

DEFINITION OF TERMS



FLORIDA EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS BIRTH THROUGH FIVE

- The Florida Standards provide information on age-appropriate expectations for children from birth to five across a wide range of developmental areas, or domains, including physical skills, approaches to learning, language, social and emotional development, the arts, and academic readiness. The Standards identify specific developmental goals and skills for children and also give suggestions on activities and materials to support the skills that are identified.

CURRICULUM

- A curriculum may include information that is in the Standards, but is more comprehensive. A curriculum provides the framework for designing a developmentally appropriate early learning program that supports children in mastering the expected skills identified in the Standards across all the domains and content areas.

A curriculum guides teachers on how to set up the environment, select materials and equipment, structure the day, create lesson plans, individualize instruction for children at different levels and abilities, support social and emotional growth, develop activities that are fun and promote learning, and communicate and engage families in the program.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- A character development program is a set of both planned and informal activities and approaches designed to support and strengthen children's social and emotional skills. The social and emotional component of a provider's chosen curriculum may be used as a guide to implementing a character development program, or other programs specifically designed to focus on social and emotional skill development may be chosen, such as the Kindness Curriculum, DECA, or I Love You Rituals.

There are many ways to infuse character development within an overall program. When teachers help children understand and manage their feelings, teach friendship skills, promote cooperation, and strive to create a caring classroom community that values and supports every child, they are implementing a character development program.

CHILD SCREENING

- Child screenings, such as the ASQ (Ages & Stages Questionnaire), are designed to give a quick picture of a child's development and identify any concerns or delays at an early stage. All children should be screened at least once a year and anytime a provider has concerns. It is a requirement for providers to screen all school readiness scholarship children using the age appropriate ASQ and submit it to the Florida Center to be scored. Screenings rely on information collected as children perform a specific set of tasks.

CHILD ASSESSMENT

- Child assessments, such as the Creative Curriculum Individual Child Profile, document a child's growth over time based on teacher observation, anecdotal records and samples of children's work. Unlike child screenings, assessments are not designed to screen children for problems and delays.

Assessments identify a child's strengths and areas that need improvement. Assessments track knowledge and skills across a broad range of developmental and content areas and identify the next level of skills that a child should be acquiring. For that reason, children should be assessed several times during the year to track growth and progress. Information from child assessments should be used to plan activities and individualize instruction based on needs identified in the assessment.

Best practice is for all children to be assessed at least twice a year. As required by the state, a random sample of school readiness children is assessed twice each year (a pre and post assessment) using the Creative Curriculum Individual Child Profile. The assessments for this group of children are returned to the Early Learning Coalition so that progress can be tracked over the course of a year for this sample group.