers demonstrate appreciation of diversity as well as concern for fairness and equity. Teachers know that their attitudes provide young children with powerful examples that may have long-term effects, and they deliberately demonstrate the behaviors they wish to instill in children. Teachers empathize with the special pressures and frustrations experienced by some families and children, including those learning English for the first time or those demonstrating exceptionalities. Teachers nurture communities in which all children respect diversity and treat each other fairly.

Ensuring Equity

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand the importance of providing high-quality experiences that promote the learning and development of all young children, especially those whom schools have traditionally under-served. When they observe inequities, teachers take situationally appropriate action to correct them. Equitable access includes providing all children with challenging curricula and linguistically sensitive learning materials, including materials with appropriate gender-neutral terminology; adequate and safe educational facilities; and competent teachers. Accomplished teachers advocate for the timely provision of early interventions and identifications. They also strive for an equitable distribution of educational materials, media, and technologies. They remain sensitive to issues related to differing access to technology and continually work to address digital resource limitations by advocating for children. Teachers serve as a bridge between home, school, and community

organizations, including businesses, from which children can gain increased access to developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive supports for learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers consistently adhere to local, state, and federal policies concerning children with exceptionalities, especially the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Teachers build relationships with families and school professionals to gain valuable insights into how individual children develop so they can differentiate learning opportunities, make adaptations to the curriculum, and accommodate the unique social, cognitive, linguistic, physical, and emotional needs of children with exceptional needs. They help children to work toward and achieve learning goals and objectives, and they remain open and flexible so that exceptional needs are met.

Demonstrating Fairness

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that fairness is best served by enhancing each young child's potential to succeed. Teachers are aware not only that each child should contribute according to his or her ability, but also that each young child comes into the educational setting with different and unequal needs. True fairness often involves distributions of resources and time that are unequal. Teachers therefore adapt instruction to meet varying needs while maintaining challenging expectations for all children.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize that young children's perspectives on fairness often vary from adults' perspectives. Therefore, teachers not only plan for explicit ways to teach about fairness, but also look for teachable moments in which to model fairness in a safe and caring environment. For example, if a child in the class needs special equipment such as noise-filtering headphones or adaptive seat cushions, an accomplished teacher might allow all classmates to explore or discuss the equipment before allocating it to the child for whom it is intended. Such an approach demonstrates that certain resources should be given to those who need them most, but also allows everyone a degree of participation with a desirable object or experience.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know the importance of establishing a climate of fairness and respect in the classroom. They take active steps towards making such a climate a reality not only by talking about the importance of fairness but also by modeling it to young children, parents, colleagues, and the community. For example, teachers might collaborate with colleagues to offer multiple back-to-school or open-house events so that all family members have the opportunity to attend, regardless of their responsibilities and schedules. Accomplished teachers inform families about the issues of fairness that are being addressed in the classroom so that they have the opportunity to support this learning at home.

Valuing Diversity

Accomplished early childhood generalists recognize and value children's diversity—including the physical, emotional, sociocultural, and cognitive variability of children—as a dimension that enriches the learning environment. Teachers are articulate about their own culture, show curiosity and respect for other people's history and beliefs, and are aware of their own responses and biases in regard to diversity. They actively investigate the culture and history of children, for example, during a family interview. They explore the school community, seeking out people and resources that will help them understand the values, accomplishments, and mores that form the context in which children grow up. (See [Standard II—Partnering with Families and Communities](#).)

Accomplished early childhood teachers show respect and appreciation for each young child's cultural background. They are careful not to make unchecked assumptions about any child's background, and they research current diversity issues and learn about common misconceptions that may affect the child's learning and success. Teachers demonstrate their appreciation of children's cultural backgrounds by weaving attention to diversity throughout the curriculum and the year through various modes, such as movies, stories, and guests. For example, a teacher might invite a woman from a Muslim community who wears traditional dress to visit the classroom to explain the significance of her garments. By nurturing positive links to each child's background, teachers create a more successful learning environment. They invite children to share their cultures and values through their repertoire of songs, games, dances, or stories. They learn to speak some words and phrases in the languages of children and attend community events of different cultures. They may make home visits to understand the children's backgrounds and to develop relationships with the families.

Accomplished early childhood teachers encourage young children to understand their own ethnicities, for example by interviewing their parents and then bringing related artifacts to the classroom or by relaying oral traditions. Teachers also provide young children with opportunities to become familiar with ethnicities other than those represented in the classroom or the local community. They provide materials or experiences that enable children to gain a global perspective, such as using video conferencing tools or pen pals to communicate with a classroom in a different part of the world or attending virtual field trips to understand how the people in another country speak, look, dress, and act.

Accomplished early childhood teachers build a classroom community that fosters young children's curiosity and respect for other people's history, language, values, beliefs, family structures, cultures, and communities. Teachers are welcoming toward diverse issues and challenging perspectives. They understand that group diversity may cause reactions ranging from curiosity to discomfort among children, and they engage in courageous conversations. They address diversity issues affecting instruction, class management, and children's participation, and they encourage children to celebrate one another's accomplishments within the classroom.

Accomplished early childhood teachers respect differences in families and family structures. They actively learn about children’s families to ensure that they can respond appropriately to their particular needs. They understand that their own values and their style of speaking and interacting, as well as the public purposes of schooling, may be in conflict with some children’s family cultures. For example, many early childhood teachers seek to foster children’s abilities to make individual choices and to think independently. In some cultures, however, most decisions are made by elders or by group consensus, and children are expected to conform. Parents in such communities may perceive children’s efforts to express themselves and make choices as imposing on adult authority. Accomplished teachers communicate with and respond to families in ways that match language and cultural norms in a respectful manner. They use technology to communicate with families when appropriate, but they also use face-to-face communication when possible in order to build rapport.

Accomplished early childhood teachers acknowledge the commonalities that underlie diversity. They know that children from various backgrounds may share many interests, have similar successes and challenges, and are excited by many of the same kinds of learning opportunities. Thus, while teachers capitalize on the diversity among children as an opportunity for learning and for strengthening individual children’s self-esteem, they also build upon commonalities to promote classroom cohesiveness and foster attitudes conducive to participating in democratic institutions and a global society.

Standard IV

Knowing Subject Matter for Teaching Young Children

Accomplished early childhood teachers integrate the foundational ideas of the subjects they teach, the ways young children think about these ideas, and effective approaches to support each child's learning.

Accomplished early childhood generalists bring together their knowledge of children, content, and pedagogy in ways that often appear effortless. In actuality, achieving this mastery requires deep knowledge of the foundational ideas in subject matter, sensitivity to the ways that young children reason about content, and awareness of the difficulties children typically encounter. Accomplished teachers understand that fostering young children's development in social, cognitive, linguistic, physical, emotional, and moral-ethical domains is crucial during the early childhood years. Teachers intentionally integrate these developmental domains into the teaching and learning of subject matter for young children. Accomplished teachers of young children know what is important in each content area, why it is important, and how it links with earlier and later understanding, both within and across subject areas.

Accomplished early childhood teachers design and implement experiences that effectively convey developmentally appropriate content and develop young children's critical thinking and creativity, and they also nurture the dispositions toward learning that children will need for success in the future. By making subject matter relevant, meaningful, and captivating, accomplished teachers invite children into the world of ideas and information.

Knowing Subject Matter

Accomplished early childhood teachers prepare young children to use subject matter in future levels of formal education and in life beyond school. They support children's enthusiasm, wonder, and curiosity about the subject areas. Teachers have a strong grasp of the subject areas they teach, including the main academic areas (language and literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies), the arts (visual arts, music, and drama), health education, physical education, and technology. They have deep insight into the knowledge, skills, and practices that distinguish each subject. They know how information is structured within each subject and understand the pedagogical methods through which subject matter knowledge can best be conveyed to young children. Accomplished teachers know the unifying concepts

that connect essential facts, ideas, and processes within each subject. They stay abreast of developments in the subject areas and appropriately incorporate new information in the classroom. They immerse themselves in learning and teaching all subjects with equal dedication. They realize that nurturing productive dispositions toward every subject is an essential professional task in the education of young children. As a result, accomplished teachers demonstrate purpose, create relevance, and model enthusiasm for each subject area, and they advocate the importance of every subject area.

Even though the degree to which disciplinary distinctions are apparent varies according to the developmental level of the children being taught, teachers ensure that all young children have opportunities to learn each subject. Teachers create ambitious but reasonable expectations for learning based on their general knowledge of child development and their ever-growing knowledge of the particular children they are teaching. They are knowledgeable about local early childhood learning standards as well as national and state content standards and use them as guides in their teaching and interactions with children and families.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know research-based instructional strategies specific to the disciplines. They judiciously select and capably employ the strategies that best suit their instructional goals and the development levels of the young children they are teaching. They sequence learning experiences in ways that make sense conceptually and that help children move steadily toward greater proficiency. Accomplished teachers find ways to integrate content areas seamlessly; however, they also know when to teach subject matter in isolation in order to enhance the learning experiences of children. Teachers continuously research instructional resources and skillfully choose and adapt those which will best support children's learning.

Integrating Subject Matter

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that subject-matter integration allows children to learn in the interactive, holistic ways that are most natural to them. Teachers draw on their understanding of the specific young children in their classroom as well as core subject matter when planning, implementing, and assessing integrative experiences. Teachers thoughtfully weave various aspects of the curriculum into meaningful associations in order to engage children's interests, embody appropriately high expectations, foster higher-level thinking, and encourage real-world applications.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are advocates for subject matter integration that is meaningful and authentic to children. They exercise professional judgment about the value and relevance of topics for integrated study, including those suggested by children. When designing integrated content experiences, teachers align goals, objectives, and child outcomes with state standards and local program expectations. Teachers use ongoing assessment of learners to refine cross-disciplinary activities, and they explain to children, parents, and others how integrated

learning is structured. Over the course of the instructional year, accomplished teachers achieve balance in teaching all subject matter, using an appropriate blend of events that focus on one subject area and those that are integrated. At the end of an integrated experience or project, teachers assess children's progress in relation both to specific subject area knowledge and cognitive skills that bridge disciplines.

Accomplished early childhood teachers employ a variety of ways to integrate content. They create opportunities for young children to investigate, research, write, create, express their knowledge artistically, and share their learning with an audience. They offer possibilities for thinking about content in new ways. They might engage children in projects, themes, invented games, community-service projects, concept maps or webs, or whole-group exploration of broad questions. Integrated approaches might include actual and virtual guests and trips, creative writing activities and dramatics, contests, construction of replicas, visual documentation of child and family events, or child interviews of family and community members.

The following sections describe how accomplished early childhood teachers understand the main content strands and practices in each subject, know and attend to the unifying concepts in each subject, apply their insights into the ways that young children typically understand each subject, and use their knowledge of the pedagogy and resources for each subject to provide meaningful learning experiences for children.

Language and Literacy

Accomplished early childhood teachers are conversant in the major theories, knowledge bases, and controversies related to the teaching of language and literacy. They create programs that promote the interrelated skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and visually representing. They also have a broad understanding of the continuum in language development and reading development and of the ways the stages of learning shape a model for teaching language and literacy. Teachers promote daily print and oral experiences. They use visual representations such as graphic organizers, graphs, charts, illustrations, photographs, and available technologies to foster critical and creative thinking through the use of language. They draw on their knowledge of the key challenges and typical and atypical processes in the development of literacy skills and capacities.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know how young children acquire a first language and how they acquire a second one, and they address the challenges that language learners face. Teachers differentiate instruction so that all children can achieve their fullest potential. Teachers design appropriate learning experiences in ways that will challenge and motivate children at a suitable pace. They explain to parents, administrators, and colleagues how their instructional strategies and objectives support children's language development.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize the importance of social interaction in developing strong language and literacy skills, and they facilitate

such interaction among young children. Teachers support dramatic play, such as spontaneous pretend play, dramatizing their own and other people's stories, and reenacting literature, as an important way to help children develop literacy skills. Teachers might have children create group morning message charts as well as individual and group stories, and then share them aloud in order to understand better the connection between what is said and what is written. They might also use class poems and songs as a further means to reinforce these connections. Accomplished early childhood teachers might use interactive writing to begin to teach the conventions of written language.

Listening and Speaking

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that literacy is developed by building on every young child's oral language skills, including the development of listening comprehension skills, a rich oral vocabulary, the ability to understand and express complex thoughts through spoken language, and the ability to reflect on language. Although these skills develop naturally, teachers use explicit instruction and rich language experiences based on children's individual needs to expand children's use and appreciation of oral language. Teachers foster and model listening and speaking. They also explicitly teach speaking and listening skills without hindering children's natural expressive abilities, diminishing the importance of their families' primary language, or dampening their desire to continue learning. (See [Standard V—Assessing Children's Development and Learning](#).)

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that listening is more than just the physical act of hearing; it is the process of receiving and attending to meaningful auditory stimuli, processing sounds, and comprehending auditory messages. Teachers know that attending to the speaker is fundamental to listening. Therefore, teachers model for young children how to stop what they are doing when someone begins to speak, look directly at the speaker, listen for main ideas, and ask questions for clarification. Teachers encourage children to pay attention to such non-verbal cues as body language and facial expressions in order to understand better and relate to others. Accomplished teachers explain that various cultures have differing conventions for nonverbal communication, and they help children interpret these differences when they arise.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are knowledgeable about distinct purposes for listening, such as informational, critical, appreciative, relational, and discriminative. They provide experiences that allow young children to listen for all these purposes, and they help children develop listening strategies to match each purpose. For example, interactive listening activities such as call and response foster question-and-answer interactions.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are well versed in the literature that examines the connection between oral language development and the acquisition of reading and writing skills, both for native English speakers and for those learning English as a new language. Teachers use this knowledge base to design appropriate

learning experiences for children of different ages and with different levels of language and literacy in their first language and in English.

Accomplished teachers provide children with opportunities to participate in rich and varied experiences with spoken language. They engage children in meaningful conversations. They retell what they have seen and restate what they have heard, and they encourage children to do the same. They provide activities and materials that promote children's conversations with peers and adults, both one-on-one and in groups. They encourage children to discuss stories, the things they are learning in school, and their own experiences. Teachers invite children to play with words and sounds through such vehicles as rhymes, chants, and songs, and they foster children's awareness of the rhythmic patterns in language. Accomplished teachers are constantly working to expand and enrich children's vocabulary. They support children's presentation of information in clear and well structured ways, model for children how to adjust their speech and language depending on their audience and purpose, and provide an environment in which children feel safe communicating their thoughts.

Accomplished early childhood teachers show respect for diverse language traditions. They demonstrate the importance of oral traditions to various cultures by teaching fables, fairy tales, folktales, folk songs, and legends in age-appropriate ways. Teachers extend opportunities to people of many cultures to share their rich oral histories with the class. For example, an accomplished teacher might invite family and community members to sing a traditional song or chant from their native culture. Accomplished teachers provide the necessary support for children whose first language is not English, and they understand the issues that arise when standard English is not the language a child speaks on a regular basis. Accomplished teachers make the effort to understand how literacy is understood and used in the child's home culture and family, and they apply their findings in ways that increase children's prospects for success.

Accomplished early childhood teachers accept and value young children's unique modes of expression and distinctive dialects as they guide them toward conventional speaking. Teachers recognize that mastering the conventions of formal language is one key to children's future success. Accomplished teachers model standard English in the classroom and find appropriate ways to incorporate enriched language in their speech. When children's utterances are fragmentary or vague, accomplished teachers recast those utterances as complete sentences containing precise and vivid language, and they do so in a way that is natural and respectful, helping children see how to use oral language in a more sophisticated way. Teachers also use their knowledge of oral language development to identify children who may benefit from assessment by a specialist. In the case of children who need speech and language interventions, accomplished teachers collaborate with specialists and families and provide related support in the classroom.

Reading

Accomplished teachers recognize in order for children to gain meaning from print, they must be proficient in decoding and language comprehension skills. They understand that readers progress from mastering letter-sound correspondences to fluently reading connected texts. Therefore, teachers of emerging readers incorporate research-based components of teaching early literacy (print awareness, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension). As young readers continue to develop, teachers also incorporate research-based components (phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency) to make meaning from print.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know the broad range of print-awareness skills and provide children with opportunities to acquire these skills. When reading to preschool and kindergarten children, teachers focus children's attention on such features as book concepts, print directionality, and differentiating pictures from print. Because they understand the challenges young children face when attempting to map spoken language onto print, teachers often point to the text as they read in order to help children track the text. Teachers of primary-aged children help learners begin to understand how authors use text features such as headings, graphs, and pictures to aid readers in constructing meaning from the text.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that systematic, explicit instruction in phonological awareness is important to children's development as readers and that children's knowledge progresses from the whole (words in sentences) to the smallest parts (sounds in words). Teachers of very young children provide opportunities to acquire the full range of phonological awareness skills, including separating sentences into words and clapping syllables in words. Teachers of older children within this age group focus on blending, segmenting, and substituting phonemes in words. Accomplished teachers emphasize learning opportunities focused on phonological to phonemic awareness skills.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that alphabet knowledge includes identifying and naming letters and producing letter-sound associations, and they know the role that alphabet knowledge plays in children's ability to decode and spell words. Teachers provide young children with both playful learning opportunities and explicit teaching strategies to help them learn letter names, often beginning with the letters in the child's name. Teachers know that although children learn some letter-sound associations when they learn some letter names, primary-aged children also need explicit phonics instruction. Teachers provide phonics instruction and help children learn how to apply this knowledge to decode written words. Early childhood teachers are aware of issues that affect the alphabet awareness of language learners. They know that not all children's home languages have a written form, that not all languages are written alphabetically, and that some children will not have experienced all the sounds of English in their home languages. Accomplished teachers are attune to the ways in which children's diverse language backgrounds affect their ability to learn sound-letter associations in English and provide extra support when necessary.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that the size of a child's vocabulary is a strong predictor of reading comprehension. Therefore, early childhood teachers use a variety of research-based instructional strategies, such as repeatedly reading books with rich vocabularies and providing child-friendly definitions of words while reading to children to increase children's expressive and receptive vocabularies. Teachers also recognize the importance of providing explicit vocabulary instruction.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize that the primary goal of reading is comprehension. They help young children master reading comprehension skills, such as identifying key ideas and details, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, understanding the sequence of events, comparing and contrasting ideas and details within and across texts, and analyzing literary elements such as plot and theme. Teachers understand that children will need scaffolded support as they apply a wide range of strategies, such as predicting, generating questions, rereading, creating graphic organizers, discussing, and summarizing to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, compare, and appreciate texts. Teachers encourage children to ask and answer questions before, during, and after reading. Teachers model for children how to make connections that link text to self, text to text, and text to the world. Accomplished teachers of preschool and kindergarten children begin young learners' acquisition of these comprehension skills and strategies through regular read alouds. As children transition to reading texts themselves, they learn to apply these skills and strategies in their independent reading.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that fluency involves more than the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression; fluency also contributes to comprehension. Teachers read aloud regularly in class to model fluency, and they have young children read to each other, sometimes rereading texts. Teachers have children read aloud a variety of texts, such as stories and poems, and in a variety of formats, such as reader's theatre. Teachers understand the importance of teaching children to vary their reading rate depending upon the type of text and the purpose for reading.

Accomplished early childhood teachers create a print-rich environment. They make ample use of functional print in the environment, such as posters explaining how to use equipment. They also use environmental print, such as arrows showing how to turn lights off and on, because they know that young children engage in reading environmental print, such as road signs, restaurant logos, or pictures on packages, before they read print in books. Teachers use environmental print to foster young children's understanding of concepts about letters, words, and messages. They provide children with a wealth of appealing reading materials in a range of formats, including print and digital, and at varying levels of complexity. They expose children to texts that represent diverse topics, genres, cultures, and time periods, and they expose children to reading for both information and enjoyment. They use literacy stations or learning centers to provide children with opportunities to reinforce reading skills and strategies, and they share their own love of reading, model good reading habits, and instill the love of reading in children.

In all educational settings, including those in which children’s home language is not English, accomplished early childhood teachers build on the previous linguistic experiences of children. They organize their classrooms in ways that take advantage of children’s prior literacy experiences. They promote and encourage the ongoing development of language and literacy in spoken language in the home and community.

Writing

Accomplished early childhood teachers know how young children develop as writers, and they use this knowledge to teach writing. They know that young children’s writing tends to progress from scribbles, to mock letters and symbols, to developmental spelling with limited control of mechanics, and then to increasing use of conventional spellings of words. They know that for the youngest children, “writing” to express their ideas may involve drawing and dictating as well as actually forming letters and words. Teachers encourage children to communicate using print, and teachers gain insights into children’s thought processes and growing literacy by studying what they write. They understand the challenges that children face when trying to convey their thoughts in writing.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand the importance of teaching writing in ways that are meaningful and developmentally appropriate. Teachers encourage children to write, or pretend to write, during dramatic play; for example, children might act the parts of servers writing restaurant orders, or they might create road signs for block cities they have built. Accomplished teachers create readily accessible writing areas stocked with materials such as pencils, markers, staplers, and paper that children can use to write and illustrate books and cards.

Accomplished early childhood teachers support children’s development as writers in many ways. They introduce children to the different genres, including narrative, informative, and persuasive texts, and they provide opportunities for children to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. They encourage children to share their opinions, provide information, recount experiences, or correctly explain the steps in a procedure. They understand how to scaffold children’s writing development. For example, they might guide children through the stages of creating an argument, moving them from simply stating an opinion to ultimately creating a counter-argument.

Accomplished early childhood teachers provide developmentally appropriate instruction in the writing process. They teach young children prewriting strategies such as brainstorming; finding a topic that fits a purpose or an audience; researching or otherwise exploring ideas related to the topic; and organizing ideas with outlines, webs, charts, or other graphic organizers. They show children how to write a first draft, reminding them to include details that will catch the reader’s interest and to provide support for main ideas. They teach children to revise their work by reviewing ideas and organization, and model how to edit work for spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar. Finally, they help children publish their work. Accomplished teachers weave technology into every step of the writing process, from researching interesting topics, to checking spelling, to publishing.

Accomplished early childhood teachers demonstrate that good writers are also good researchers. They teach young children how to formulate questions, find answers in a variety of sources, evaluate sources, and restate information in their own words. They explain the meaning of plagiarism and show children how to cite sources appropriately.

Viewing and Visually Representing

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that viewing refers to the act of attending to communication conveyed by visual representations, and that visually representing refers to conveying information or expressing feelings using non-verbal media such as drawings, photographs, graphic designs, or physical performances. Teachers know that viewing and visually representing involve visual language, and they teach children to become attuned to the conventions, style, and vocabulary that visual language comprises. Teachers understand how visual images become part of spoken and written language, thus making visual representations an integral part of language development. Accomplished teachers know that children process visual language differently; for example, children with visual impairments might view drawing, charts, and diagrams tactilely. Accomplished teachers use developmentally and culturally appropriate strategies to teach all children skills related to viewing and visually representing.

Mathematics

Accomplished early childhood generalists know the ways in which young children think about mathematics and know mathematics in ways that allow them to support the learning of every child. Teachers know the structures and interconnections of mathematical topics. They are skilled in modeling processes and practices that provide young children with the means of developing and using mathematical ideas, and they routinely structure opportunities for children to engage in practices such as representing and explaining their mathematical thinking. Accomplished teachers know, and are skilled in noticing, how children think about particular concepts, procedures, and practices. They are familiar with children's common misconceptions about mathematics, and they assist children in clarifying them as they arise. Teachers lay a solid foundation for future learning by nurturing the view that mathematics makes sense and is practical.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know the content of mathematical strands, including number and operations, geometry and spatial sense, measurement, data and probability, and algebra. They have particularly deep understanding of the early concepts, skills, sensibilities and procedures related to each strand, and they know the ways in which these elements connect. Teachers appreciate and emphasize number and number sense in early mathematics. With younger children, this work involves daily routines that involve the use of numbers and development of number sense through collecting objects, counting objects, and associating numbers with collections of objects; saying, reading, and writing numbers; playing simple games that involve numbers; grouping objects and skip counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s; and engaging concretely with number combinations and estimation. When working

with older children, the focus moves toward operations, basic facts and invented algorithms; increasing use of symbols; and engagement with larger numbers and numbers beyond whole numbers. Accomplished teachers know that using pictures, manipulatives, and strategies can help to develop children's fluency with basic facts. They also know how to support children's development of increasingly sophisticated ideas, such as moving from informal understandings of more and less to the more precise terminology of greater than/less than and finally to the use of symbols such as $<$ and $=$. Accomplished teachers might explain mathematical symbols through accessible and playful analogies; for example, they might explain that the $<$ symbol looks like the open mouth of a hungry crocodile that wants to eat the greater number.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are mindful that counting, numbers, and operations do not comprise the entirety of mathematics in the early grades. For instance, they understand that pivotal aspects of mathematics content such as algebraic reasoning are rooted in young children's opportunities to notice, record, and build patterns. Teachers provide time for young children to work through sequences of concept and skill development. They might have children progress from using non-standard measurement, such as the use of body parts and everyday objects to measure, to using standard units to measure properties of an object. Teachers know how national and local standards delineate mathematics content. They also know various ways in which mathematical topics are embedded in mathematics curriculum materials, are embedded in other subject areas, and are embodied in real-world experiences.

Accomplished early childhood teachers competently model processes, including problem solving and reasoning, the representation and communication of mathematical ideas, and the ways that connections are made among ideas. They believe that young children can engage meaningfully in these processes and routinely provide opportunities for them to do so. They know how to support young children as they learn content through the use of these practices and also support learning of key aspects of the processes themselves. They see the roots of mathematical processes in the ways that children organize information, record their ideas while participating in mathematical play and centers, or name an example to support a mathematical idea. Teachers provide tools and technologies that facilitate multiple methods of representation, connections, and communication. They encourage children to describe their approaches to problem-solving and their uses of representation.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know unifying mathematical ideas and understand how these concepts connect mathematical strands as well as connect essential subject matter facts, ideas, and processes. They know that young children are capable of engaging meaningfully with unifying concepts and ensure that the encounters are developmentally appropriate. Accomplished teachers ensure that children encounter ideas such as precision when measuring, using operations with numbers, and talking about particular shapes. Teachers encourage attention to generalization when helping children move from specific observations to broader insights. For example, when children working with stackable cubes see that $3+4$ yields the same result as $4+3$, an accomplished teacher helps them understand that

this pattern is not a unique occurrence but rather is representative of a mathematical property that applies to all addition problems. Teachers point out the different ways in which notation is used. For example, it might be used to label each vertex in a triangle with a different letter, or to use the letters B, Y, and G to document a pattern of blue, yellow, and green colored beads. Teachers encourage children to use notational norms that will serve them well in later learning. They systematically plan opportunities for children to encounter and name unifying concepts, but they also know how to harness teachable moments in ways that highlight the importance and usefulness of those ideas. They realize that overarching insights into mathematics are present even when working on specific concepts and skills, and they use unifying concepts to help children see participation in mathematics as coherent and cumulative.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that mathematics learning begins with children's thinking and language and then builds on this thinking. Teachers encourage young children to talk about mathematical ideas, processes, and reasoning. They help young children describe attributes of shapes, identify shapes in their immediate environments, and reason that the orientation of a shape does not affect its attributes, so that for instance a door and table can both be rectangles even though one seems tall and skinny and the other appears to be short and wide. Teachers ask children to demonstrate and explain the logic by which they reached an answer. They help children make connections between informal everyday language, such as "take away," and formal mathematical language, such as "subtract." They also use tools such as models, diagrams, and story problems to expand children's initial understanding of concepts such as subtraction. Teachers help children learn that in mathematics, many names can be associated with the same thing. For example, 4 is a digit, a quantity, a numeral, and an even number. Teachers model the appropriate use of mathematical language and provide many opportunities for children to develop mathematical language through experiences such as describing shapes as a process to understand geometry concepts; estimating quantities, distances, weights, and lengths of familiar objects when considering measurement concepts; and making predictions while using data. Teachers also know that invention, inefficiency, and error are a part of the process of developing mathematical ideas. Teachers recognize that understanding concepts, fluency, skill in developing and using strategies, adjusting ideas to work in particular contexts, and perseverance are all hallmarks of mathematical competence. They value each of these attributes of competence, understand their interdependence, and use knowledge of children's thinking to plan and implement instruction.

Accomplished early childhood teachers provide varied opportunities for children to explore mathematics. Teachers design mathematical tasks that engage children in doing mathematics in authentic ways. They encourage children to generate their own questions and then develop, explain, and defend their responses. They create rich environments in which children select from among manipulatives, mathematical tools, and technology as means to solve problems. Accomplished teachers encourage children to exchange ideas and strategies and to try different approaches to problems. Teachers scaffold learning in such a way as to help children reflect and gradually arrive at key ideas over time. They partner with parents and obtain community resources to expand where, when, and how children use mathematics. Using all these strategies,

the accomplished teacher supports young children's learning and their sense that mathematics is worthwhile.

Science

Accomplished early childhood teachers appreciate the ways that young children think about science. Teachers understand key elements in science and select science content that strengthens the cognitive capacities of learners. Teachers know that young children's dispositions toward science form at an early age, and they build skillfully on children's curiosity and wonder to help them organize and report their meaningful discoveries. They provide consistent opportunities for children to examine, explore, compare, classify, describe, and ask questions about their environment. They support children's growth in the ability to formulate and follow up on questions, and as children progress, teachers help them explore their world more systematically. Teachers understand the nature of scientific inquiry and the ways in which the scientific community works to test theories and build knowledge over time. Accomplished teachers use inquiry approaches to provide opportunities for children to learn scientific skills, such as predicting, observing, gathering information, inferring, generalizing, and analyzing data, to acquire the skills needed for inquiry and to create their own hypotheses.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are familiar with the major concepts of earth science (space, physical features, geological formations, forces of nature, and environmental science), physical science (motion and energy), and life science (plants and animals). Teachers are adept at teaching the unifying concepts and themes of science, such as systems, energy, and change, and they realize the significance of process standards to support those ideas.

Accomplished early childhood teachers help young children see the relevance of science. For example, when teaching life science, teachers might engage younger children in understanding the body through activities involving their senses and through stories, songs, and motions. Teachers might involve older children in earth science with a study of animal habitats or an investigation of the features of the natural environment outside the school. In physical science, teachers might begin simple investigations of the properties of water by having children observe an ice cube and tell what occurs when it is exposed to heat. The children might further explore water's states of matter by heating the water to see it evaporate or freezing it so that it will turn into a solid cube. In environmental science, the accomplished teacher might have children plant a garden or develop and observe a compost pile to learn how to recycle waste into useful fertilizer that helps save our Earth. Accomplished teachers understand that such hands-on activities help children make connections to the world around them.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that young children typically have roughly formed notions about science. Teachers value the thinking processes behind children's naïve conceptions and design developmentally appropriate learning experiences to help children uncover explanations that are closer to scientific reality.

For example, teachers might guide younger children to discover the reason an item sinks is not because it is too big or, with older children, because it is too heavy. Teachers understand the complexity of concepts in science, and they take care to address the scientific process to help children understand those concepts. Teachers know what level of scientific terminology is challenging yet attainable for children of a given age. Teachers design learning experiences that help children uncover for themselves the counterintuitive nature of many scientific principles. Accomplished teachers understand that deep discussions can transform a class of children into a community of future scientists.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that children need to know scientific facts as well as to practice scientific inquiry, and they create a program that balances both elements. They help young children become aware of the scientific nature of their questions, pursue multiple paths to investigate a problem, and raise new questions. Teachers also allow children to take control of investigations and extend them if they wish. Rather than having children simply execute prefabricated experiments, accomplished teachers use probing questions to steer children toward discoveries.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand ways of using inquiry to engage children in hands-on science that supports the learning of scientific concepts and processes. They know that engaging children in science is foundational for developing children's ability to ask questions, conduct investigations, collect data, and seek answers. Teachers provide sufficient time to instill in children a deep understanding of essential scientific concepts rather than simply providing children with a superficial acquaintance with isolated facts. They help children develop acute observational skills and support children's emergent reasoning and problem solving about what they experience through their senses. In addition, they incorporate ongoing exploration, investigation, and inquiry in science as a consistent part of their curriculum. Teachers systematically plan instructional activities, some of which focus solely on science and some of which integrate science with other subject areas. Teachers are also adept at using teachable moments to steer children toward new knowledge. Accomplished teachers constantly research new knowledge bases and use technology and best practices to enhance children's learning in science. Accomplished teachers ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to engage in science as a means to understand better and enjoy the natural world.

Social Studies

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that social studies is the vehicle through which young children acquire knowledge of the past and the present and prepare for the future. They know that for young children, understanding social studies begins with fundamental questions about who they are and where they live. While supporting individual development and identity, accomplished teachers move children into and out of a variety of social groups in school and the broader community as a way of developing the sense of social identity essential for understanding social studies. Teachers nurture children's abilities to work collectively and make informed

decisions for the common good. Teachers' ultimate goal is to help children become responsible, productive citizens of their local communities, their nation, and the world.

Accomplished teachers are knowledgeable about the fields of history, geography, civics, and economics. They understand the connections among these fields and effectively integrate the scope and sequence of social studies across the curriculum in developmentally appropriate ways. Teachers take advantage of children's natural curiosity about the world to introduce them to the ways in which social science promotes understanding of different cultures, people, and places. Teachers know the common misconceptions children have within the social studies. For example, children might think that George Washington and Abraham Lincoln were friends or that all Native Americans live in teepees. Teachers are adept at teaching skills and concepts in ways that ensure the social studies are not viewed simply as factual recall. Accomplished teachers plan for active and authentic learning experiences; whenever possible, they use field trips, reenactments, and play to make social studies come to life. Through the innovative use of literature, technology, artifacts, and data from places such as historical societies and museums, teachers provide children with valuable opportunities to gain a sense of human existence in the past and the present. Accomplished teachers also encourage children to make predictions about the future.

Accomplished early childhood teachers strive to use children's natural curiosity to help them understand the concept of history. Teachers know that children need to understand their place in time and begin to comprehend how their lives are rooted in historical events. They use children's ability to recount stories as routes to understanding the concept of chronology. Teachers of younger children might ask them to develop a timeline listing the events of a day, week, or even a whole school year in chronological order as a way of giving children insight into the concept of how people, objects, and experiences change over time. Teachers of older children might focus on the technological advances made throughout history, such as innovations in transportation or communication. Accomplished teachers might use examples of how people have mailed letters over time, from the pony express to e-mail, to illustrate some of the ways that science and technology changed the lives of children's ancestors and continue to affect society today. Teachers help children develop a historical perspective on how our world is continuously evolving, and yet remains the same in many ways.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use developmentally appropriate strategies to help young children develop geographic concepts, and they provide opportunities for children to consider spatial relationships as a precursor to understanding the concept of location. Teachers find concrete ways to explain how people all over the world are connected to one another, including through the global economy. Teachers might prompt children to examine the labels on items such as their backpacks or their clothes to identify where they were made, and then pinpoint the items' sources on a globe or a map. Teachers might take children on walks to learn about their neighborhood, using directional words such as "left" and "right" or "north" and "south" to describe the orientation of traffic signs, buildings, and people.

To make these experiences even more meaningful, teachers might help children subsequently construct a model or map of the neighborhood and discuss what they observed.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use the concepts of civics and government to help children understand that in their learning communities, just as in their homes, there are rules, rights, and responsibilities that allow the members of the group to interact successfully. Teachers might regularly schedule meetings in which children interpret the classroom codes of conduct and discuss how to resolve issues. Teachers might guide children through the process of creating their own set of behavioral expectations and appropriate consequences for the classroom.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that young children may be aware of and concerned about problems in their neighborhood or issues they have heard about through various media. Teachers help younger children begin to understand the role that local agencies such as fire and police departments play in addressing such problems. Teachers of older children help them understand the levels and functions of government and envision their role as citizens. Addressing issues related to governance helps children learn to solve problems in a way that benefits both themselves and the community.

Accomplished early childhood teachers help young children explore the principles of economics in the context of familiar experiences. For example, teachers might organize play stores, restaurants, and other appropriate economic venues to illustrate principles related to resources and consumption. Teachers might prompt children to create a class town with its own monetary system designed by the children, or might set aside certain days on which children are allowed to set up a business to sell something such as a craft item. Accomplished teachers hold discussions on such concepts as trade, wants and needs, supply and demand, and consumers and producers in order to help children understand that economics is part of everyday life.

Visual Arts

Accomplished early childhood teachers sensitively interpret the ways young children use symbols and patterns of artistic expression to communicate their ideas and feelings. They promote children's awareness and creation of the visual arts in ways that are developmentally and culturally appropriate. Teachers have a broad background in the arts which allows them to make visual arts an integral part of the early childhood curriculum; they are familiar with the unifying concepts of the visual arts, which include color, texture, line, symmetry, light, and shape. They are also familiar with various visual media, including drawing, painting, sculpture, and film, and they know some of the history of art in cultures throughout the world.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that creativity is at the heart of children's artistic expression. They provide opportunities for each young child to experiment with various tools, processes, and media, and they mirror children's joy and excitement as children share their resulting artwork with others. Teachers use art

materials, media, and concrete props with children as catalysts for talking and thinking about compelling design questions. They support artistic investigation and provide opportunities for children to observe, reflect, explore, and create using the visual arts. Accomplished teachers understand the ways in which eye-hand coordination and body-brain development are enhanced when children explore the visual world, and they can explain the many benefits of the visual arts to colleagues and families.

Accomplished early childhood teachers help children look at art, talk about art, create art, and develop an awareness of the visual arts in their everyday lives. They create environments in which play, both natural and virtual, serves as a context for engaging in artistic activities. Teachers help children analyze and evaluate the visual arts. For example, accomplished teachers of younger children might have them peruse multiple books by a single illustrator to highlight the use of color or line, whereas teachers of older children might engage them in comparing styles among multiple illustrators.

Accomplished early childhood teachers help children understand that there are many valid aesthetic approaches and responses to the visual arts. Whereas some children may consider a particular work of art appealing, others may find it unsettling. Teachers use examples from a variety of cultures to expand children's understanding of different approaches to beauty and aesthetic expression. They also help children appreciate beauty in the world around them and begin to manipulate their own aesthetic environments. For example, children may be encouraged to select and display their work throughout the community. Accomplished teachers value each child's developing appreciation of the visual arts and incorporate children's artwork in the classroom.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use the visual arts to extend other aspects of children's learning. They seek opportunities to creatively integrate visual arts content and skills in children's daily activities and learning. For example, in mathematics, teachers may have children draw or paint patterns. In social studies, children might design a flag or represent an aspect of their culture through various artistic media.

Music and Drama

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize that the performing arts enable forms of emotional expression that may not be available in other parts of children's lives. They strive to support meaningful and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to engage in both drama and music. They design activities that reflect the diversity of the children in the educational setting and the local community, and they involve families in performing arts activities.

Music is one of the first ways children experience communication—through lullabies, rhymes, or simple humming. Accomplished early childhood teachers know that music brings people together through song, movement, communication, storytelling, and performance. They provide young children with multiple opportunities

to explore music through singing, dancing, and listening as well as through the use of instruments. Early childhood teachers use music to enhance learning and development across the curriculum, and as a medium to develop skills such as body coordination and awareness, language, reading, memory, spatial reasoning, number concepts, and timing. Accomplished teachers also use music as a mnemonic device when teaching concepts such as counting, colors, relationships among ideas, and social skills.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that listening is a fundamental musical skill to develop in young children. Listening is a nonthreatening way for a child to participate in music because no performance is involved, and listening to music helps children learn patterns of sounds and rhythms. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for children to listen to and appreciate music so that they can expand their store of musical experiences and develop a vocabulary for talking about music. Teachers introduce various rhythms, melodies, and tones and help children to discriminate differences in pitch, beat, and volume. They select music that represents the vast range of human experiences and musical traditions. Accomplished teachers also use music to enhance the study of other cultures and languages and to help children appreciate various musical forms and styles.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are familiar with the basic elements of music: rhythm, tempo, pitch, tone quality, dynamics, and harmony. They understand that music is a uniquely human enterprise which represents cultural, patriotic, and religious values; as well as the sense of a particular time or place and widely shared emotions and experiences associated with music. Teachers strive to integrate elements of music into the curriculum and daily routines. Accomplished teachers know that by listening to music, singing, playing instruments, and moving to music, young children develop healthy ways to interact and express themselves.

Accomplished early childhood teachers provide time, space, and materials so that young children can explore sounds and rhythms. Teachers provide young children with opportunities to practice vocal and instrumental sounds through solos and ensembles. Most children spontaneously express whole body rhythm activities through creative play, and accomplished teachers use this expressiveness as a transition to drama and the performing arts. They encourage children to create and move to music as well as listen to it. They may provide opportunities for children to express themselves by singing and playing musical instruments. Teachers help children to improvise short songs and instrumental pieces using a variety of non-traditional sounds such as paper tearing or pencil tapping; body sounds such as hands clapping or fingers snapping; and electronic sounds such as keyboards or synthesizers.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that drama is a process through which individuals enact ideas, wishes, and conflicts, often in symbolic form. They are familiar with the basic elements of drama, including plot, theme, character, language, music or rhythm, and visual elements such as scenery, costumes, and props.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that acting out stories is characteristic of young children, and they understand that drama is one of the primary ways in which children learn about life. By creating and reenacting situations, playing different roles, exploring different viewpoints, interacting with peers, arranging the environment, directing the course of the action, and solving problems, children can make sense of their world. Teachers understand that for young children, drama is primarily an improvisatory process that fosters the physical, social, and emotional exploration of unfamiliar or challenging concepts or experiences within a safe environment. Accomplished teachers enhance the learning potential of dramatic play by encouraging children to reflect on the options they explore and the decisions they make.

Accomplished early childhood teachers design and select dramatic activities using their knowledge of child development, individual children, and the community in which children live. They provide opportunities, ideas, and props that extend play, develop imagination, and encourage creativity. They provide children with opportunities to use the processes of drama to extend learning in the subject areas. They choose activities that foster teamwork, character building, empathy, self-confidence, speech and language development, imagination, problem solving, memory, aesthetic appreciation, and fun. They encourage children to explore diverse roles, viewpoints, and motivations; to listen carefully to and interact sensitively with peers; and to adapt the environment to their imagination. Accomplished teachers guide older children in their ability to identify and compare similar characters, settings, and situations in dramatizations.

Health Education

Accomplished early childhood teachers are committed to promoting young children's health and well-being, and they place children's well-being at the center of the health curriculum. Teachers know that wellness results from the integration of the physical, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and moral-ethical domains, and that daily practice of the basic health skills of communication, decision making, goal setting, stress management, and conflict resolution helps young children to be healthy. Accomplished teachers understand that good health supports children's progress in all areas of development and learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers plan positive routines for play, work, rest, hygiene, and social interaction throughout the day. They implement skill-based instruction in health during play, meal, rest, and transition times. Teachers educate young children about their need for movement and play and help them develop effective strategies for maintaining wellbeing. Accomplished teachers teach and model daily health habits in nutrition, safety, hygiene, physical activity, relationships, rest, and quiet time.

Accomplished teachers plan opportunities for young children to explore the unifying concepts of health, such as the influences of families, peers, media, culture, technology, prevention, and habits, to inform their health practices. Through

instruction augmented by cues to action and ongoing feedback, teachers provide young children with opportunities to practice daily routines for personal health. For example, teachers may cue children to set goals for how many fruits and vegetables to eat every day and set goals for brushing teeth twice a day. They also encourage children to verbalize their needs, wants, and feelings in healthy ways, and have children differentiate when to make health-related decisions individually or with trusted adults and community helpers.

Accomplished teachers use instructional strategies such as graphic organizers, checklists, and hypothetical situations to help young children think about their personal health choices such as refusing offers of tobacco and alcohol or dialing 911 in emergencies. When young children are encouraged to share their reasons for healthy behaviors, they may be more likely to reduce health risks. Teachers might also use cooperative learning, problem-based learning, or service learning to support health practices across the curriculum and advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are committed to ensuring children's safety. They equip children with the skills and knowledge to be safe on the playground, in the classroom, at home, in their neighborhoods, and online. They shield children from harm and readily educate and warn them about unsafe activities and hazards in the immediate environment. Accomplished teachers might use role-playing, discussions, or modeling to empower children to say no to safety hazards, inappropriate touches, or unsafe acts.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are aware of patterns of behavior that indicate health-related issues, and they are alert to any shifts in young children's behavior, appearance, emotions, or academic performance that may signal problems. If they notice any potential warning signs, they follow up with detailed observation and then talk with children and, as appropriate, with families. Teachers pay close attention to children's health questions and concerns. They cautiously evaluate situations and then, based on their interpretation of the information they have gathered, they determine appropriate next steps. Teachers access up-to-date health-related information, products, and services to promote child health, and they team with other health and educational professionals to coordinate the necessary supports for each child.

Accomplished early childhood teachers reach out to families to promote healthy habits for young children and communicate with families to share information on developmentally appropriate health habits and wellness routines. Accomplished teachers can inform parents about the latest findings on the role that health plays on cognitive growth and development. They encourage parents to set goals to reduce the number of hours children spend in passive play with media and to increase the time children spend being active in order to increase focus and to reduce stress. Accomplished teachers work with families to encourage children to get sufficient sleep and adequate nutrition in order to be alert and ready for learning.

Physical Education

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that physical education has an important impact on the development of the whole child. They understand that gross- and fine-motor skill development, healthy lifestyles, body coordination, and social skill development are essential to growth. They are familiar with research showing that physical fitness supports children's academic progress, improves posture, and helps address the issues of childhood obesity, attention to task, and classroom behavior. Teachers provide well-balanced physical education programs in order to promote the well-being of children including lifelong physical fitness. They are advocates for physical education and ensure that children engage in movement activities through informal as well as formal means. For example, young children might explore shapes made by their bodies while balancing on one arm and one leg, or might move with varying speeds through circular pathways while manipulating a ball or scarf. Accomplished teachers might engage students individually or in groups to explore other movement concepts using equipment, props, artwork, stories, and music to inspire movement.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are familiar with the essential principles of physical education including intensity, frequency, duration, and patterns of movement. They know that children typically use a variety of games, sports, dance, and fitness activities to express energy and emotions and to explore body awareness. Accomplished teachers use direct instruction with specific feedback to help children practice and integrate a variety of psychomotor skills such as running, walking, skipping, kicking, and jumping. Accomplished teachers provide a variety of physical activities to increase children's coordination, balance, agility, spatial orientation, sensory development, and kinesthetic awareness. For example, they might use stability balls and balance boards to stimulate the body in ways that increase opportunities for sensory integration, which in turn maximizes children's growth and development. Children who are active on a daily basis can increase their confidence and understanding of who they are and how they grow.

Accomplished early childhood teachers provide sufficient time and varied settings for children's physical activities in the classroom and beyond, such as during recess, physical education, and outdoor field days. Teachers of younger children know that appropriate and frequent periods of physical activity are essential for developing fine- and gross-motor skills, including cognitive skills, and for satisfying the young child's need to be active. Teachers are creative and imaginative in seizing opportunities to have children dance, mimic animal movements and move during transition times by hopping, crawling, or dancing to the next activity. They ensure that children have appropriate supervision, and they model physical activity patterns for children.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize that children have different needs and limitations and that no two children are at the same level of physical development at the same time. Teachers accept children as they are and give them the experiences and opportunities necessary to learn the skills they need. Teachers work with physical educators, physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, and parents to provide movement and fitness opportunities for all children.

Accomplished teachers also help all children understand how to work and play with others who have physical or sensory limitations.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that games and sports help to teach rules and regulations as well as dispositions for cooperation, respect, and sportsmanship. Teachers provide time for cooperative and competitive games, outdoor play, movement relays, and free-choice activities as important ways to increase personal and social interactions and to help release tension in an enjoyable context.

Technology

Accomplished early childhood teachers use pedagogies that support young children in learning how to use technology as a tool and how to become critical consumers of technology. They evaluate technology as critically as they would any other learning resource, applying such criteria as whether or not the content is developmentally appropriate; linked to curriculum, goals, and learning standards; flexible enough to accommodate the individual needs of all children; and appropriate given the cultural context of the community, families, and children with whom teachers work. Teachers are purposeful in making decisions about when and how to use technology as a vehicle for learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are competent with an array of technology, including visual, audio, and assistive technologies as well as computer software and hardware. They are aware of the ever-changing nature of technology, and they stay abreast of new technological developments. Teachers know that technology, used appropriately, has the potential to positively influence children's development and learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand the importance of interacting with young children as they explore technology, not only to protect the devices and ensure child safety, but to expand the learning opportunities that the technology offers. Teachers use various forms of technology to enhance children's natural sense of curiosity and ability to learn. Accomplished teachers understand young children's attitudes toward technology and their ability to interact with it. They also know how young children tend to engage with and think about technology and are familiar with the problems that children typically encounter. For example, an older child may think that calculators always provide the right answers, and a younger child may experience dissonance between the movement of the mouse on the table with the movement of the cursor on the screen. Accomplished teachers anticipate and resolve such issues.

Accomplished early childhood teachers show children how to use technology throughout the curriculum to identify, organize, communicate, collaborate, create, illustrate, demonstrate, research, and collect data as well as to produce presentations, artifacts, and documents. Accomplished teachers ensure that children understand how to use technology safely and cooperatively. Teachers can discuss technology using terminology that is both developmentally appropriate and accurate.

They facilitate children's use of technology to communicate within and beyond the classroom walls, to work collaboratively, and to support individual and group learning. Accomplished teachers find ways to personalize technology to assist the learning of each child.

Standard V

Assessing Children's Development and Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers use assessment to support and guide young children's development and learning.

Accomplished early childhood generalists assess and document young children's development and subject matter knowledge. Assessment is a process through which teachers learn about children's social, cognitive, linguistic, physical, and emotional development by gathering and interpreting information. They ensure that assessment practices fairly and equitably focus on children's emerging capabilities. Teachers set clear purposes for assessment, systematically and efficiently employ a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment tools, and accurately interpret assessment data. They use assessment results to guide teaching and learning, a process which includes communicating assessment results in meaningful ways to children, families, and colleagues, and includes setting instructional goals.

Accomplished early childhood teachers make assessment and responsive feedback a daily, ongoing activity that is embedded in the routines of teaching and learning. They know that assessment draws on insights from beyond the classroom. Teachers observe children throughout the educational environment and incorporate the observations of families and colleagues such as school psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, and counselors. Teachers use what they learn from assessment as they plan and implement instruction.

Setting Clear Assessment Purposes

Accomplished early childhood teachers clearly articulate their purposes for assessment. They ensure that assessments capture information about the whole child for an array of educational purposes such as documenting children's achievement, evaluating the curriculum, and improving instruction. Teachers collaborate with young children and families when articulating learning goals and following the child's development in light of those goals, and they use well-defined purposes as a foundation for the assessment process.

Accomplished early childhood teachers purposefully focus on young children's development and their emerging subject matter knowledge. To develop a comprehensive picture of a child's social relationships, modes of learning, use of language, family priorities and resources, strengths, and any possible concerns,

teachers collaborate with the child's family and other professionals in addition to relying on their own data. Because they know that children's development is not linear, teachers attend to changes in the ways children think and behave over time. They trace the ways in which children engage in cross-disciplinary practices such as experimentation, problem solving, and using primary and secondary sources. Teachers stay informed about changing national, state, and local subject-matter standards, and they use these standards in combination with developmental milestones as lenses for analyzing children's progress. Accomplished teachers advocate for subject matter goals that are developmentally appropriate and meaningful.

Selecting and Using Different Assessments

Accomplished early childhood teachers draw on a professional knowledge base that includes research, standards, theory, and best practices related to assessment in order to achieve familiarity with the full range of available assessments. They judiciously select the appropriate tool for a given purpose based on a deep understanding of child development, their observations of specific children, and knowledge of the data that the assessment generates. Teachers know when to employ standardized assessments and when to use performance-based assessments. They understand the differences between formative and summative assessments and know when to employ each type. They use pre-assessments to determine a child's baseline knowledge or developmental level and post-assessments to determine whether a child has met a desired goal. Accomplished teachers collect samples of children's learning and development over time with tools such as anecdotal records and portfolios. They may use conversations as a way to gain invaluable information from a child or parent. They know how to develop meaningful and comprehensive checklists to observe specific skills, and they employ rubrics that clearly and comprehensively reflect the criteria for evaluating a specific task. Accomplished teachers ensure that assessments validly assess the skills they purport to measure; for example, a mathematics assessment may require a child to identify or draw shapes rather than merely asking questions about shapes. Accomplished teachers employ multiple assessments to discover valuable information about the whole child and to define and prioritize teaching, learning, and developmental goals.

Accomplished early childhood teachers do more than select the most appropriate assessments; they know the most effective ways to administer them. Teachers modify assessments for different learning modalities and developmental levels in ways that ensure individualization while preserving the integrity of the assessment. For example, a teacher might visually administer parts of a test to a child who is hard of hearing or might modify instructions for a child whose native language is not English. Teachers attend to equity not only in the selection of assessment tools but in the assessment environment; they understand that the context in which young children are assessed has an enormous impact on children's ability to demonstrate their knowledge and potential. When appropriate, teachers strive to elicit what a child knows by prompting, probing, and rephrasing.

Accomplished early childhood teachers ensure that their assessment practices are equitable and fair and that they meet the needs of diverse learners. Teachers construct, select, and tailor assessments so that every child has an equal opportunity to show what she or he knows and is able to do. Teachers allow for flexibility, giving children choice in how they demonstrate what they know. For example, children might be allowed to role play, draw, write, or make models to demonstrate their knowledge of the plant cycle. Teachers schedule assessments in ways that ensure all children have had substantial and differentiated opportunities to learn targeted skills before they are assessed.

Interpreting Assessment Data

Accomplished early childhood teachers are able to efficiently analyze, interpret, and summarize assessment data, including data from mandated, standardized, and performance-based assessments. When applicable, teachers use technological tools to organize and analyze data, and they collaborate with other professionals if they have difficulty interpreting certain data. When interpreting assessment results, teachers actively seek to determine whether the data present an accurate picture of a child's knowledge or development. They make this determination by applying different lenses, including their knowledge of planned learning outcomes and typical patterns of child development, plus their accumulated data on the individual child and that child's family and community.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are well informed about the nature of all early childhood assessments and the types of inferences that can validly be drawn from them. Teachers do not draw unjustified conclusions or over-generalize based on limited assessment results; rather, they make only those claims for which there is sufficient data. They evaluate their own assessments and remove any instances of bias that they identify. Early childhood teachers receive information from outside assessments, such as speech evaluations, and they critically interpret the results. To the extent possible, accomplished teachers rigorously appraise all assessment information that is used to determine a child's strengths and needs.

Communicating Assessment Data

Accomplished early childhood teachers know how to communicate assessment results clearly and meaningfully. They sensitively and accurately explain assessment results to children, families, and colleagues, providing evidence that supports their findings. For example, a teacher might share with parents that a child's gross-motor skills have advanced from hopping to skipping and would explain the significance of this developmental trajectory. Accomplished teachers frame their interpretations in positive language, emphasizing children's strengths and then explaining what next steps are needed. They document pertinent information and convey it as appropriate to other stakeholders such as next year's teacher or an occupational therapist. They understand the usefulness and limitations of results from mandated tests, and they help children and parents understand the purpose, results, and meaning of such

assessments. When in doubt, accomplished teachers seek guidance from colleagues on how best to communicate assessment results.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that assessment is a collaborative process. Communication among members of the educational team is essential for determining goals, planning for children's transitions from one setting to the next, developing educational plans, monitoring and revising these plans, and determining the need for additional services or supports. Good communication about assessment data is essential. Families need to understand the significance and limitations of test data, and children can use assessment data to evaluate their work and then set expectations based on their strengths and needs.

Using Assessment Data to Inform Teaching and Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers view assessment data as the starting point for informing their teaching practices. They review assessment data critically and use the data as a basis for selecting instructional goals and objectives, organizing learning environments, selecting teaching and learning materials, creating flexible instructional groups, and planning and implementing instruction.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use assessment data to identify children whose development is outside the expected range. They can determine the nature of the necessary intervention, ranging from modifying the environment to referring the children for further evaluation. Teachers know how to implement an educational plan by including its functional goals and objectives into daily lesson plans and by making modifications and adaptations as necessary.

Accomplished early childhood teachers effectively participate in all team discussions about using assessment results in planning; they contribute insights based on observations of children's classroom behavior. They communicate with colleagues who are also currently working with the children, and those who will work with the children the following year. Teachers share documented information on children's behaviors, abilities, interests, and responsiveness to different instructional strategies.

Accomplished early childhood teachers encourage children to evaluate their own work as a way to take responsibility for their own learning and behavior. Teachers model for children how to design rubrics and use them to judge their performances on given tasks. Teachers provide opportunities for children to use self-assessment to set goals. A teacher might help younger children contrast their drawings of people made in September with drawings made in January and then decide how to develop their drawing skills in the coming months. A teacher might help older children select a piece of writing to reflect on, articulate the reasons behind the selection of that particular example, elaborate on the strengths and weaknesses of the writing, and use the results to determine the next writing goal.

Addressing Issues of Mandated Assessments

Accomplished early childhood teachers know the value and limitations of mandated assessments, which may or may not be standardized. Accomplished teachers understand that mandated tests, like all assessments, have specific purposes and that it is problematic to use them for purposes beyond those for which they were intended. Teachers realize that mandated tests may have minimal relevance for day-to-day instruction, but can be useful when a teacher is thinking cumulatively across years and across classes about the effectiveness of the curriculum. Accomplished teachers are aware of the controversies surrounding high-stakes tests, including using test data as the sole determinant for retaining young children in their current grade, and they assume an analytic stance toward the data that mandated tests provide. Accomplished teachers are able to draw on their knowledge of the test and their interpretation of the data to share well-warranted information with children and families.

Accomplished early childhood teachers may find themselves in situations in which a program, school district, or state mandates tests that fail to reflect the full range of children's learning and development or that are flawed in some other way. Teachers do their best to mitigate the detrimental effects of such practices. Teachers also stay informed about positive trends in the development of more comprehensive, meaningful, and constructive forms of observational and performance-based assessments for young children, and they actively advocate for changes in assessment policy so that testing practices are aligned with effective instructional practices.

Standard VI

Managing the Environment for Development and Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers organize and manage the environment to promote young children’s development and learning.

Accomplished early childhood generalists skillfully manage all aspects of the learning environment, both tangible and intangible, to create a supportive yet challenging climate that is conducive to young children’s development and learning. The tangible aspects include the overall space in which learning takes place and the physical structures and learning materials deployed within that space. The intangible elements include the time in which learning unfolds, the emotional climate in which it takes place, and the management techniques that teachers use to integrate all resources in an effective way. Accomplished teachers foster learning in a variety of settings in addition to the classroom, and when they encounter drawbacks over which they do not have direct control, they find ways to make creative adaptations or to advocate for improvements.

Accomplished early childhood teachers apply their foundational understanding of the whole child, diversity, and subject matter in order to create an environment that is conducive to young children’s play, socialization, learning, and development. Teachers understand that the goal of a well planned physical environment is to support independent learning. Teachers analyze children’s social, cognitive, linguistic, physical, emotional, and ethical development when designing the environment to meet their diverse needs, including exceptionalities. Teachers apply knowledge of core academic subjects, the arts, health education, physical education, and developmentally appropriate practices when designing spaces, selecting resources, and managing time. Accomplished teachers draw upon professional knowledge, including research findings, to support the design and management of the learning environment.

Designing the Physical Space

Accomplished early childhood teachers ensure that within the learning environment, the temperature, furniture arrangement, noise levels, and visual displays are conducive to the learning and development of all children and that the space is organized to allow for easy and safe movement from one area to another. Teachers provide multisensory learning opportunities, and they take into consideration

attributes such as cleanliness, order, comfort, and beauty as well as function. They continuously evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the environment and modify it as necessary. They work with colleagues, other professionals, children, and families to create environments that reflect the diversity of the community; for example, preschool children could be encouraged to stock the housekeeping area with food boxes, utensils, and items of clothing that represent their home cultures.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use the physical environment to support children's growth in all the inter-related domains of human development. They design meaningful learning environments that support the strengths, interests, and needs of individual learners within a group context. Teachers create indoor and outdoor spaces that are conducive to movement, rest, play, fine- and gross-motor development, health, and fitness. They provide children with spaces that allow for oral and written communication, layouts that enable collaboration, and areas that allow for reflection on activities or regrouping after a challenging experience. For example, the classroom might have a quiet area with pillows where children can read, reflect, or simply relax.

Providing Learning Materials and Resources

Accomplished early childhood teachers are resourceful in creating, selecting, combining, and adapting a wide variety of appropriate materials that assist children in their development and learning. Teachers know that young children build understanding from the concrete to the abstract and from the simple to the complex, and they use this understanding when sequencing materials. They ensure that younger children have early access to materials that make it relatively easy to encounter and work with foundational ideas, such as objects that support initial counting and one-to-one correspondence. As children grow older, teachers provide them with materials that encourage higher-level engagement with the same ideas. When considering learning materials, accomplished teachers take into account many criteria including safety, developmental appropriateness, quality, durability, affordability, flexibility, and aesthetics.

Accomplished early childhood teachers carefully select materials such as books, music, manipulatives, visuals, and technology that are current and accurate and which enhance the curriculum. Teachers select materials that are developmentally appropriate and diverse in nature and that will enhance children's self-images; items such as books, dolls, and puppets reflect the class's diverse makeup as well as the composition of the broader society. They ensure that the language and images in the materials do not depict any group or individual as less capable than another or in stereotypical ways. Teachers select materials which show individuals demonstrating positive leadership, democracy, and cooperation; for example, individuals in a computer game might accept responsibility, solve problems, and settle disputes in a creative manner to which children can relate. Accomplished teachers evaluate possible materials to determine whether they are likely to encourage critical analysis and broaden children's outlook on the world.

Accomplished early childhood teachers organize materials in ways that make them easy for all children to access. Teachers teach children to use materials appropriately and to work as a team to ensure that materials are ready for classmates the next day. Teachers label shelves and containers with pictures and words in English and also, where possible, in children's home languages, in order to support children's independence in accessing materials and returning them to their proper place. Teachers arrange materials in ways that pique curiosity and wonder. They ensure that children encounter the tools and representations that are commonly employed in the subject areas, such as calculators, globes, and magnetic letters.

Accomplished early childhood teachers integrate technology throughout the curriculum and the daily routine in ways that support and extend traditional resources and help children become lifelong learners in an ever-changing world. Teachers carefully position technology in ways that allow easy access for children, including children with physical challenges. In addition, teachers provide enough space so that children can easily collaborate when using technology, for example, by equipping the computer table with multiple chairs. Accomplished teachers ensure that all technology is developmentally appropriate, safe, carefully selected, and used appropriately by children to enhance the curriculum and address developmental objectives.

Accomplished early childhood teachers conscientiously manage time as a resource in order to meet the needs of young children. Teachers structure time in such a way as to provide a clear framework for each school day, and they organize temporal transitions between learning activities, including down time when children can reflect and rest. Accomplished teachers provide sufficient time for reading and writing, social conversation, play, collaboration with others, learning new things, and building on prior knowledge. Teachers recognize that schedules should accurately embody curriculum priorities and that children need sufficient time on task in order for learning activities to be meaningful. Teachers build flexibility into schedules so that they can respond to children's spontaneous need to ask questions, their tendency to stop to ponder, and their desire to interact with other learners. They help children adapt to unscheduled events that may occur such as a fire drill. They use developmentally appropriate methods to help children understand schedules. Schedules for younger children might consist of symbols for the day's activities paired with pictures of clocks showing the times. Schedules for older children might consist of standard written lists of activities next to standard times.

Managing Play in the Learning Environment

Accomplished early childhood teachers value young children's play as a powerful facilitator of growth, development, and learning across all developmental domains. Teachers thoughtfully organize safe and inviting indoor and outdoor environments, managing them to promote productive play. Because play has a central role in achieving a balance among the cognitive, emotional, and physical areas of the curriculum, accomplished teachers provide adequate time and space for young children to engage in play.

Accomplished early childhood teachers take into consideration children's ages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds when selecting materials and equipment for play. Teachers know that culturally reflective play materials will help young children understand the values of their communities, and teachers are careful to avoid stereotypes in all materials. Accomplished teachers select play materials that can be adapted to different age and ability levels because they understand that developmental differences across one year can be vast. Teachers also make necessary accommodations and adaptations for children with exceptionalities. For example, a child with a wheelchair can partner with another child when returning play equipment to a shelf or bin. Accomplished teachers provide a variety of equipment and materials that stimulate imagination, language development, independent activity, and social interaction.

Accomplished early childhood teachers provide adequate time, materials, and equipment for large muscle play in order to give children opportunities to express their emotions and to develop muscle strength, coordination, and balance. Accomplished teachers equip the play environment with materials from a wide variety of sources: commercial, found, and teacher-made. They select and arrange a variety of materials that allow for a range of uses, from basic to increasingly complex.

Managing the Learning Environment

Accomplished early childhood teachers appreciate the connection between the composition of the learning environment and the management of learning. They create arrangements of materials that are likely to encourage productive social dynamics and manage the learning environment so that space is conducive for either independent or group work. The teacher might set up a variety of learning centers in the classroom and then let children decide where to go by placing pocket charts containing children's names and the names of centers at a level where children can reach them easily. This strategy would help manage the flow of individuals to various centers in the room, and would foster both independence and critical thinking skills by allowing children to make choices. Accomplished teachers provide a mixture of regular classroom routines, which give children a sense of security, and unstructured experiences, which foster independence. The blend of structured and unstructured activities helps children experience success and thus perceive themselves as competent.

Accomplished early childhood teachers manage the social and emotional climate as well as the physical elements of the learning environment. They manage engagement, opportunities, and interaction to establish a climate that is focused on development and learning. Teachers are highly effective when responding to misbehavior and actively consider the social and emotional context in which such behavior occurs in order to ensure that the learning environment is as conducive to productive behaviors as possible. Teachers partner with young children to manage the classroom. They ensure that children understand the rationale for routines and rules, and they model productive ways for children to engage in learning, take responsibility for their learning, and engage with classmates. Accomplished teachers

use modeling to create a risk-free climate in which all children are able to exhibit their individuality and to understand that making mistakes is an acceptable part of the learning process.

As accomplished early childhood teachers manage learning environments, they demonstrate genuine care and respect for young children, and they encourage children to show concern and respect for their peers and adults and for equipment and materials. Accomplished teachers act in ways that earn respect from children and families. They understand the importance of the child-teacher relationship, especially when children are initially adjusting to formal educational settings. Accomplished teachers gradually help children move from dependence on adults to reliance on peers and themselves. For example, when a child first comes to school and spills something, the teacher leads in cleaning up; however, the teacher quickly transfers the responsibility to the children.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know how to collaborate with others in order to manage time, materials, and space in an array of environments including homes, classrooms, playgrounds, and various sites in the community. Teachers are able to create a sense of community among children, families and volunteers, co-teachers, and other professionals. Accomplished teachers cultivate respect, support, and mutual acceptance across all learning environments. They effectively address the array of situations, be they typical or unexpected, potentially adverse or favorable, which arise in different settings so that children are safe and able to learn.

Standard VII

Planning for Development and Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers plan for children's development and learning by setting developmentally appropriate goals and designing learning activities to achieve those goals.

Accomplished early childhood teachers responsibly and systematically plan for young children's learning and development with clear goals and objectives in mind. The planning process incorporates assessing what children know, setting challenging yet attainable goals, and designing learning activities that help children achieve those goals. Teachers use their professional knowledge of child development, the diverse needs of the individual children in their class, and learning standards to select and design appropriate activities, resources, and formal and informal assessments. Accomplished teachers plan instruction with attention to foundational concepts and to the whole child, and they ensure that children have substantial opportunities for learning in all subject areas.

Setting Goals and Objectives

Accomplished early childhood teachers focus on a variety of dimensions when setting goals and objectives for young children. They focus on each child's entering developmental level to set individual goals, and they consider children's shared needs to set group goals. Teachers consider children's prior knowledge in relation to curriculum content and standards, and they take into consideration the academic and social context in which they teach. Teachers respond sensitively when collaborating with families to determine appropriate outcomes for children; and they guide children and families to set challenging, yet achievable, goals. Accomplished teachers make well-balanced decisions based on research and theory, their professional experience, and their knowledge of children and proven practices; and they collaborate with colleagues to articulate goals for teaching and learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are skilled at sequencing goals. They strive to achieve a firm understanding of where children are now and what children's needs are for future growth. As often as possible, teachers integrate children's interests within the framework of curricular and developmental goals. Accomplished teachers establish logical links between short- and long-term goals and objectives. When setting goals, they apply the knowledge that young children build understanding from the concrete to the abstract, from whole to part, and from the simple to the complex.

In sequencing goals for mathematics learning, for instance, accomplished teachers might introduce the concept of fractions with manipulatives such as paper strips, then move to less concrete representations such as drawings, and finally make the transition to abstract numerical symbols.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand the range of development that is typical for a given age group. They set goals and plan for children whose development falls outside this range. They collaborate with a variety of specialists, including health professionals, teachers of children with gifts and talents, and psychologists to skillfully differentiate learning experiences for children with exceptionalities. Teachers know that families have insights into children's functioning and adaptation that may not be manifest in the school setting. Consequently, teachers make special efforts to learn from those families in order to involve them in decision making and goal setting.

Designing and Selecting Activities and Resources

After setting goals, accomplished early childhood teachers design and select developmentally appropriate activities, resources, experiences to help children reach those goals. They are proactive when designing and selecting instructional activities and resources. They anticipate learning outcomes, child engagement, and possible misconceptions related to activities, including play activities. When designing learning experiences, teachers consider the kinds of activities that spark children's excitement and enjoyment. Accomplished teachers use foresight to gather resources and consider social arrangements in order to increase the likelihood that children will experience success.

Since play has a key role in integrating young children's development, accomplished teachers design play activities that help children process life experiences and understand content across the curriculum. Teachers design a dramatic play area that offers opportunities for young children to develop socially, cognitively, linguistically, physically, emotionally, and ethically. (See [Standard VIII—Implementing Instruction for Development and Learning](#).)

Accomplished early childhood teachers design activities in ways that ensure equitable participation for diverse learners, including those who need special support. Accomplished teachers understand that individual young children develop in different ways and at varying rates. They also understand that children learn and express themselves best through different modalities; whereas some are primarily verbal learners, others learn best through music, art, or movement. Accomplished teachers devise learning activities that can be differentiated to accommodate all learning styles, and they construct multiple entry points so that all children can participate. Furthermore, they are sensitive to the cultural diversity in their classroom when planning and developing learning activities, and they find ways to embed cultural resources in the classroom.

Accomplished early childhood teachers design learning activities that are coherent and connected. They ensure that learning unfolds in logical ways across

days, months, and beyond. They plan thematic units that seamlessly connect ideas from different subject areas, and they develop authentic experiences that help children appreciate that what they are learning relates to the world beyond the educational setting. Accomplished teachers design and select activities that move learners from less to more complex levels of thinking. As young children begin to acquire information, process knowledge, and develop their meta-cognitive skills, teachers plan activities and events that help young children develop their skills of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. They encourage discovery, problem-solving, and critical and creative thinking. When relevant, accomplished teachers integrate technology into instruction. For example, after studying ecology the teacher could provide opportunities for children to create interactive games or presentations that demonstrate their understanding of ways to reduce, reuse, conserve, and recycle.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are knowledgeable about a broad range of instructional resources. They evaluate resources according to a range of criteria: child safety, age appropriateness, applicability to different disciplines and learning goals, potential for multiple forms and levels of engagement, and relevance to young learners' interests and prior experiences. They are adept at selecting, combining, adapting, and creating print and non-print media resources, including current and emerging technologies. When technology resources are scarce, accomplished teachers find creative ways to ensure that young children have equitable access. Teachers collaborate with colleagues to critically analyze curriculum resources such as textbooks, adapting and using the suggested activities to support developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive learning experiences. Accomplished teachers continually seek out and review new books and games, various forms of technology and media, and manipulative materials. They also find new ways to use familiar items in the classroom. When evaluating, selecting, adapting, and using instructional resources, accomplished teachers may consult with children, families, colleagues, and community partners.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use community resources to enrich learning experiences for young children. They involve older siblings or schoolmates, parents, colleagues, and other community members to enhance classroom learning experiences. They plan ways to connect children to the community, both by taking children into the community and by inviting community members into the educational setting. A teacher might set up a regular Saturday event in a local bookstore in which children and parents meet to enjoy stories and encounter new children's books. The teacher might also invite local artists to display their work in the educational setting. Accomplished teachers monitor news events and developments in sports, the arts, and popular culture that interest children; then they plan appropriate ways to use these elements to enrich instruction.

Accomplished early childhood teachers plan for a variety of flexible grouping strategies, from whole-class to small-group, partner, and individual activities, in order to facilitate classroom management and to improve learning. Teachers use grouping for many purposes, such as enhancing both cooperation among children

and individual autonomy. They have many ways to think about grouping, including children's interests and learning styles, and how groups necessarily change over time. An accomplished teacher might plan an activity in which members of a small group practice waiting their turns, speaking one at a time, and listening and repeating what others have said as a means of developing group social skills. Teachers' plans include teaching children to use a combination of mutual and individual responsibility to solve problems and resolve conflicts. When grouping, teachers take into account children's personalities, how children get along with one another, and individual learning styles in order to maximize children's productive engagement in learning. For example, after grouping a child who is especially adept in a certain subject area with peers who need extra support, an accomplished teacher would carefully monitor the arrangement to ensure that the expert child is being sufficiently challenged and that the other children are having sufficient opportunity to learn rather than relying on their classmate to do the work. Accomplished teachers also consider equity, fairness, and diversity when grouping.

Standard VIII

Implementing Instruction for Development and Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers skillfully implement strategies and use resources to support young children's development and learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are highly skilled at promoting young children's ongoing development and learning. They are able to simultaneously manage multiple aspects of teaching including time, materials, and social dynamics to facilitate children's success and their enjoyment of learning. Accomplished teachers advance development and learning through a variety of strategies and resources, including play and appropriate use of technology, which foster children's active engagement and ensure that all children achieve. Accomplished teachers challenge and support every child, closely monitoring individual responses to instruction in order to make learning and information accessible to all.

Setting, Communicating, and Monitoring Expectations

Accomplished early childhood teachers act on the belief that every child can learn. They set high but achievable expectations that are developmentally appropriate, fair, and equitable, and which take into consideration young children's cultural and family backgrounds. Teachers model and explicitly discuss expectations, and they actively inform children and families of their expectations, using channels such as parent nights, newsletters, morning meetings, and other forms of communication. Accomplished teachers know that setting and communicating expectations is not enough; they must also continuously monitor progress in relation to expectations and make appropriate adjustments. Underlying all expectations is the belief that the goal of the teacher is to empower children to act, make decisions, and take responsibility for their learning and behavior.

Engaging Children in Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that young children are active learners, and they are adept at finding ways to increase children's engagement in learning. Teachers understand the importance of discussions in helping children form, extend, and refine their theories and explanations. Teachers help children develop communication skills, teaching and modeling the importance of listening carefully and responding thoughtfully to the topic at hand. Accomplished teachers

patiently and skillfully help young children learn how to formulate questions, think through their ideas, pose additional questions, unscramble confusions, and develop their own hypotheses. Teachers facilitate problem-solving experiences that promote children's critical thinking skills. At a basic level, they may have children provide a summary or synthesis of what they have learned. At a higher level, teachers may ask questions that help children consider new perspectives, extend or clarify an idea or concept, or develop deeper or more diverse understandings of a phenomenon. Accomplished teachers model strategies for organizing and synthesizing information, allowing children to begin to construct their own knowledge base and generate their own understanding of the world around them.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use a variety of techniques to engage young children. They use proximity to children as a motivational technique, vary their volume and intonation when speaking, and employ facial expressions and body language to express ideas and emotions. Teachers model enthusiasm, energy, and willingness to try new ideas and activities. They capitalize on children's interests; for example, a teacher might bring in a magazine about horses to encourage horse-lovers to read or incorporate children's names into a mathematics problem. Teachers encourage children to assist classmates who are struggling to master new information or skills. For example, in the case of a child who is having trouble understanding when to use a period, the teacher might encourage a classmate to relate the analogy that a period is like a stop sign. Accomplished teachers monitor children's emerging or waning interests, and they alter plans to find new ways to engage children in the moment.

Accomplished early childhood teachers assess young children's progress and use immediate feedback to enhance ongoing learning. Teachers convey feedback through words, gestures, and facial expressions that children will readily understand. Accomplished teachers identify the specific ways in which children are succeeding and concrete ways in which they can improve. In addition to providing children with feedback on all areas of their development and learning, accomplished teachers ask children to evaluate learning activities, and they use children's responses to improve their teaching.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know how to make learning enjoyable for young children by using humor, showing affection, expressing wonder, and sharing their own learning experiences. For example, a teacher might explain to reluctant readers that the teacher did not enjoy reading as a child until encountering books about a favorite subject. Teachers know how to motivate children by appealing to their pride in meeting a challenge; they might explain empathetically that although some types of learning can be hard work, perseverance can lead to a sense of accomplishment and joy. Accomplished teachers understand the social and emotional aspects of learning, and they are adept at manipulating these aspects in productive ways. They do not merely interact with children cognitively, but rather create a caring community that makes children feel valued by teacher and peers. They show children that while learning is important, it does not always have to be serious, and when children share jokes, teachers laugh. Accomplished teachers do not always act like

experts; sometimes they act as if they do not understand something and let children explain. Accomplished teachers find enjoyable ways to give children choices; for example, they might let children decide how to greet the teacher in the morning, thus making the process of entering classroom fun, an especially useful strategy to use with young children who experience anxiety about coming to school.

Using Strategies to Foster Children’s Learning and Development

Accomplished early childhood teachers use a variety of strategies to foster young children’s learning and development. They understand that teaching must be intentional and multi-faceted. They are responsive to ongoing teaching interactions and take advantage of teachable moments that allow children to gain the most knowledge from their experiences. Accomplished teachers use an extensive repertoire of instructional strategies, including explicit and indirect, formal and informal, inductive and deductive, and teacher-directed and child-selected. Accomplished teachers differentiate instruction to meet individual needs while maintaining high expectations for all, and they encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning.

When implementing instruction, accomplished early childhood teachers know when it is appropriate to modify or change their plans in the moment. They closely monitor the learning environment in order to continuously re-evaluate each individual’s progress and the group’s dynamics, and they provide support as needed. Teachers know when a child simply needs more practice in order to master a skill and when the teacher needs to re-teach on another day or employ a different approach. Accomplished teachers are adept at listening to young children’s conversations and using the insights they gain to further everyone’s understanding.

Although accomplished early childhood teachers recognize that there are certain uniform standards that every young child must meet, they are also cognizant that children follow different paths to meet those standards. Teachers differentiate instruction to maximize each child’s learning. They modify their approaches to instruction in response to such features as children’s developmental levels, learning styles, skills, abilities, exceptionalities, culture, and English language levels, and they help each child move to the next level of proficiency.

Accomplished early childhood teachers implement instruction that is meaningful to the learner. Teachers draw on their past experiences, along with their knowledge of child development and core subject areas, to develop an ongoing mix of activities that allow children to begin creating their own understandings. Teachers model the kinds of creative-thinking and problem-solving skills that will enable children to become successful in their own endeavors. Teachers are skilled at observing, listening, facilitating discussion, orchestrating play, creating a positive learning environment, asking questions, adapting resources and routines to new uses, and helping children make connections with past ideas, experiences, and bodies of knowledge.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand the value of using a variety of student grouping patterns to facilitate young children’s development and learning,

and they perceive grouping patterns as flexible and fluid. Teachers evaluate grouping patterns according to various criteria, including their relevance to children's skills, abilities, knowledge, and interests, and they sometimes allow children to make choices and move freely among groups. Teachers monitor groups, and they deftly make modifications based on their insights. They sometimes change the configuration of a group in order to meet the needs of an individual child, and at other times they make adjustments to ensure the cohesiveness of the group.

Accomplished early childhood teachers help all children take responsibility for making appropriate choices about how they spend some of their time each day, how they respond to learning experiences, and how they evaluate their own work. They observe every child's interactions and discourse carefully, and they then find meaningful ways to encourage every child to elaborate on, reflect on, change, or refine his or her choices. Accomplished teachers also know when to hold back and let young children pursue their own interests, answer a question, resolve a difficulty, or pursue a discussion on their own.

Accomplished teachers recognize the many ways in which communication is central to learning in early childhood. They know that competence in receptive language precedes competence in expressive language, and they meet each child at her or his stage of language development. Teachers modify instruction in relation to children's differing degrees of English language competence while simultaneously encouraging children to enhance their communication skills. Teachers model the use of enriched vocabulary, and they encourage children to talk in order to improve their communication skills and to share their needs and wants, thoughts, and experiences. Teachers create an appropriate balance of interaction between their own talk and the children's talk. Accomplished teachers skillfully incorporate techniques such as wait time, active listening, turn and talk, sharing, and play in order to enhance communication.

Facilitating Play

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that play enhances all areas of young children's development and learning, and they provide ample opportunities for various kinds of play throughout the school day. Teachers help children use play as a vehicle for processing emotions and for developing social skills such as cooperation and communication. Accomplished teachers also use play to help children develop cognitive skills, such as perceiving connections among curricular areas, making their first attempts at symbolic representation, solving problems, and developing higher-order thinking skills.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are aware of the role of play in social development. They understand the ways in which play can help children begin to deal with issues of justice and fairness, and they know that play provides opportunities for children to practice generosity, fairness, tolerance, understanding, and other key social-development traits. Accomplished teachers help children manage frustration when they play. If a game does not work out the way a child wants it to, an

accomplished teacher can help the child distinguish between a disappointment that needs to be accepted and an injustice that should be remedied.

Accomplished early childhood teachers create an environment that stimulates discovery and imagination through different forms of play, including indoor and outdoor play, solitary and cooperative play, dramatic play, block play, and directed and free play. Building on children's interests and the curriculum, teachers create a variety of dramatic play settings, which they encourage children to personalize with objects from home or props they craft themselves at school. Early childhood teachers provide opportunities for children at all developmental levels—not just the youngest children—to make sense of their world and gain new knowledge through the manipulation of realia, dress-up clothes, and writing materials relevant to each dramatic play setting. For example, a teacher might create a veterinary hospital stocked with books about various pets, play medical instruments, and medical history forms for children to complete.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand the dynamics of play. They know that children need to warm up before they can settle into productive activity; therefore, teachers provide children with sufficient time for play. Teachers understand the ways in which children move in and out of various scenarios, for example, by leaving the group that is acting out a medical emergency when the restaurant group suddenly seems more appealing. Teachers also know that children come in and out of role playing, sometimes stopping in mid-sentence to make a pronouncement in their “real” persona.

When appropriate, accomplished teachers join children in their play, modeling the behaviors and language appropriate to the roles assumed. Teachers understand that some children have a hard time gaining access to play for reasons such as their gender, shyness, or limited prior play experience; teachers are constantly on the alert for evidence of such challenges and, when necessary, will help a child become involved. Teachers sometimes join children to enrich or elaborate an activity or modify a scenario to make it more accessible. They actively manage play so that it stays within the boundaries of safety and reasonableness. They attend to children who may reach levels of exuberance that are not appropriate to the space or that are potentially harmful to themselves or others, and they organize play so that it does not perpetuate or engender divisiveness. Accomplished teachers train paraprofessionals and volunteers who work directly with children about what to look for during play and when and how to intervene effectively.

As keen observers of children, accomplished early childhood teachers draw inferences from young children's behavior during play. Teachers understand that some play is purely for enjoyment, and they may subtly intervene to help certain children join in the spirit of fun. Teachers also know that children often use play metaphorically, to act out a range of emotions and ideas. Teachers interact strategically in more conceptual or emotionally significant play; for example, they might use a game to extend a concept taught in an earlier lesson. Even when accomplished teachers refrain from direct involvement in children's play, they are not disengaged or passive.

They use their observations to gather information about the children and to inform their design of future activities.

Accomplished early childhood teachers advocate for play. They have a clear rationale for the allocation of time for indoor and outdoor play, and they can articulate this rationale to families, colleagues, administrators, and other stakeholders. They can explain the educational value of play and the ways in which play can provide a valuable balance to the media and technology to which children are routinely exposed. Accomplished teachers can explain when it is appropriate for children to engage in competitive team sports and how children can gain access to safe and well-equipped play.

Using Resources to Support Learning

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that the importance of an instructional resource lies not in the tool itself but rather in the way it is used to support development and learning. Teachers guide young children to use resources in ways that promote positive outcomes. However, accomplished teachers also understand that children's creativity and curiosity may lead them to use materials in ways that are novel and unexpected but just as productive as more typical uses. In all cases, accomplished teachers carefully observe children as they interact with instructional resources, understand the educational implications of these interactions, and know when and how to adapt or supplement resources in order to meet children's diverse needs.

Accomplished early childhood teachers appreciate the ways in which their actions can enhance or diminish the effectiveness of particular instructional resources. They encourage young children to discover relationships among objects and resist showing those relationships when children do not initially perceive them. If a child needs prompting, the teacher provides just enough information to re-engage that child in independent exploration. When planning to use an especially novel or attractive new resource in a learning activity, teachers often allow young children to freely explore the resource first so they will not be distracted when asked to deploy the resource for a particular purpose. Accomplished teachers are adept at using materials, schedules, groups, tasks, roles, and time to increase children's learning.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use materials in flexible and innovative ways. They skillfully exploit readily available resources rather than depending solely on commercially packaged materials. If, as a project evolves, children need additional tools or materials, accomplished teachers expeditiously secure those resources. Accomplished teachers also find creative ways to draw on children's imaginations to create resources. For example, a teacher might provide scrap paper and scissors, giving children the opportunity to make their own books about a concept they have just learned.

Accomplished early childhood teachers establish and maintain constructive procedures for using instructional resources. They make certain that young children

know how to use materials safely, and they monitor the learning environment to ensure that children routinely employ the materials in appropriate fashion. When necessary, accomplished teachers restate the rules for using particular materials and revisit the reasons for such rules. They show approval when children use materials in ways that ensure those resources will last. Teachers kindle an ongoing sense of shared responsibility for organizing and sharing materials.

Integrating Technology into Instruction

Accomplished early childhood teachers use a variety of technological tools, such as video, audio, and digital materials, to enhance the curriculum. They help young children begin to use technological reference sources such as computer software, the Internet, and emerging technologies to gain information. Teachers use technology in all subject areas, not just academic subjects. For example, teachers might use programs to monitor children's heart rates or to help them count how many steps they take during the school day. Teachers incorporate various types of technology, including assistive technology, to differentiate instruction as it unfolds. For example, a teacher might use a toy phone with a prerecorded message to help a nonverbal child participate in circle time, a calculator to check a computation, or the corresponding audio book when a child selects a storybook to read.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use technology flexibly, adapting to situations as they arise, troubleshooting problems, and smoothly switching to backup plans if technology malfunctions or fails to support the desired outcome. They continually check to ensure that technology is functioning properly. For example, if a teacher uses a microphone and speaker to communicate with a child who is hard of hearing, the teacher periodically checks to confirm the device is meeting the child's needs. The teacher also makes sure that children operate technology tools correctly and safely, whether they are using computers, karaoke machines, or grow lights for plants. Teachers clearly explain and model each step of use, from set up to completion, and they are sensitive to young children's misunderstandings or anxieties about using unfamiliar technologies. Accomplished teachers explain to young children how to use the Internet safely and how to become critical consumers of information obtained through websites.

Accomplished early childhood teachers help families understand that young children can use technology for more than play. They hold parent-information nights to share how children use specific programs, for example to type journal entries or to illustrate their stories. Accomplished teachers encourage parents to explore technology so that they understand its significance to children. Teachers also share developmentally appropriate websites with parents so they can reinforce specific skill development at home.

Standard IX

Reflecting on Teaching Young Children

Accomplished early childhood teachers engage in systematic reflection on their teaching to enhance their professional knowledge and skill and to benefit young children’s development and learning.

Accomplished early childhood generalists routinely engage in the process of reflection to reconsider their prior knowledge in light of experience and to inform and improve their practice in the future. Reflection is a self-analysis and retrospective consideration of one’s practice, and teachers see reflection as a purposeful and necessary endeavor. Two foundational purposes that guide accomplished teachers’ reflective routines are to improve teaching and to steadily grow in professional knowledge and skill. With these purposes in mind, accomplished teachers focus on particular aspects of their teaching as well as on overarching elements of their professional work, such as the ways in which it advances equity, diversity, and fairness and the quality of partnerships with parents and the wider community. Accomplished teachers reflect in order to optimize the way in which their instruction supports children’s development and learning, to critique the assumptions underlying their teaching practices, and to make the rationale for their teaching explicit. They also understand that reflection is a way to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their knowledge and skill. They take action in light of their reflection to improve their knowledge as well as their teaching, by delving into professional literature, engaging with colleagues, and perhaps designing classroom-based action research projects to change their teaching for the better.

Engaging in Reflection

Accomplished early childhood teachers are intrigued by their teaching and learning. Their dispositions foster reflection that is robust and meaningful. Teachers are open-minded and take responsibility for their own professional growth. They understand that the professional knowledge base for teaching and learning is expanding constantly. Thus, they seek out new and relevant information from multiple sources including young children, families, colleagues and peers as well as published research, codes of ethics, theory, best professional practices, and standards. Accomplished teachers resist quick conclusions, choosing instead to carefully consider multiple possible interpretations. When new information comes to light, they are willing to rethink, reinvent, and reinvestigate. Accomplished teachers have a passion for learning and a dedication to better serving children, and they are disposed to engage wholeheartedly in reflection.

Accomplished early childhood teachers use reflection to think through the obligations and complexities of teaching in order to gain deeper perspectives on their instruction. They engage in a variety of reflective processes, individually and with colleagues, collecting information on teaching and young children's learning that provides a strong basis for analyzing practice and improving subsequent engagement. They also engage in reflection as teaching unfolds. Accomplished teachers masterfully connect their observations with particular routes of action that are likely to improve opportunities for children to develop and learn. In all reflection, accomplished teachers draw on substantial professional resources such as their knowledge about young children's development, pedagogical knowledge, and subject-matter knowledge.

Reflecting to Improve Teaching

Because of their strong professional obligation to use the best of their knowledge to serve the learning and developmental needs of each child, accomplished teachers reflect for the purpose of improving instruction. Teachers have a deep appreciation of the intricacies of practice. They know there is always more that they can learn and do to improve components of their teaching. Furthermore, they know that each group of children with whom they work presents unique challenges. Accomplished teachers deliberately analyze teaching events to guide their consideration of their future actions. When their teaching is successful, they reflect on why it succeeded, how it might be enhanced, and how they can apply the lessons learned to other situations. When their teaching is less successful, accomplished teachers reflect on ways to adjust instruction by abandoning less effective practices and seeking more promising approaches. Through repeated and systematic engagement in reflection, accomplished teachers hone their selection and implementation practices. At the same time, they become more skilled in the metacognitive process of reflecting.

Accomplished early childhood teachers often engage in self-reflection on teaching and learning, doing so in ways that are critical, open-minded, and productive. They are focused in their reflection, and their focus is often directed by instructional, ethical, or moral dilemmas that arise in daily practice. Teachers strategically attend to opportunities for children to develop in particular areas. They look at the ways in which they organize the learning environment, plan instruction, and assess learning in order to improve these routine elements of teaching. They are adept at using records generated during teaching, such as children's work samples, anecdotal notes, and audio recordings, to gain new insights and to confirm recollections of daily events. They know which records can be helpful when reflecting on different aspects of teaching and learning. For instance, they may use video instead of memory to analyze subtle aspects of the teaching process. Accomplished teachers develop habits, such as journaling, communication logs, or keeping systematic anecdotal records, that allow them to keep track of ideas and analyses over time. In some cases, they may conduct research in their classrooms. For example, they may conduct systematic classroom-based inquiry to solve problems or answer questions related to the reservoir of ideas they can draw upon as they analyze teaching and learning. Accomplished teachers engage in a systematic process that begins with identifying the question to be answered or the problem to be solved, proceeds to

gathering relevant documentation of teaching and learning plus information from the professional literature, and culminates with carefully analyzing this evidence to improve subsequent teaching and learning.

Reflecting to Promote Professional Growth

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that it is critical to reflect for the purpose of extending their knowledge and skills. Accomplished generalists appreciate the vast scope of knowledge that is necessary to support children's development and learning. Teachers use reflection to deepen their understanding of children's social, cognitive, linguistic, physical, emotional, and ethical development, as well as their subject matter knowledge. Such reflection is necessary not only because of the scale of what an early childhood generalist must know, but also because the professional knowledge base is constantly expanding what professionals need to know and do. Accomplished teachers use reflection to develop knowledge that is deep, multifaceted, situationally relevant, and connected to experience—exactly the kind of knowledge that is useful in teaching.

Accomplished early childhood teachers improve their professional knowledge by engaging with colleagues in reflection. They learn from one another by collectively considering experiences with particular children, sharing records of their practice, and sharing professional articles and books. They collaboratively reflect on areas of mutual concern. For example, they might participate in lesson study on topics that are challenging to teach or learn how to work constructively when instances of inequality affect children's progress. They consult their colleagues on the equity and fairness of particular teaching practices and school policies and also on developments in particular subject areas. They know that reflecting on teaching with colleagues provides opportunities to ponder the obligations of teaching and greater access to theories, emerging practices, and promising research findings that can help them develop their professional expertise. Accomplished teachers know that reflecting on teaching and learning with colleagues requires more than sharing interesting stories. It requires a readiness to express, listen to, and debate alternative viewpoints; a willingness to risk sharing information about aspects of one's own practice that may be in need of improvement; and a genuine interest in learning about colleagues' teaching and helping them improve experiences for children. Through interaction with colleagues, teachers gain access to resources and ideas that they employ in later reflection. Through interaction with colleagues, accomplished teachers also learn about new facets of familiar approaches and instructional strategies and also about approaches with which they may have limited expertise. As a result, accomplished teachers constantly gain new knowledge that can be brought to bear in reflection, or that can serve as the impetus for new work in teaching that will eventually be the subject of subsequent reflection. Accomplished teachers know that systematic reflection not only improves their own work, but also serves as an example that can improve the work of colleagues and thus strengthen practice in the early childhood profession.

Standard X

Exemplifying Professionalism and Contributing to the Profession

Accomplished early childhood teachers are leaders, collaborators, and advocates in improving early childhood programs, practices, and policies.

Accomplished early childhood generalists are experts in their field, and they are both leaders and collaborators in their professional community. They are aware of issues and best practices in programs for young children and their families, and they stay current in their field. Accomplished teachers know the importance of maintaining their own physical and mental well-being in order to establish a healthy and balanced professional and personal life. They manage their commitments in ways that enhance their primary commitment to children, and they inspire those around them by their commitment to early childhood education.

Demonstrating Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct

Accomplished early childhood teachers are proactive professionals who conduct themselves in responsible and ethical ways both inside and beyond the classroom. They perform their duties effectively and efficiently with honesty, integrity, and fairness. Through each step of planning, implementation, and assessment, teachers support appropriate educational policies while modeling best practices in early childhood education. When injustices, inequalities, or acts of marginalization occur in the early childhood program or elsewhere in the educational community, accomplished teachers promote new policies or social norms that minimize bias and harm to individuals or groups. Accomplished teachers make informed decisions when advocating for curricular, policy, and program change. They are committed to children, families, and colleagues and uphold professional early childhood codes of ethics in their school, community, and profession.

Collaborating with Other Professionals

Accomplished early childhood teachers know that effective service to young children depends on successful collaboration with colleagues and other professionals in the field of education. They work with colleagues, encouraging them to reflect on teaching in ways that ensure high-quality outcomes for children's learning. Teachers develop dispositions for collaboration, and they use effective communication and interpersonal skills. They articulate the rationale behind their practices to

administrators and other stakeholders, and when necessary, they challenge the status quo in constructive ways.

Accomplished early childhood teachers work with colleagues to construct curricula, plan and implement instruction, and design and evaluate assessments. They successfully coordinate the efforts of paraprofessionals and other adults who fall under their supervision, distributing tasks in ways that capitalize on the strengths of collaborators. They contribute to assessment teams and participate in other processes that involve multiple professionals. Accomplished teachers advocate for a seamless transition process as children move through various early childhood programs, from less formal to more formal school settings. They also empower colleagues for the betterment of early childhood programs, for example, by encouraging paraprofessionals or teachers without licensure to pursue credentials or degrees.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are skilled at celebrating successes as well as reconciling conflicts and addressing ethical dilemmas with colleagues and administrators. They initiate communication with colleagues in ways that are welcoming and empowering, and they know how to give and receive support, advice, and criticism. Teachers seek ways to resolve professional conflicts in such a way as to ensure that children, families, and colleagues are not adversely affected by them. Drawing on a professional knowledge base and ethical standards for practice, teachers are able to effectively challenge those whose behavior is detrimental to themselves, children, colleagues, or other adults. When faced with educationally inappropriate mandates or reforms, accomplished teachers use their professional knowledge and standards for ethical practice to articulate their concerns to administrators and school boards, and to devise creative responses and solutions that safeguard the interests of children, families, and communities.

Demonstrating Leadership

Accomplished early childhood teachers are visible and valued members of learning communities at the local, state, and national levels. They lead by example, take initiative, and inspire others through their words, efforts, and accomplishments. They use their knowledge of young children and the community and their understanding of early childhood education and research to advocate for the importance of early childhood education and their profession.

Accomplished early childhood teachers work collaboratively with peers to fashion creative approaches to education, sharing knowledge of how young children learn and develop, knowledge of specific children and the local community, and understanding of educational theories and research. Teachers have vision and lead both through ideas and actions to make schools places that are fair and equitable, serving the needs of diverse learners. Teachers shape the attitudes of colleagues by sharing ideas, approaches and strategies, readings, and websites. They work with policy makers and community leaders to craft common visions of ways in which the early childhood program, the school, and surrounding neighborhoods can be improved for the benefit

of young children. Accomplished teachers are informed by local, national, and global perspectives on educational trends and issues, and they are skilled at conveying their messages and priorities regarding teaching and education to diverse audiences.

Accomplished early childhood teachers are aware of the full range of educational policies and issues that impact children. They understand the policy structure in their state, which may include licensing standards for childcare centers, the Head Start performance standards and monitoring system, major federal education programs such as Title I, and legislation governing services to young children with exceptionalities. Furthermore, accomplished teachers are actively engaged in advocating for and helping to formulate new policies that reflect best practices.

Accomplished teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their local early childhood education systems and the degree of coordination among programs, schools, and districts. They know where additional work is needed in order to benefit young learners, and they are catalysts for setting high expectations for children, teachers, families, and staff. They advocate for and contribute to both formal and informal professional development for colleagues and support staff. They also contribute to the profession by mentoring novice teachers and by regularly participating in dialogue with colleagues. Accomplished teachers engage productively with administrators and policy makers in decision-making processes.

Contributing to the Field of Early Childhood Education

Accomplished early childhood teachers contribute to the educational community in multiple ways and at different levels. They take leadership roles in professional organizations, and they make presentations at local, state, and national conferences. They network with other teachers and university faculty through activities such as web-based discussions to foster collective thinking about children, curricula, and pedagogies, and they collaborate on projects with researchers. Teachers may write for professional journals on thoughtful but realistic responses to common early childhood dilemmas or submit articles to local newsletters describing ways to enhance children's opportunities to write on meaningful topics. They collaborate with higher education faculty in designing, evaluating, and implementing effective teacher education programs. Accomplished teachers also disseminate information based on their educational expertise to the general public and policy makers, and they advocate high-quality early childhood education for every child.

Accomplished early childhood teachers influence both the current and next generation of early childhood teachers. They help new teachers engage young children in subject matter areas in ways that uphold the integrity of what is being learned. Teachers model careful use of mathematical language, qualifying what they say about instances that arise, like subtracting 5 from 3, so that children do not over generalize and, later, experience difficulty thinking that it is not possible to subtract larger numbers from smaller numbers. Accomplished teachers also explain the complexities of practice that are difficult to perceive, such as the decisions that underlie strategies for supporting individual children while simultaneously

attending to the whole group. In a larger sense, they model the accomplishment, responsibility, integrity, and ethical conduct central to being a professional in this field. Accomplished early childhood teachers inspire colleagues to pursue teacher leadership opportunities and advanced degrees, thereby promoting transformation of this field in ways that enhance young children's development and learning.

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Acknowledgments

Early Childhood Generalist Standards, Fourth Edition, derives its power to describe accomplished teaching from an amazing degree of collaboration and consensus among educators from the field. Through the expertise and input of four standards committees; numerous reviews by the NBPTS Board of Directors; three periods of public comment and a stakeholder review by educators, policymakers, parents, and the like; as well as through the intense study of candidates for National Board Certification who have immersed themselves in the first, second, and third editions, these fourth-edition standards emerge as a living testament to what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. Early Childhood Generalist Standards, Fourth Edition, represents the best thinking by teachers and for teachers about advanced teaching practice in the field.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is deeply grateful to all those who contributed their time, wisdom, and professional vision to Early Childhood Generalist Standards, Fourth Edition. Any field grows, shifts, and evolves over time. Standards, too, must remain dynamic and therefore are subject to revision. In 2024, NBPTS convened the Contemporary Relevance Check Committee to address exactly this issue. The committee was charged with achieving both continuity and change by replacing language used to describe practices no longer in general professional use or no longer supported by pedagogical research since the creation of the third edition in 2012. The Contemporary Relevance Check Committee exemplified the collegiality, expertise, and dedication to the improvement of student learning that are hallmarks of accomplished teachers. Special thanks go to committee chair Leslee Milch, NBCT, for her invaluable leadership in making the fourth edition a reality.

A debt of gratitude is owed to the three original committees which debated, reflected, and articulated the multiple facets of accomplished teaching to advance the field and to provide a rigorous and sound basis for national certification of teachers. In particular, the National Board appreciates the leadership of the third edition chairs—Karen Crow Roark, NBCT, and John Johnston—and their committee, whose work remains the basis of the fourth edition. An enormous word of thanks also goes out to all previous committees and their chairs—Ilna Rivera Colemere; Marlene Henriques, NBCT; Baiba Woodall; and Mary Zapata Huerta, NBCT—who skillfully led the effort to weave the National Board’s Five Core Propositions into field-specific standards of teaching excellence.

The work of the Contemporary Relevance Check Committee was guided by the National Board Certification Council, which seated the committee, reviewed updated language constituting the fourth edition, and approved adoption of the standards on behalf of the Board of Directors. Stakeholders from disciplinary and policy organizations, teacher associations, and higher education provided insight into the current status of the field and recommended members for the committee. Writer Robyn Seglem, NBCT, and staff members Kristin Hamilton, NBCT; Susan Lopez Bailey; Dianna Minor, NBCT; Arlen Hancock; Evangeline Stewart; and Janet Haber supported the committee in their task.

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