

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

High quality early childhood programs offer learning opportunities that have a significant impact on the success of all children. A warm, responsive relationship with a highly trained teaching staff is foundational. It is expected that teachers will intentionally integrate developmental knowledge with the attitudes, skills, and concepts children need to make progress socially and academically. High quality early childhood programs maintain high developmentally achievable expectations for all children using clear performance standards with a continuous cycle of assessment understood and used by staff, children, and parents.



High quality early childhood education and care programs have a significant impact on children's future successes.



All children can learn and deserve high expectations that are age, individually, and culturally appropriate.**



Young children learn best when they are able to construct knowledge through meaningful play, active exploration of the environment and thoughtfully planned activities.



The learning environment for young children should stimulate and engage their curiosity of the world around them, and meet their physical needs and emotional needs so that children feel safe and secure.



Language and early literacy development must be supported and integrated throughout all aspects of early childhood care and education programs.



Children's learning, development and opportunities are supported when their teachers are trained in early childhood development and education, including professional training and ongoing professional development, and are intentional in their relationships and work with children and families.



Early childhood care and education programs must address the individual needs of a diverse population of children, e.g., children with special needs, children from diverse cultural backgrounds, children from all social-economic groups.



Early childhood care and education programs are defined by a set of comprehensive standards that maximize a child's growth and development across domains.



There must be a system of assessment that documents children's growth and development in relationship to a defined set of standards, and is used to inform instruction.



Children's learning is enhanced when families, schools, and communities work together.



**Footnote: Young children with disabilities will meet standards consistent with their individualized education programs (IEPs) goals developed by IEP teams in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and Pennsylvania's Early Intervention Services System Act (Act 212 of 1990).