**Section 26.125 Curriculum: English Language Arts Standards**

Each teacher holding an early childhood education endorsement shall possess the knowledge and skills articulated in this Section.

a) Foundational Knowledge

1) Language

The effective early childhood education teacher:

A) applies major theories, stages, and processes of first and second language acquisition, in particular understanding the importance of social interaction, culture, play, emergence of social discourse, and the relationship between first and second language development during the early years;

B) applies the nature, development, and communicative role of various features of language, including the four cuing systems of graphophonemic, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic, in the language experiences of children;

C) demonstrates the importance of play as the cognitive and social basis for the development of phonemic, semantic, and pragmatic knowledge across languages in young children;

D) supports the role of the home (the first) language in learning to read and write in a second language;

E) applies the theories, principles, and practices of emergent literacy, including the development of speaking and listening and their relationship to the developmental process of reading and writing acquisition;

F) recognizes the sequence of stages in language, reading, and writing development from birth through grade 2 using supporting evidence from theory and research, and acknowledges individual differences among children progressing through those stages. Applies understanding of the particularities of these processes for children whose first language is other than English;

G) utilizes social discourse in developing critical thinking, argumentation and analysis;

H) acknowledges the role of fine motor development in children's emergent literacy, specifically the ability to form letters and words through a variety of media;

I) provides experiences with content-specific vocabulary and decontextualized language that develop children's understanding of concepts, content, skills and processes;

J) applies understanding of the relationship between first and second language content-specific vocabulary for children whose first language is other than English;

K) provides experiences explicitly designed to facilitate the acquisition of academic decontextualized language and English vocabulary for children whose first language is not English;

L) models and supports children's use of conventions of grammar and language of wider communication; and

M) supports bilingual children's awareness of differences and commonalities between the conventions of grammar and language of English and that of the home language.

2) Alphabetic Code

The effective early childhood teacher:

A) models and supports the development of phonological awareness (recognition of phonemes and the sound structure of words, including rhyming words; initial, middle, and ending sounds; syllables; and onsets and rimes) and its relationship to reading and writing proficiency;

B) supports children's developing understanding of the orthographic-phonological system, including sound-letter relationships and common English spelling patterns and their relationship to pronunciation and developmental spelling;

C) supports bilingual children's awareness of the differences and commonalities between the orthographic-phonological systems of English and the home language; and

D) supports structural analysis (e.g., syllabication, affixes, root words) for decoding unknown words in language experiences for children.

3) Text

The effective early childhood teacher:

A) supports the development of narratives in young children's spoken language and understanding of narrative structure;

B) supports the development of text awareness and emergent reading behaviors in young children, including concepts of print, book knowledge, and narrative structure evidenced in picture reading, story-telling, and retelling of the story;

C) uses "read-alouds" and shared reading experiences to support emerging language and literacy, and ongoing literacy development;

D) acknowledges and uses the quantitative, qualitative, and individual factors that affect text complexity, including how to estimate developmentally appropriate levels of text;

E) uses texts that engage children with the organizational structures, literary devices, rhetorical features, text features, and graphics commonly used in literary and informational texts;

F) uses texts that engage children with the characteristics of various genre or forms of literary and informational text;

G) uses a variety of textual and authentic resources that promote differentiated instruction that meets the needs of all learners;

H) understands the role, perspective, and purpose of text in all content areas; and

I) supports the transference of text competencies from the home language to English for bilingual children.

b) The Language and Literacy Curriculum

The effective early childhood teacher:

1) understands and uses developmentally appropriate and evidence-based practices to plan, evaluate and modify instruction (e.g., use of appropriate research in identifying and implementing effective instructional practices);

2) knows the developmental sequence of language acquisition and emergent literacy strategies and skills, along with age-level or grade-level benchmarks of development, and utilizes them in classroom practice;

3) demonstrates the understanding that language is acquired through social interaction and that social discourse, in spoken and written formats, underlies all learning in literacy;

4) incorporates the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards – Children Age 3 to Kindergarten Enrollment Age set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 235.Appendix A, the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines – Children from Birth to Age 3 set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 235.Appendix C, and the Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.Appendix D, including their organization and progressions and the interconnections among the strategies and skills;

5) evaluates the components of a comprehensive curriculum that develops children's language and literacy skills and strategies, and ensures that instructional goals and objectives are met;

6) creates a developmentally appropriate language- and literacy-rich classroom environment that incorporates opportunities, experiences, routines, and activities that promote literacy;

7) intentionally engages children in experiences that will build foundational literacy skills;

8) understands and uses evidence-based instructional strategies that have been demonstrated to be particularly successful in differentiating instruction for all learners;

9) builds upon children's skills in their home language to develop language and literacy skills that are transferable to English;

10) understands and uses the relationship between first and second language and literacy development to support the transfer of language and literacy skills from the home language to English; and

11) utilizes a wide range of developmentally appropriate literacy assessments (e.g., informal, observational, performance-based, standardized, diagnostic measures, universal screening, curriculum-based, and progress monitoring), recognizing their purposes, strengths, and limitations.

c) Using Research-based Instructional Approaches

1) Current Research

The effective early childhood teacher:

A) critically reviews current research in English language arts; and

B) applies research to instructional practice as appropriate.

2) Decoding and Fluency

The effective early childhood teacher:

A) uses a developmentally appropriate, balanced literacy framework, such as "read-alouds", guided reading, centers, and independent reading and writing;

B) systematically and intentionally engages children with authentic functions of print to develop awareness and build understanding of concepts of print and text, including the use of illustrations and graphic representations; the use and understanding of graphemes and grapheme patterns; and understanding directionality of print in a wide variety of graphic and textual formats;

C) intentionally and systematically engages and supports children in developing the use of oral language, play, and experimentation with language;

D) utilizes phonologically significant text to build children's knowledge and understanding of the phonological aspects of language, including the patterns of sounds and segmentation in and blending of speech at the word, syllable, and phoneme levels;

E) engages children in textual experiences that provide opportunities for exploration of sound-symbol relationships at the word, syllable, and phoneme levels;

F) intentionally and systematically engages children in textual experiences that provide opportunities for exploration and for embedded implicit and explicit instruction of varied and appropriate word identification strategies, including sight word recognition, phonics, and context and morphemic cues;

G) models and supports fluent language use in dialogue and in numerous and varied print sources and encourages children's developing use of fluent oral language;

H) provides intentional instruction of strategies that support the development of fluency, such as recognition of word and letter patterns, use of high frequency words, and development of reading comprehension; and

I) intentionally supports the transfer of literacy competencies from the first to the second language for English learners, particularly in regards to functions of print (e.g., understanding the concepts of print and text, use of illustrations and graphic representations, use of oral language, play and experimentation with language, and sound-symbol relationships).

3) Reading Comprehension

The effective early childhood teacher:

A) selects a balance of developmentally appropriate, high-quality, complex information and narrative texts that match children's interests, cultural backgrounds, developmental levels, and reading purposes;

B) recognizes text features that may challenge readers' understanding (e.g., prior knowledge assumptions, unfamiliar vocabulary, sentence complexity, unclear cohesive links, subtlety of relationships among characters or ideas, sophistication of tone, complexity of text structure, literary devices, or data) and provides explicit modeling, instruction, and discussion of these features to support reading comprehension;

C) selects texts that support and build comprehension, vocabulary, understanding of text structure and literary devices and that provide clear and cohesive links between ideas and relationships. Illustrations, photographs, charts, and graphs should meet the same criteria;

D) models for and engages children in social discourse about texts as a means of scaffolding their understanding of more complex texts;

E) provides text-appropriate supports, such as background experiences, previewing text, pre-teaching vocabulary or key information, repeated reading, discussing illustrations or other graphic features, and other strategies to enable children to understand and learn from challenging text;

F) provides developmentally appropriate introductions to text, including materials, experiences, discussion, and background connections that support children's motivation, purpose, and understanding;

G) provides developmentally appropriate modeling of and instruction on close reading of text, including identification of key ideas and details; analysis of craft, structure and illustrations; critical text evaluation; and numerous opportunities for guided and independent practice;

H) models and engages children in the interpretation of graphic text features (e.g., tables, charts, illustrations, tables of contents, captions, headings, indexes) and includes numerous opportunities for guided and independent practice;

I) models for and engages children in developmentally appropriate guided and independent discussions of high-level, text-dependent topics and ideas requiring complex thinking, understanding, inference, application, evaluation, analysis, synthesis, persuasion, and evidentiary argument;

J) models for and engages children in developmentally appropriate independent practice of comparing multiple texts and evaluating and synthesizing information between and across texts to support coherent understanding of a topic;

K) models for and engages children in the use of developmentally appropriate reading comprehension strategies (e.g., predicting, sequencing, connecting, visualizing, monitoring, questioning, summarizing, synthesizing, making inferences, evaluating), and includes numerous opportunities for guided and independent practice of these strategies' use in understanding text;

L) models, discusses, and supports children's developmentally appropriate use of literary elements and text features across multiple genres and disciplines in age-appropriate text;

M) shares varied print sources, discussing, as appropriate, alternate views and perspectives of topics presented in texts;

N) models, discusses, and supports children's use of critical reading strategies, including the evaluation of text claims through identification of supporting evidence, such as evidentiary argument and persuasion;

O) shares varied print sources, discussing, as appropriate, text structures that support children's understanding of the text;

P) provides intentional modeling of and instruction on the use of the organizational structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole, and offers numerous opportunities for guided and independent practice; and

Q) intentionally plans experiences for English learners that facilitate the transfer of effective reading comprehension strategies and competencies from the home language to English.

4) Writing

The effective early childhood teacher:

A) introduces children to the organization and basic features of print;

B) provides opportunities for children to write, including pictures and dictation, for authentic purposes in multiple forms and genres to demonstrate how ideas, thoughts, and language can be represented by pictures or texts;

C) engages children in using drawing and writing to develop an understanding of content-area concepts and skills;

D) encourages and guides children in all stages of writing development from the earliest scribbles through conventional writing;

E) models and provides instruction in producing coherent and clear writing with organization, development, substance, and style appropriate to the task, purpose and audience;

F) confers with children to motivate and scaffold children's development throughout the writing process;

G) models and provides instruction in creating a text (oral or written) that represents information learned through a hands-on experience;

H) introduces and provides instruction in creating an informative and explanatory text that introduces a topic supported by logically ordered facts, definitions, details, examples, quotations, and other types of information; uses precise language, academic vocabulary, and appropriate transitional devices; and concludes with a statement related to the topic;

I) models and provides instruction in creating a text (oral or written) with a beginning, middle, and end, based on real or imagined experiences or events;

J) introduces and provides instruction in creating a narrative text based on real or imagined experiences or events that introduces a narrator or characters; uses dialogue, description, and pacing to develop and organize a sequence of events; uses concrete words, phrases, sensory details, and transitional devices; and uses a conclusion that follows from the experiences or events;

K) models and provides instruction in creating a text (oral or written) that shares an opinion about a hands-on experience;

L) provides instruction in creating a text that introduces an opinion on a topic, supports the opinion with information and reasons based on facts and details, uses appropriate transitional devices, and concludes with a statement supporting the opinion;

M) models and provides instruction in developing written and oral arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence;

N) teaches children to conduct research projects, as developmentally appropriate, using evidence drawn from multiple sources, including how to select and develop topics; gather information from a variety of sources, including the Internet; synthesize information; and paraphrase, summarize, and quote and cite sources;

O) models and provides instruction in the conventions of standard English grammar and usage (e.g., irregular verbs, plural nouns, past tense of irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, conjunctions, prepositions, interjections, perfect verb tenses) in children's oral and written work;

P) models, encourages, and guides the use of widely accepted English conventions of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling as children use these conventions in creating written work;

Q) models and provides instruction in using technology to produce and publish oral and written texts and to interact and collaborate with others;

R) provides feedback to written work to guide the process of children's revising and editing their work; and

S) intentionally plans experiences for English learners that facilitate the transfer of effective writing strategies and competencies from the home language to English.

5) Speaking and Listening

The effective early childhood teacher:

A) provides opportunities for social discourse between individual children and in whole and small group collaborative discussions and assists them in following appropriate social conventions, such as eye contact, body language, and taking turns;

B) engages children in a variety of developmentally appropriate oral language and listening activities, including following directions, asking and responding to questions, conveying information and ideas, describing feelings, and arguing and persuading;

C) engages children in a variety of listening activities, including identifying rhymes and sounds in the environment, discriminating phonemes and conducting other phonemic awareness activities;

D) models and supports children in listening actively and critically in order to understand, evaluate, and respond to a speaker's message;

E) models, guides, and instructs children in presenting ideas, opinions, and information using facts and relevant details to support main ideas;

F) accepts children's home language and developing English language skills while modeling the widely accepted conventions of English grammar and usage; and

G) intentionally plans experiences for English learners that facilitate the transfer of speaking and listening strategies and competencies from the home language to English.

6) Vocabulary

The effective early childhood teacher:

A) supports vocabulary development daily by intentionally selecting literacy materials that expand children's knowledge and language development;

B) guides and supports children's explorations of word relationships and nuances in word meanings;

C) understands the socio-cultural context for language use and social discourse;

D) uses information about children's individual experiences, families, cultures, and communities to create meaningful vocabulary learning opportunities and enrich instruction for all children;

E) for the instructional focus, selects appropriate words central to the meaning of the text and likely to be unknown, academic vocabulary and word relationships;

F) introduces children to word play and forms of language that enhance vocabulary and understanding of language (e.g., poetic devices, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms);

G) introduces strategies for clarifying the meaning of unknown words, including contextual analysis, structural analysis, and the use of reference materials;

H) plans experiences that promote oral and written language development and the use of newly acquired vocabulary across disciplines;

I) understands and implements the forms and functions of academic language to help children develop and express content understandings;

J) utilizes authentic text (e.g., informational text, fiction, newspapers, recipes, charts) to help children develop word consciousness;

K) actively engages children in using a wide variety of strategies and authentic materials for developing and expanding vocabularies; and

L) uses home language vocabulary to develop and expand English vocabulary for English learners.

d) Authentic Materials

The effective early childhood teacher:

1) selects and uses a wide range of high-quality, diverse literature and informational, narrative, and other texts that address the interests and social and cultural backgrounds of children at levels that are appropriate to their development and build background knowledge and understanding;

2) uses evidence-based and developmentally based criteria for evaluating and selecting texts and instructional materials;

3) estimates the accessibility of texts using qualitative and quantitative factors, as well as children's background knowledge;

4) uses culturally responsive texts to promote children's understanding of their lives, society, and other cultures and societies;

5) uses a variety of technology and technologically based texts and online resources to support literacy instruction; and

6) makes available to English learners a wide range of high-quality, diverse literature and informational, narrative, and other texts that address the interests and social, cultural, and language backgrounds of these children at levels that are appropriate to their development and build background knowledge and understanding.

e) Constructing a Supportive Language and Literacy Environment

The effective early childhood teacher:

1) understands the foundational role that literacy and language play across the classroom environment and in content areas;

2) sets up an environment that is safe and low risk that encourages children and allows them to be comfortable taking risks;

3) designs a literacy-rich environment incorporating authentic, diverse, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate materials and experiences;

4) understands motivation and engagement and the use of the "gradual-release-of-responsibility" approach to design learning experiences that build children's self-direction and ownership of literacy learning;

5) establishes classroom routines that promote independence, self-direction, collaboration, and responsibility for literacy learning;

6) uses a strategic combination of flexible groupings (individual, group, and whole class) to meet the learning needs of each child efficiently and effectively;

7) incorporates children's choices in choosing literacy materials and activities; and

8) builds collaborative classroom communities that support and engage all children in reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing in their home language and English.

(Source: Amended at 45 Ill. Reg. 14807, effective November 10, 2021)