

Ohio’s Early Learning and Development Standards (Birth to Age 5): Implementation Guide
Domain: Approaches toward Learning

Introduction

The standards for approaches toward learning center on the foundational behaviors, dispositions and attitudes that children bring to social interactions and learning experiences. The standards include children’s demonstration of initiative and curiosity and their motivation to participate in new and varied experiences and challenges. These behaviors are fundamental to children’s abilities to take advantage of learning opportunities and to set, plan and achieve goals for themselves. This domain also includes children’s level of attention, engagement and persistence as they do a variety of tasks. These factors are consistent predictors of academic success (Duncan et al., 2007). Finally, children’s creativity, innovative thinking and flexibility of thought allow them to think about or use materials in unconventional ways and to express thoughts, ideas and feelings in a variety of media.

The strategies in this guidance document are not designed to be specific activities or “lesson plans.” Rather, they represent broad approaches to implementation in each strand that may help teachers create meaningful learning activities and experiences to support development and learning.

| Standard Statements | Implementation Strategies |
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| The child will: | The teacher may: |
| Initiative <i>Initiative and Curiosity</i> | |
| <u>Infants</u> Show interest in people and objects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make eye contact with infant during care routines (e.g., feeding, diapering, etc.). • Encourage children using positive expressions, smiles and language. • Place infants next to one another to foster and support interest. • Expose infant to pictures of multicultural/multiracial people and objects reflecting the cultures represented in the room. • Offer outdoor sensory experiences. • Use mirrors in places where infants can see themselves. • Play peek-a-boo for self-awareness and object permanence. |
| <u>Young Toddlers</u> Explore the environment through a variety of sensory-motor activity. Practice new skills with enthusiasm. Demonstrate a willingness to try new activities and experiences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for children to explore different sounds. • Provide music reflective of children’s cultures and opportunities for movement and dance. • Provide an environment for children to explore and experience by engaging all their senses. • Offer toys with differing textures. • Provide materials and opportunities for open-ended play (loose parts play). • Allow space and time to enhance mobility and exploration. • Reinforce new experiences through teacher enthusiasm and smiles. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help mobile children learn how to be careful around non-mobile children when they show interest in one another. |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Experiment in the environment with purpose.</p> <p>Ask questions to gain information</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide nonfiction books, real pictures and environmental print. • Intentionally set-up the environment to allow children to choose and explore materials independently. • Provide opportunities for messy play in the sensory table (sand and water). • Ask open-ended questions and model language throughout the day. • Encourage English language learners with limited English to use non-verbal responses, pointing, gesturing, as well as words and/or simple phrases – use child’s response to model English without embarrassing “corrections.” • Encourage children using positive expressions, smiles and language. • Provide new experiences by visiting places such as the park, public library or pumpkin patch. |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Seek new and varied experiences and challenges (take risks).</p> <p>Demonstrate self-direction while participating in a range of activities and routines.</p> <p>Ask questions to seek explanations about phenomena or interest.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include large blocks of time for play and exploration in the daily schedule (e.g., a minimum of one hour). • Empower children to “call a meeting” to discuss problems affecting the classroom community (e.g., a concerned child asks to call a meeting because the block builders don’t have enough room, so they build into the book nook so he can’t get in to look at books. What can we do?). • Respond to children’s interests by adding props, books and other materials to extend investigation and play. • Provide interest centers and allow children to make choices as to where to play. • Provide open-ended learning conversations with children based on daily classroom experiences. Encourage English language learners with limited English to use non-verbal responses such as pointing and gesturing, as well as words and/or simple phrases – use child’s response to model English without embarrassing “corrections.” • Provide outside play on equipment where safe risks are possible. Ensure that English language learners understand safety rules; use pictures and real-life modeling outside to explain playground safety. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a variety of opportunities for individual activities, small and large group activities and peer interactions. |
| <i>Planning, Action and Reflection</i> | |
| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Act on the environment to meet needs or interests.</p> <p>Respond to people and objects in the immediate environment based on past experiences.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage infants in verbal and non-verbal conversations that use facial expressions, body language and changes in the tone of the voice. • Use daily routines to have positive interactions and conversations about what is happening or going to happen. • Offer tummy time with colorful toys and textures to explore. • Provide safe mobiles to reach and grab (e.g., floor “gym,” mobiles over changing tables, etc.). • Provide favorite or familiar toys or objects for continued exploration. • Describe actions during routine tasks. |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Use a variety of ways to meet simple goals.</p> <p>Approach tasks with repeated trial and error.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model different ways to use simple tools to complete tasks (e.g., “Maybe we can use this long block to get the car from under the block shelf.”). • Observe to understand children’s cues and responses to the environment. • Provide simple toys that offer cause and effect opportunities. (NOTE: Toys should NOT BE BATTERY OPERATED to encourage exploration beyond pushing a button.) • Encourage children to try new strategies. • Be available to help children complete tasks beyond their levels of mastery. • Support children when they are frustrated and encourage them to try again. |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Make choices to achieve a desired goal.</p> <p>Use previous learning to inform new experiences with people and objects in the environment.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark shelves and containers using pictures and words so the children can independently make choices and cleanup. • Remind children of choices they have made in the past (e.g., “Yesterday you chose to paint, and seemed to have a good time. Would you like to paint again today, or choose another place to play?”). • Allow children to tell where they are going to play and what they plan to do there. |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Develop, initiate and carry out simple plans to obtain a goal.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for children to plan their play—what play area, what they plan to do, and with whom they’d like to play. |

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| <p>Use prior knowledge and information to assess, inform and plan for future actions and learning.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to create “written” work plans to revisit during class meeting and share the outcome of the plan. Have conversation about how they might extend the play the next day. • Encourage children to work in small groups on self-selected projects. • Engage children in making classroom rules and procedures for making the classroom community run smoothly. • Show interest in what children are doing and ask provoking/extending questions. • Use webbing with the children to find out what they know and to determine what they still want to find out. Create a plan with them as to how they will find the desired information. Modify appropriately for language level of English language learners. |
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| Engagement and Persistence <i>Attention</i> | |
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| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Demonstrate awareness of happenings in surroundings.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move babies to different locations in the room, talking to them about what is happening in the room. • Place infants on mats where they can see each other. • Offer different textures and colors in the environment for infants to explore. • Frequently change pictures, books, music and toys reflective of infants’ culture in different settings, noticing and maintaining favorites in order for infants to remain secure. |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Focus on an activity but is easily distracted.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize outside distractions while engaging children in activities. • Limit the number of choices being offered at one time. • Offer simple games that are engaging (e.g., peek-a-boo, where’s the baby). • Use simple songs and finger plays with simple motions children can imitate. |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Focus on an activity for short periods of time despite distractions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be flexible within each activity following the children’s leads regardless of the original plans. • Provide ample time and space for extended concentrated play. • Make materials accessible to allow for independence. • Set up the environment to eliminate distractions by placing similarly-related activities in the same parts of the room. |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an atmosphere where the children’s interests have priority over planned activities. |

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| <p>Focus on an activity with deliberate concentration despite distractions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in play with children in order to learn their interests. • Eliminate possible distractions and then reintroduce low levels of distractions increasing to higher levels, as tolerated. • Provide high interest materials and activities. • Minimize visual clutter. • Play background music softly—if at all—to avoid it being a distraction. |
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| <i>Persistence</i> | |
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| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Attempt to reproduce interesting and pleasurable effects and events.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use repetition of songs/nursery rhymes. • Play back and forth with infants using eye contact, smiles and sounds infants can imitate. • Read simple books to infants, using higher pitched tone of voice. • Model the use of simple toys. |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Repeat actions intentionally to achieve goal.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently respond to children’s cues. • Offer cause and effect toys and simple games such as peek-a-boo. • Observe to know children’s interest and favorite toys. • Use familiar songs and finger plays consistently and introduce new ones as appropriate. • Read and re-read favorite books, including multicultural/multiracial/bi-lingual books reflective of community. |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Engage in self-initiated activities for sustained periods of time.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce distractions and interruptions and support children’s repetitious activities. • Mark shelves and containers with pictures and words so children can make independent choices and participate in cleanup activities. • Provide additional materials to sustain play when appropriate. |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Carry out tasks, activities, projects or experiences from beginning to end.</p> <p>Focus on the task at hand even when frustrated or challenged.</p> <p>Use different strategies when trying to solve a problem.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ample time for children to engage in complex play or projects until they are satisfied. (NOTE: Requiring children to <i>clean up</i> after every activity or at the end of every day does not allow for satisfying, long-term, extended play experiences.) • Encourage completion of tasks through the use of positive feedback. • Assist the children in recognizing the source of any obstacle, suggest some problem-solving strategies and ask if the children can think of any others. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document children’s work so they can revisit experiences through conversations with adults or peers. • Encourage children—and provide space and opportunity—for projects or activities to be extended over periods of time (e.g., children make a sign asking others “Please do not touch” the city they are working on in the block area). • When trying to solve a problem, ask “What have you tried?” and “What else can you try?” allowing children to understand that trying many solutions is part of the problem-solving process. • Provide encouragement. |
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| <i>Creativity</i> | |
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| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Make discoveries about self, others and the environment.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide interesting rattles, mobiles, toys and materials in a variety of colors and textures. • Provide sensory experiences outdoors. • Place infants in front of appropriate mirrors where they can see themselves and others. • Use music for specific purposes during daily routines and one-on-one activities. |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Use objects in new ways.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of open-ended materials and opportunities for children to engage with them in many ways. • Encourage children to explore the environment. • Offer positive verbal and non-verbal feedback when children use items in new ways (be aware of culturally acceptable and non-acceptable non-verbal body language/gestures in English language learners’ culture — some U.S. customs are not considered polite to others). • Introduce and model possible uses of new toys and materials as they are added to the environment. |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Use materials in new and unconventional ways.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate open-ended materials and activities. • Add natural materials to the environment. • Give positive feedback and encourage solutions and ideas the children have. • Allow children to move materials from one area to another in play (e.g., moves a block to dramatic play to use as a telephone). |

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| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Use imagination and creativity to interact with objects and materials.</p> <p>Use creative and flexible thinking to solve problems.</p> <p>Engage in inventive social play.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer open-ended materials and experiences that promote discovery through interactions. • Have individual, small and large group discussions to find solutions to classroom problems. Encourage English language learners to point and use non-verbal means to contribute to discussions. • Provide dress-up materials and props that encourage different types of dramatic play. • Take field trips that add to the children's experiences so they can imitate them in creative play. |
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| <p><i>Expression of Ideas and Feelings through the Arts</i></p> | |
| <p><u>Infants</u></p> <p>Demonstrate preferences, pleasure or displeasure when interacting with various media.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide music that is soothing and/or stimulating; photos of family members, animals, etc., at eye level or near the floor; materials in a variety of textures. • Gain understanding of the different cries and sounds of the infants in order to recognize signs of displeasure and discomfort. • Show pleasure for the experiences through verbal and non-verbal strategies. |
| <p><u>Young Toddlers</u></p> <p>Seek out experiences with a variety of materials and art materials based on preferences and past experiences.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer documentation of past experiences that is appropriate for the children to revisit. • Observe children to know what preferences they have. • Provide different types of art materials that are non-toxic and age/developmentally appropriate. • Model the use of materials through play with them. |
| <p><u>Older Toddlers</u></p> <p>Use self-selected materials and media to express ideas and feelings.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of different materials and media for child-created projects that stress the process rather than the product. • Use music reflective of multiple cultures with words and actions that describe feelings and routines. • Allow children to decide which of their projects to display in the classroom or to place in a portfolio. • Provide pictures of each child for use throughout the classroom. • Record or videotape children as they are expressing their ideas. Play these back for the children |
| <p><u>Pre-Kindergarten</u></p> <p>Express individuality, life experiences, and what they know and are</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for the children to explore areas such as visual arts, music, dance, creative movement and drama. |

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| <p>able to do through a variety of media.</p> <p>Express interest in and show appreciation for the creative work of others.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display children’s work in the classroom and revisit it. • Place dictated stories on artwork when desired by the children. • Offer photos of art from successful artists for the children to study, describe and emulate. • Make class books of the experiences and work of the children. |
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Support for Differentiation

1. Accept children’s approximations and attempts and elaborate/expand on these as appropriate.
2. Scaffold each learner in his zone of proximal development.
3. Use assistive technology when appropriate. Assistive technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. For more information on specific strategies visit: <http://www.newton.k12.ks.us/at/examples.htm>.
4. Resources based on the *Universal Design for Learning* principles are available at www.cast.org.

Support for English Language Learners

- Use multimedia such as videos, pictures and concrete objects to create connections with vocabulary words.
 - Use gestures and body language.
 - Speak slowly and enunciate clearly. Do not raise your voice.
 - Repeat information and review. If a child does not understand, try rephrasing in short sentences and simpler syntax.
 - Try to avoid idioms and slang words.
 - Try to anticipate words that might be unfamiliar and give explicit meaning to them.
 - Make use of the excellent language learning that occurs among children by supporting play and small-group activities.
 - Show children how much you enjoy them and appreciate their efforts to learn a new language.
- Adapted from Cecil, N.L. (1999) *Striking a balance: Positive practices for early literacy*. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway.

Resources:

Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy and Learning. California Department of Education. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/psenglearnersed2.pdf>.

Guidelines for Addressing the Needs of Preschool English Language Learners. Ohio Department of Education, Lau Resource Center.

[http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Special-Education/Limited-English-Proficiency-\(1\)/About-the-Lau-Resource-Center/Guidelines-for-Addressing-the-Needs-of-Preschool-English-Language-Learners-\(1\).pdf.aspx](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Special-Education/Limited-English-Proficiency-(1)/About-the-Lau-Resource-Center/Guidelines-for-Addressing-the-Needs-of-Preschool-English-Language-Learners-(1).pdf.aspx).

Principles of Second Language Development. Ohio Department of Education, Lau Resource Center. <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Limited-English-Proficiency/Research/Principles-of-Second-Language-Development-in-Teach#.Ukm8lvkzFC8.gmail>.

McGlothlin, Barry (1995). *Fostering second language development in young children: Principles and practices*. <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/23s607sr#page-1>.

Espinosa, L. (2008). Challenging common myths about young English language learners. The Foundation for Child Development. <http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/MythsOfTeachingELLsEspinosa.pdf>.

Additional Resources and Glossary

Strand: Initiative

Topic: Initiative and Curiosity

Print Resources

Hyson, M. (2008). Enthusiastic and engaged learners: Approaches to learning in the early childhood classroom. New York, Teachers College Press and Washington, DC: NAEYC

Petersen, S. (2012). Approaches to learning: Supporting brain development for school success. *Zero to Three*, 33(1), 24-27.

Websites

[Zero to Three](#)

ZERO TO THREE: "School Readiness: Birth to 3"

developingchild.harvard.edu

Center on the Developing Child: This site includes publications and videos describing how children learn.

[Curiosity and Young Children](#)

Curiosity: The Fuel of Development, Bruce Duncan Perry, MD, PhD

Strand: Initiative

Topic: Planning, Action and Reflection

Print Resources

Fantuzzo, J., Perry, M. A., & McDermott, P. (2004). Preschool approaches to learning and their relationship to other relevant classroom competencies for low-income children. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 19(3), 212.

Websites

[Play and Approaches to Learning](#)

The Role of Play in Promoting Children's Positive Approaches to Learning, Marilou Hyson, PhD

[Planning](#)

Plan, Do, Review Ideas, High Scope

[Planning Time](#)

Teaching Planning to Young Children, Center on Brain Injury Research and Training (CBIRT), University of Oregon

[Planning and Reflection](#)

How Planning and Reflection Develop Young Children's Thinking Skills, Ann Esptein, NAEYC.

Strand: Engagement and Persistence

Topic: Attention

Print Resources

Vaughan Van Hecke, A., Mundy, P., Block, J. J., Delgado, C. E., Parlade, M. V., Pomares, Y. B., & Hobson, J. A. (2012). Infant responding to joint attention, executive processes, and self-regulation in preschool children. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 35(2), 303-311.

Danis, A., Pecheux, M. G., Lefevre, C., Bourdais, C., & Serres-Ruel, J. (2008). A continuous performance task in preschool children: Relations between attention and performance. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 5(4), 401-418.

Duncan, G. J., Dowsett, C. J., Claessens, A., Magnuson, K., Huston, A. C., Klebanov, P., ... & Japel, C. (2007). School readiness and later achievement. *Developmental psychology*, 43(6), 1428.

Strand: Engagement and Persistence

Topic: Persistence

Print Resources

Rothbart, M. K., Sheese, B. E., Rueda, M. R., & Posner, M. I. (2011). Developing mechanisms of self-regulation in early life. *Emotion review*, 3(2), 207-213.

Websites

[Overview Approaches To Learning](#)

Domain 7: Approaches to Learning, Head Start

[Persistence and Young Children](#)

Persistence birth to three, Zero to Three

[Engagement and Persistence](#)

Observing Young Children's Creative Thinking: Engagement, Involvement and Persistence, Robson, Sue; Rowe, Victoria

Strand: Creativity

Topic: Innovation and Invention

Print Resources

Galinsky, E. (2010). Mind in the making: The seven essential life skills every child needs. New York: Harper Collins.

Websites

[Supporting Children in Approaches to Learning](#)

How to Support Children's Approaches to Learning? Play with Them! Gaye Gronlund (NAEYC)

[Down Syndrome and Approaches to Learning](#)

Motivation and learning styles in young children with Down syndrome, Jennifer Wishart

Strand: Creativity

Topic: Expression of Ideas and Feelings through the Arts

Print Resources

Brown, E. D., Benedett, B., & Armistead, M. E. (2010). Arts enrichment and school readiness for children at risk. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25(1), 112-124.

Griebling, S. (2011). Discoveries from a Reggio-Inspired Classroom: Meeting Developmental Needs through the Visual Arts. *Art Education*, 64(2), 6-11.

Websites

[Young Children and the Arts](#)

This is a link to a report from the Task Force on Children's Learning and the Arts: Birth to age Eight
Isbell, R. T., & Raines, S. C. (2012). *Creativity and the arts with young children*. CengageBrain. com.

[Art and Young Children](#)

Art in Early Childhood: Curriculum Connections, Jill Englebright Fox, Ph.D., and Stacey Berry, M.Ed.

Glossary*

Approaches toward Learning: Refers to aspects of children's learning that provide for their engagement and inspiration in garnering participation in activities and tasks at hand (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber 1993; Thompson & Goodman, 2009). Recent studies have proposed that a child's approach toward learning is one of the strongest predictors of achievement.

Attention: Attention refers to the ability to focus (Colker, 2013). The largest shift in attention takes place during the preschool years when children grow from having little ability to focus to learning to maintain their attention enough to accomplish a goal (Danis, Pecheux, Lefevre, Bourdais, & Serres-Ruel, 2008).

Curiosity: A strong desire to know or learn something.

Dance: To move one's feet or body, or both, rhythmically in a pattern of steps, especially to the accompaniment of music.

Drama: A prose or verse composition, especially one telling a story, that is intended for representation by actors impersonating the characters and performing the dialogue and action.

Expression: The act of expressing, conveying, or representing in words, art, music, or movement; a manifestation.

Initiative: The ability to assess and initiate things independently.

Innovation: The act of introducing something new. Innovation and invention begin with flexibility and adaptability. According to research, without flexibility and adaptability, students cannot succeed (Moran, 1988).

Invention: A product of one's own ingenuity, experimentation, or contrivance. Innovation and invention begin with flexibility and adaptability. According to research, without flexibility and adaptability, students cannot succeed (Moran, 1988).

Music: Vocal or instrumental sounds possessing a degree of melody, harmony, or rhythm.

Movement: Move freely and creatively to a variety of music.

Persistence: The act of persisting; continued effort or existence. According to recent research, both attention span and persistence are the foremost predictors of the completion of a higher education.

Planning: Epstein (2003) defines planning as choice with intention and reflection as remembering with analysis. Planning allows children to prepare for the day, think ahead and intentionally make decisions about their actions.

Reflection: Careful or long consideration or thought. Reflection provides children with the opportunity to make generalizations or conclusions about what they have observed, determine how they could have acted differently, and make decisions about the future.

**This glossary was developed by the Center for Family Studies, West Ed. for Early Childhood Ohio Professional Development Related to Approaches toward Learning.*

References

Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., & Dauber, S. L. (1993). First-grade classroom behavior: Its short-and long-term consequences for school performance. *Child development, 64*(3), 801-814.

Colker, L. J. (2013). Pay attention: Behavior skills children learn in preschool will help them complete college. *Teaching Young Children* (6)3, 13-15.

Danis, A., Pecheux, M. G., Lefevre, C., Bourdais, C., & Serres-Ruel, J. (2008). A continuous performance task in preschool children: Relations between attention and performance. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 5*(4), 401-418.

Epstein, A. S. (2003). How Planning and Reflection Develop Young Children's Thinking Skills. *Young Children, 58*(5), 28-36.

Moran, J. D. (1988). *Creativity in young children*. ERIC Clearinghouse.

Thompson, R. A., & Happold, C. A. (2002). The roots of school readiness in social and emotional development. *SET FOR SUCCESS: BUILDING A Strong Foundation FOR School Readiness BASED, 7*.