

March 2021

Scholastic Prekindergarten Program Summary

Section 1. Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines Alignment

- [Proclamation 2021 List of Materials Adopted by the State Board of Education](#)

Domain	Student	Teacher
Social & Emotional	100.00%	100.00%
Language & Development	100.00%	100.00%
Emergent Literacy Reading	100.00%	100.00%
Emergent Literacy Writing	100.00%	100.00%
Math	100.00%	100.00%
Science	100.00%	100.00%
Social Studies	100.00%	100.00%
Fine Arts	100.00%	100.00%
Physical Development	100.00%	100.00%
Tech Apps	100.00%	100.00%

Section 2. Integration of Content and Skills

- Materials include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections integrated in an authentic way to support students' unified experience throughout the day.
- Materials utilize high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration and support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains.
- Materials provide support regarding fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure and include guidance to support the teacher's delivery of instruction.
- Materials are supported by child development research on children's development within and across all domains.

Section 3. Health and Wellness Associated Domains

- Materials include direct social skill instruction and explicit teaching of skills; students repeatedly practice social skills throughout the day.
- Materials include guidance for teachers on classroom arrangements that promote positive social interactions.
- Materials include some activities to develop physical skills, fine motor skills, and safe and healthy habits.

Section 4. Language and Communication Domain

- Materials provide some guidance on developing students' listening and guidance on speaking skills as well as expanding student vocabulary.
- Materials include strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their development of English language skills and developmentally appropriate content knowledge.

Section 5. Emergent Literacy: Reading Domain

- Materials provide opportunities for students to develop oral language skills, including through authentic text conversations.
- Materials provide some explicit instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills and print knowledge and concepts and explicit instruction and opportunities for student practice in alphabetic knowledge skills.
- Materials include some text types and genres across contents that are high quality and at an appropriate level of complexity and use a variety of approaches to develop student comprehension of texts.
- Materials include strategies to support ELs with their reading skills and give guidance to teachers to use the child's primary language as a means to support learning English.

Section 6. Emergent Literacy: Writing Domain

- Materials include a variety of experiences through which students can engage with writing and somewhat instruct students along the developmental stages of writing.
- Materials provide some support for fine motor development alongside and through writing.

Section 7. Mathematics Domain

- Materials include a variety of concrete and pictorial manipulatives and representations.
- Materials promote instruction that builds on students' informal knowledge about mathematics.
- Materials develop young children's ability to problem-solve, use number sense, and build academic math vocabulary.

Section 8. Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, and Technology Domains

- Materials build science knowledge through inquiry-based instruction and exploration of the natural world.
- Materials build social studies knowledge through the study of culture and community.
- Materials expose children to fine arts through exploration.
- Materials provide opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience or to explore and use various digital tools.

Section 9. Progress Monitoring

- Materials include some developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools with guidance on use for teachers and students; they do not include tools for students to track their own progress and growth.
- Materials include some guidance for teachers to analyze and respond to data from diagnostic tools but no guidance for administrators.
- Materials include some integrated progress monitoring opportunities.

Section 10. Supports for All Learners

- Materials include guidance, scaffolds, supports, and extensions intended to maximize student learning potential.
- Materials provide instructional methods that appeal to different student learning interests and needs.
- Materials include some accommodations for linguistics commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency.

Section 11. Implementation

- Materials include a year-long plan with practice and some review opportunities that support instruction.
- Materials include some implementation support for teachers but not for administrators. Implementation guidance also meets variability in programmatic design and scheduling considerations. The materials contain a Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines-aligned scope and sequence.
- Materials provide guidance on fostering connections between home and school.
- The visual design of student and teacher materials is neither distracting nor chaotic.

Section 12. Additional Information: Technology, Cost, Professional Learning, and Additional Language Supports

- The publisher submitted the technology, cost, and professional learning support worksheets.

2.1 Materials are cross-curricular and integrated in an authentic way to support students' unified experience throughout the day.

- Materials include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections to create a unified experience for students.
- Materials name which domains are purposefully developed or reinforced in each learning activity.

Meets 4/4

The materials include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections to create a unified experience for students. Materials provide connections to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Teachers can view these connections summarized daily, or they have the ability to search using the product's online platform.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

During a whole group read-aloud of *Before We Eat: From Farm to Table* in Theme 2, the teacher facilitates a group discussion about eating habits and rituals. The words *before*, *when*, and *after* are purposefully targeted as students describe personal experiences with eating. This concept is later reinforced when the teacher models writing short sentences about food experiences and preferences. Students are invited to expand upon these sentences using vocabulary words introduced in the text. In each "Teaching Guide," there is a section at the bottom of each day that explains the "Skills Focus." This section lists the Texas Prekindergarten Guideline (TPG) for that day broken into domains in each Language, Literacy, and Math block. For example, a Theme 2 focus on vehicles includes the following references to guidelines: "Conversation: Investigate and demonstrate growing understanding of the sounds and intonation of language. (II.C.3)"; "Use a large speaking vocabulary, adding several new words daily. (II.D.4)"; "Match language to social contexts. (II.B.6)"; "Vocabulary: Use a large speaking vocabulary. (II.D.4)"; "Demonstrate understanding in a variety of ways. (II.D.3)"; "Sentence Structure: Use regular and irregular plurals and personal and possessive pronouns. (II.E.2)"

This information assists in understanding how the materials integrate cross-curricularly, but materials do not match each component with correlated TPGs. At point of use, activity guidance sometimes lacks how teachers can reinforce cross-curricular concepts. That being said, teachers do have access to this information for each activity through the "Skills" section of the "Teacher

Hub.” This resource allows teachers to see which lessons and which small groups address each learning domain, including cross-curricular connections.

An exploration of weather in Theme 3 is reinforced across several domains following a whole group read-aloud of *Cloudette*. The teacher says, “We will talk about the kind of weather we see and use our bodies to show how we’d act in each kind of weather.” (Physical Development and Health) “We’ll look outside and draw a picture of the weather in our ‘Daily Weather’ books.” (Emergent Literacy Writing) “Have children observe and record the weather. Work together to create symbols. After making the symbols, have children take turns being the ‘daily weather person,’ placing the correct symbol(s) on the calendar.” (Science and Mathematics). A Theme 3 read-aloud of *Cold, Crunchy, Colorful: Using Our Senses* is followed by an extended group discussion. Guiding questions include “What senses do we use when we’re on a street with a lot of cars?” and “Have you ever smelled something stinky? Let’s pretend we just smelled a stinky skunk. Why do people hold their noses when they smell something stinky?” This discussion creates a unified experience by engaging students in higher-order thinking in connection with shared reading.

In Theme 6, rhyming and patterning are conjoined to reinforce each concept. Prior to a whole group read-aloud of *Every Little Thing*, the teacher reviews ABAB and AABB patterns by leading a sing-along of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” During the read-aloud, students are asked, “Do you hear any rhyming words?” and “The birds are humming soft rhymes. Are there any rhymes in the words?” A Theme 7 small group activity combines concepts in science and math following a whole group read-aloud of *Lola Plants a Garden*. Students receive connecting cubes; they imagine the cubes are seeds that need planting and count them in varying order. As in Theme 3, each Teaching Guide in Theme 7 includes an overarching list of related Prekindergarten Guidelines. For example, Week 3 specifies Math guidelines: “Child counts up to 10 items and demonstrates that the last count indicates how many items were counted. (V.A.5)”; “Child recognizes and compares heights or lengths of people or objects. (V.D.1)”; “Child recognizes and creates patterns. (V.E.3)”

2.2 Materials utilize high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration.

- Texts are strategically chosen to support content and skill development in multiple domains.

Meets 4/4

Texts are strategically chosen to support content and skill development in multiple domains.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include a list of over 300 texts, including fiction and nonfiction titles, poems, songs, and nursery rhymes. Titles include but are not limited to *Rainy, Sunny, Blowy, Windy; Cloulette*; “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes”; *A Fire Truck Named Red; Lola Gets A Cat; Happy Birthday, Moon; Penguin Day; On A Bridge*; and *What Is a Friend?* Additional texts are available in the form of e-readers.

Prior to a Theme 2 whole group read-aloud of *Biblioburro*, students are prompted to look for picture clues regarding Columbian landforms, plants, and animals. During the read-aloud, students consider what animals live in the rainforest as the teacher calls attention to details such as hot weather and the topography of the jungle. This text connects several content areas and serves as a foundation for small group learning and independent center exploration.

Fictional titles in Theme 4, including *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, are used to connect the domains of Writing and Reading Comprehension. For example, the materials instruct: “Transcribe children’s speech as they talk about taking care of dogs.” Also: “Talk with children about a time they needed to listen and remember.” Nonfiction titles in this theme reinforce science concepts. For example, during a whole group read-aloud of *Penguin Day: A Family Story*, teachers ask children what they know about penguins. The materials state: “Use the book’s photos to show that penguins are birds that have adapted to their environment.” A small group activity following a read-aloud of *Baby Animals with Their Families* suggests: “Share a pen with children as you draw and write together about how animals keep their babies safe.” Children with special needs are underrepresented in the materials. In Theme 4, *Hello Goodbye Dog* features a character in a wheelchair using a ramp to enter and exit a van. This book is about a girl in a wheelchair and Moose, her emotional support dog. Page 33 of the book provides background information on therapy dogs like Moose. In Theme 5, a whole group read-aloud of *My Body* mentions blindness but does not suggest guiding questions to facilitate discussion: “People who

cannot see read by touching raised dots called 'braille.'" Another book read-aloud, from Theme 3, *Close Your Eyes*, is about a sighted brother relating to how his blind brother perceives the world around him. A lesson in large group addresses the brother's blindness during story time, and the small group activity connects to the read-aloud as children consider each of their own senses.

Several nonfiction titles are used in Theme 7 to support exploration in the Science domain. For example, teacher guidance accompanying *Rainy, Sunny, Blowy, Snowy: What Are Seasons?* states: "Talk with children about what they know about seasons. Discuss what season it is now, and what season is coming next." Following a read-aloud of *The Things That I Love About Trees*, materials instruct: "Ask children to talk about what they learned about the seasons. What did they already know about how trees change in the different seasons?" The materials provide an opportunity for student collaboration after a read-aloud of *Seed to Plant*: "Give children an opportunity to talk and share by playing 'Interview with Plant.' Pair up children to play the roles of 'Interviewer' and 'Plant.'" Fictional texts such as *Happy Birthday, Moon* and *Rabbit Moon* further support science concepts: "Discuss with children all they have learned about Earth this week. What have they learned about daytime and nighttime? What is their favorite time of day?" "Ensure children understand that the moon isn't changing. Instead, the sun's light makes it look smaller or bigger." During a whole group read-aloud of *Kindergarten Countdown!* in Theme 8, students are encouraged to think about things they have learned during the school year and act out various parts of the story. Topics include greeting a new friend in a different language, identifying numbers on a number chart, and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.3 Materials support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains.

- Materials include a variety of opportunities for purposeful play that promotes student choice.
- Materials provide guidance to teachers on how to connect all domains to play.
- Materials provide guidance to teachers on setting up and facilitating activities to meet, reinforce, or practice learning objectives.
- Materials have an intentional balance of direct (explicit) instruction and student choice, including purposefully planned learning centers, as appropriate for the content and skill development.

Meets 4/4

The materials include a variety of opportunities for purposeful play that promotes student choice. Materials have an intentional balance of direct (explicit) instruction and student choice, including purposefully planned learning centers, and mostly connect all domains to play. Teacher guidance adequately describes how to set up and facilitate activities to meet, reinforce, and practice learning objectives.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Large and small group activities throughout all themes include a hands-on approach to learning, often through music, movement, and student actions. A materials list included in each theme provides center material suggestions. The materials include three instructional lesson sets each day in each subject (literacy, math, and language), providing a full instructional day with a balance of direct and indirect instruction. Large group activities provide lively pacing and encourage student participation to help sustain attention. Seven centers are indicated in the materials: “Library and Listening” center, “Pretend and Learn” center, “Math and Science” center, “Writer’s Corner,” “Creativity Station,” “ABC” center, and “Construction” center. While these centers provide students purposeful play, there are only minor changes to the daily structure as the year progresses. Each center rotation is 15 minutes long, providing students with choice.

During a large group activity in Theme 3, students are encouraged to think about how photos in a book connect to the story. Throughout the reading, the teacher asks questions about *taste* and what students like or do not like. At the end of the activity, students “Turn and Talk” with a peer about various description words related to taste. During a small group activity, students

view photos from *Cold, Crunchy, Colorful* and connect the photos to their lives. Teacher guidance suggests facilitation through questions such as “Does your neighborhood look like this? What does it look like?” and “Do you eat eggs for breakfast? Do they taste sweet?” Lessons clearly define a developmentally appropriate setting for instruction. For example, before a Theme 3 whole group read-aloud, the teacher shares a guiding question and reminds students they will answer at the end of the story. The teacher uses “Equity Sticks” to determine who will answer questions during the read-aloud, and students Turn and Talk with a peer to address the previously indicated guiding question at the conclusion of the activity. After a whole group read-aloud of *Thank You, Omu!* students have opportunities to practice skills based on the story. For example, students draw their favorite food in the Creativity Station and pretend to cook in the Pretend and Learn center. In Theme 3, students use their senses to identify items from a “mystery box.” Teacher guidance includes recommended materials such as empty cube-shaped tissue boxes, bells, cotton balls, cinnamon sticks, and pictures of clouds. Movement is included as a learning approach in a Theme 3 large group activity. Following a whole group read-aloud of *Penguin Day: A Family Story*, students pretend they are “mama penguins,” waddling in place. Teacher guidance states: “Ask children to pretend to dive into the water and then have them make swimming motions as they search for food for baby penguins.”

Theme 4 provides students the opportunity to broaden and deepen knowledge through play. Following a whole group read-aloud of *Baby On Board: How Animals Carry Their Young*, independent center prompts include “Pretend you are a mother hen. How would you show your chicks how to eat corn?” (Pretend and Learn center) “Can you draw a family of animals? How many babies are in this family?” (Math center) “Can you make a finger puppet of a chick?” (Creativity center) “Can you use blocks to build an animal family? How many family members will you make?” (Construction center). A Theme 4 small group activity builds upon this focus on animals by inviting students to identify “real” and “not real” animals and create a pet out of clay. Suggested center materials include but are not limited to pretend pet care items; photos of dogs, hamsters, and other pets; and animal figures. During centers, the teacher scaffolds with guiding questions about proper care and pet houses; students can also create a bowl or other object for a pet.

In a Theme 7 small group activity, students make connections to the letters *H*, *O*, and *B* through exploration of corresponding alphabet books. Students identify the letters in the text by pointing, naming the letter, and producing the sound. Additional support for following a consistent research-based routine for alphabet lessons is included in the “Implementation Guide.” This includes both the research-based recommendation and a teacher example of best practices. Each student is invited to select and illustrate a sentence from the text, and the class combines their work to create a class book. This book is then placed in the Library for students to revisit during independent center time. In the “Resources” area of the “Teacher Hub,” there are additional suggestions for center set up. There are printable center signs and lists of center materials for each week. For example, one list includes leaves, twigs, sticks, clothing for varying weather, and books about seasons. Teacher guidance includes guiding questions for center time, including “Can you write about what happens to trees in the summer?” “What materials can you use to show a flower growing?” and “Use blocks to build an igloo for winter! How could

you build a bigger one?” The independent center questions are meant to serve as “Prompts for Purposeful Play,” but they are not always written as open-ended questions. These questions increase in complexity across the week as children explore that week’s concept question; some of the prompts are more suited for a comprehension check or a skills evaluation. The question focus was adapted from Bloom’s Taxonomy to be developmentally appropriate for prekindergarten: Day 1: Identify (e.g., what, how); Day 2: Apply (e.g., show, act, make, change, build); Day 3: Investigate (e.g., how, why); Day 4: Evaluate (e.g., think, compare, order); Day 5: Extend (e.g., write, pretend, imagine, create).

2.4 Materials fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure.

- Materials specify whether they are for three or four-year-old children.
- If intended for use for both three and four-year-old children, materials include a variety of options that clearly differentiate instruction for level of development.
- Materials provide differentiated use recommendations for half-day and full-day prekindergarten programs.

Meets 4/4

The materials state that they are for three-, four-, and five-year-old children and provide options that differentiate instruction for level of development. Materials also provide differentiated use recommendations for half-day and full-day prekindergarten programs.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

A “Program Guide” accompanying the materials indicates they can be used for three-, four-, and five-year-old children and references a color-coded teacher support system on large and small group cards (yellow: three-year-olds, green: four-year-olds, blue: five-year-olds). This guide includes general guidance, such as: “Scaffold by adjusting the activity downward for three-year-olds or developmentally delayed children. Scaffold by adjusting the activity upward for five-year-olds or developmentally advanced children.” A specific daily schedule is included in the “Implementation Guide” within the materials, and there is guidance on how to differentiate and utilize pacing to schedule the components of the day within a half-day and full-day schedule. Teacher guidance does include a general suggestion to include three 20-minute large group activities, each followed by a small group activity and independent centers. The materials address additional opportunities for implementing daily routines such as meals, rest time, gross motor, and arrival/dismissal within the Implementation Guide.

An independent reading guide suggests teachers explore students’ prior knowledge when introducing new texts: “Invite children to share background knowledge about the book topic and ask questions about the content based on the cover.” Teacher guidance outlines whole group engagement strategies: “Encourage children to name familiar objects in the pictures.” “Have children join in on rhyming or repetitive text.” Following read-alouds and group discussions, the reading guide suggests students “begin to retell parts of the story with partners.” It instructs teachers: “Ask children to share new things they learned from

informational text.” Differentiation guidance for four-year-olds includes: “Read the title and the names of the author and illustrator. Point out sounds and letters in the title that children might recognize. Guide children to compare and contrast, categorize, and make other connections when appropriate. Encourage children to look for details and new information in the pictures and discuss how the pictures help to tell the story. Have children use writing, painting, modeling, and acting to respond to the read-aloud. Invite children to retell the story using the words first, next, and last.” Differentiation guidance for five-year-olds includes: “Preview the book cover, the title, and the author and illustrator names. Invite children to find, name, and sound out familiar letters. Encourage children to identify what is real and what is ‘make-believe’. Have children compare the book to others they have read. How are the characters, setting, or ending the same or different? Begin to use fun graphic organizers to help children organize information in their reading.” While this guidance is provided in the independent reading guide, it is not integrated into the instructional materials themselves.

During a whole group read-aloud of *Preschool Time* in Theme 3, the teacher asks guiding questions regarding the characters’ emotions. Suggested questions following the read-aloud adhere to a color-coded system; they include simplification of the question (three-year-olds) and an extension question, “What do the animals do when they get to school?” (five-year-olds). This system is described in the Program Guide. Additionally, this includes the “strive for five” questions during the interactive read-aloud as well as the “Guiding Question” and “Support/Challenge” scaffolding on Days 1, 3, and 5. A whole group read-aloud of *Hey Wall* in this theme includes guiding questions: “How do you think the boy is going to change the wall?” “What do we learn about where the boy lives?” Teacher guidance offers differentiated versions of the guiding questions, such as “Does the boy live in a city or on a farm?” “The boy lives in a c...” (three-year-olds) “Describe the boy’s neighborhood” (five-year-olds). Similarly, in this theme, students engage in group discussion after a whole group read-aloud of *Oscar and the Cricket*. The guiding question “What does Oscar make the ball do?” is differentiated: “Does Oscar make the ball roll?” “Oscar makes the ball r...” (three-year-olds) “What can make a ball change direction?” (five-year-olds). The materials provide some suggestions for further variation or individualized support strategies in the Implementation Guide, but these are not specific to individual lessons.

During a small group activity in Theme 6, students use two-color counters and a five-frame to count various objects observed in photographs. After the activity, the teacher reinforces the role of five-frames when determining set size. For example, when supporting three-year-olds, materials instruct teachers: “Show a full five-frame and ask, ‘How many?’ Count each box and count one counter in each box to show that a full five-frame always represents a quantity of five.” Differentiation for five-year-olds suggests: “Use a ten-frame, as they may be able to work with larger numbers.” The teacher uses the “Small Group Teacher Activity Card” to conduct this activity. This differentiation strategy appears on the back of that card. All Small Group Teacher Activity Cards have “Before/During/After” instructions for typically developing four-year-olds on the front of the card and “Support/Challenge” differentiation and “Modifications” on the back of the card. So, the differentiation options are presented to the teacher at point of use.

2.5 Materials include detailed guidance that supports teacher’s delivery of instruction

- Guidance for teachers is evident and provides explicit instructional strategies for teaching prekindergarten skills.
- Materials include detailed and explicit guidance for teacher and student actions that support student development and proficiency of content and skills.
- Materials provide detailed guidance for connecting students’ prior content knowledge and experiences to new learning.

Meets 4/4

Teacher guidance provides instructional teaching strategies for prekindergarten skills; this includes guidance for teacher and student actions that support student development and proficiency of content and skills. The materials also provide guidance for connecting students’ prior content knowledge and experiences to new learning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Implementation Guide” includes information on the “Developing Talkers” program for vocabulary development. This program supports the instructional strategies used to support vocabulary development. Some of these include vocabulary teaching and reteaching (found on the back of the vocabulary cards), read-aloud routines with guiding questions, specific activity models for Language small group activities, and hand-signal comprehension strategy cards. The Implementation Guide is one of three documents supporting implementation of the curriculum; the other two are a “Program Guide” and “Program Walkthrough.” Additionally, teachers have access to printed “Theme Overviews” for each of the eight themes within the program. These resources included detailed and explicit guidance for materials, skills, vocabulary instruction, lesson direction, questioning strategies, and family engagement.

In Theme 2, teacher guidance suggests questioning strategies to extend student conversation and activate higher-order thinking: “Ask children questions to help them go further in their learning. By carefully challenging children to go little by little, they will feel a sense of growth and accomplishment without being overwhelmed. Differentiate your questions as needed to help all children continue to grow and learn.” Questions include “What are you working on?” “How do you think that happened?” “What do you think will happen next?” and “How did you do that?” During a small group activity in this theme, students are encouraged to recognize and identify repeated, intentional teacher “mistakes.” Guidance for this activity includes examples of

possible student responses. While there are no direct teacher responses at the point of instruction, teachers can search suggested lessons and activities in the “Teacher Hub” to respond to student work. Later in the theme, a whole group read-aloud of *Preschool Time* connects students’ prior knowledge to new concepts about school. The teacher facilitates a group discussion about various school activities before reading the text, highlighting connections.

Before a whole group read-aloud of *Cloudette* in Theme 3, the teacher engages and assesses students’ prior knowledge: “What are clouds?” “What do clouds do?” and “What happens if clouds are dark?” Prior knowledge is then connected to the text through teacher questioning: “How was Cloudette different from the other clouds?” and “As soon as Cloudette made it rain, what happened?” The teacher revisits the text throughout the week, posing additional questions, such as “What would happen if lots of rain fell?” and “How would someone know if there was a storm?” This activity includes a reference to child development theory: “One of the milestones in children’s social and emotional development at this age is their increasing awareness of self as distinct from others. Cloudette’s concerns about her size and her coming to terms with what she is capable of compared to the other clouds will engage children in interesting discussions about differences.” Child development theory is again referenced in a Theme 3 math activity: “Provide plenty of opportunity for physical involvement, such as pointing to ears to explain the sense of sound and pointing to eyes to indicate the sense of sight. This reinforces vocabulary without the added complexity of needing to understand definitions as well.”

Before a whole group read-aloud of *Rainy, Sunny, Blowy, Snowy* in Theme 7, the teacher facilitates a group discussion about seasons: “What season is it now?” and “What season is coming next?” Teacher guidance suggests reinforcement of prior knowledge through song, using “What are the seasons of the year?” to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” Music is suggested as an instructional strategy to introduce a focus on caring for the Earth in this theme. Students participate in a large group song and dance experience “to build excitement for learning about caring for plant life.” The words *tiny* and *bud* are introduced using “Vocabulary” photo cards, following the Children’s Learning Institute model during “Circle Time,” so children are familiar with the words by the time they participate in this related modeled writing. Teachers then reinforce the vocabulary words *tiny* and *bud* through modeled writing: “Write and read aloud short sentences about how the parts of a plant grow.” Teacher guidance suggests connecting this whole group experience to a small group lesson: “Today we talked about the life cycle. Then we read the book *Seed to Plant*. We’ve learned that all living things have a life cycle. Now let’s make sure we know how to tell the difference between living things and things that are not living. Remember, living things change as they grow—that’s the life cycle. I’ll show you a picture card, and you tell me whether it shows something that is living or not living. We’ll put the living things in one column, and the nonliving things in another. We can tell if something is living or nonliving by asking whether it grows and changes. As we talk and share, we’ll come up with other ways to tell if something is living or not living.” The scripting in the program supports children’s skill development, following the Children’s Learning

Institute model. This scaffolding and instructional strategies are described for teachers in the Implementation Guide.

2.6 Materials are supported by child development research on children’s development within and across all domains.

- Materials include a clear description of how the curriculum is supported by child development research.
- Materials provide research-based guidance for instruction that enriches educator understanding of early childhood development and the validity of the recommended approach.
- Cited research is current, academic, relevant to early childhood development, and applicable to Texas-specific context and demographics.
- A bibliography is present.

Meets 4/4

The materials include research-based guidance for instruction that enriches educator understanding of early childhood development and the validity of the recommended approach. Materials describe how the curriculum is supported by child development research. Cited child development research is current, relevant, and applicable to Texas-specific context and demographics. A bibliography is present.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

A “Program Guide” accompanying the materials references the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI) and Yale Child Study Center: “[The instructional materials] build on the model known as ‘Developing Talkers,’ which research has shown to build students’ receptive and expressive language skills.” (CLI) “With a focus on the intersection of literacy and health across a range of education imperatives—including early childhood development, social and emotional development, equity, social justice, and family and community engagement—our ultimate goal is to improve academic and mental health outcomes for children and their families.” (Yale Child Study Center) The guide references three “advisors” and five “consultants” in regard to the development of the curriculum, including one “bilingual specialist.” The “Implementation Guide” includes descriptions of each of the program’s contributors and outlines the research base supporting different aspects of the program: “Mind Builders,” “Language: Developing Talkers,” “Literacy: Discover Together,” and “Math: Mathematical Thinking.” For example, the Mind Builders section lists characteristics about four main skills: Emotional Development, Social Development, Motivation and Creativity, and Executive Function. While found in the “Research Foundation” section of the Instructional Guide, the only reference to research in this section

states that the Mind Builders were “developed in close collaboration with the Yale Child Study Center.” This section does go on to define each skill in more depth, along with language, literacy, and math connections for three-, four-, and five-year-olds. A bibliography is included at the end of the Implementation Guide and for each “Teaching Guide.” Combined with the bibliography, these sections adequately enrich educators’ understanding of early childhood development and the validity of the recommended approach.

Teacher guidance includes connections to Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (“Skills Focus”) and references to child development research (“Mind Builder,” “Scaffolding,” “Multilingual Learner”): “Children of this age need to develop persistence rather than give up on a challenging task. Teachers of children in this age group have an important role in developing this skill, which is helpful both now and later in all areas of life. Praising effort, providing challenges, and offering guidance all help children master this ability.” (Young and Reed, 2017). For example, teacher guidance states: “There are many opportunities for preschool children to take care of shared objects and complete jobs for the benefit of the community. Children do this daily when they participate in clean-up, volunteer for classroom jobs, and handle communal materials with care. Point out examples of children helping the community during the day to explain this ‘Mind Builder.’” This guidance suggests an activity exploring community roles, and the Mind Builder focuses on the concept of empathy: “Not everyone feels the same way—you might be having a great day but your friend might be frustrated or sad.” This guidance enriches educator understanding of early childhood development.

The Program Guide references “Teacher Tips” throughout all themes. For example: “Children this age typically use all of their senses to explore materials, positions, and motion. Teachers are encouraged to have children use more scientific language.” “Some children may be sensitive about making mistakes and possible repercussions. Reinforce that mistakes can happen and that you are there to help. Guide children to notice that when the boy in the book makes a mistake, the adults do not scold him. We can all learn and grow from our mistakes.” The Program Guide and Implementation Guide state these Teacher Tips are supported by the research found in each bibliography; however, the connection between which citation relates to which Teacher Tip at point of use is not made clear. Still, these Teacher Tips are research-based, and they productively guide instruction.

As another example, a Theme 5 math lesson on “counting forward” and adding “one more” using connecting cubes is accompanied by the following Teacher Tip: “Understanding that large words can be broken down into small parts, or syllables, can make it easier for children to learn how to read and write. One way to find syllables in words is by clapping. Say ‘mar-ket’ with the children, and clap on each syllable. Challenge students to count the syllables in ‘ba-nan-a.’” While this teacher tip is not directly related to the associated activity, it does support instruction. Later teacher guidance for a whole group lesson on categorizing states: “Young children naturally begin to notice what is the same and what is different in their world. Encouraging this kind of categorizing is an important part of early education, helping children define and organize their world. Support children as they notice similarities and differences based on factors like color and shape of objects.” While not directly tied to a citation, this

statement is similar to the other examples in that it clearly increases understanding of early childhood development.

3.1 Materials include direct social skill instruction and explicit teaching of skills.

- Full lessons on Self Concept Skills, Self-Regulation Skills, Relationships with Others, and Social Awareness Skills, as laid out in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.
- Materials provide guidance on teacher modeling of these skills.
- Materials include appropriate texts used to support the development of social competencies.
- Materials include appropriate texts used to support the development of competencies to understand and respond to emotions.

Meets 4/4

The materials contain weekly full lessons on self concept skills, self-regulation skills, relationships with others, and social awareness skills, as laid out in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Materials include appropriate texts to support the development of social competencies, including skills needed to understand and respond to emotions. Materials provide guidance on teacher modeling of these skills.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include “Mind Builders,” which address social, emotional, executive function, creativity, and motivation skills; they were developed in partnership with the Yale Child Study Center and are infused throughout the program. These lessons are directly taught on the second day of each week and are supported through large group and small group lessons on that day. The “Implementation Guide” has a section titled “Social and Emotional Development,” which summarizes these Mind Builders, emphasizes the power of words, describes how they meet childrens’ needs, and explains methods for self-regulation. Mind Builders are separated into suggested actions for three-, four-, and five-year-olds and offer connections to language, literacy, and math. Additionally, teachers have access to a “Songs and Fingerplays” booklet, including 32 songs that reinforce and extend social skill themes.

The materials include direct social skills instruction and explicit teaching of skills through themes. In Theme 2, the materials include the text *Biblioburro*, which is a culturally relevant story based on real life and the traditions of a man from Columbia. The story shows characters in social situations and contains friendship themes. Additional opportunities to make cross-curricular connections occur in the text *Ma Ofrenda*, a story about the traditions of a family native to Mexico and how to deal with the sadness of losing a pet. This text offers an

opportunity for students to connect and develop their Social and Emotional domain. Students further develop competencies to understand and respond to emotions during a large group math activity, when the teacher shares a prompt about demonstrating empathy: “Not everyone feels the same way—you might be having a great day, but your friend might be frustrated or sad. Knowing how someone else feels is a really important skill. When you know how someone feels, you can respond appropriately. If your friend is sad, you can give her a hug to feel better.” This prompt includes a suggested action for teachers to model, although it does not direct teachers to specifically model the action. The prompt provides students the opportunity to describe themselves using proper pronouns, and the activity teaches self-concept. There are times when the materials tell teachers to “use the Clifford Puppet” when introducing or describing social skills. Together, there is adequate modeling of social skills throughout the year.

Theme 5 includes the text *Happy in Our Skin*, which introduces students to information about other cultures, traditions, ages, and differing abilities. A whole group read-aloud of the text is used to launch a discussion about emotions and how we show our feelings. The teacher presents prompts such as “I feel happy so I...” or “I feel sad so I...” The teacher also poses a guiding question: “What is special about our skin?” Afterward, the teacher facilitates a group discussion about the concept of personal space, providing guidance to students as they explore this concept. Using gradual release, the teacher demonstrates the concept of movement by modeling the behaviors involved. Students practice by moving around the classroom space and amongst each other without touching. Also in this theme, a large group activity uses the text *How Do Dinosaurs Get Well Soon?* as a reference for a group discussion, which supports students in their development of understanding and responding to emotions. While reading the book, the teacher asks questions such as “What are the people doing with their hands so they don’t disturb each other?” and “How can you tell that this dinosaur is feeling grumpy? Let’s share ideas about why he is feeling and acting that way.”

Theme 8 offers more opportunities to foster the development of self-competencies. For example, after a whole group read-aloud of *The Very Impatient Caterpillar*, the teacher leads a discussion about the caterpillar’s difficult feelings about being patient and not knowing how to do things. The teacher poses the question “What do you do when feeling impatient?” In addition to group discussions and whole group read-alouds, the materials integrate the use of visual supports, hands-on materials, puppets/characters, songs and fingerplays, and role-playing. The “Ready, Set, Go” activity card guides a teacher-led group discussion aimed at helping students recognize personal strengths. The lesson culminates in a multisensory class talent show in which students are invited to demonstrate and celebrate their skills.

3.2 Materials include repeated opportunities for students to practice social skills throughout the day.

- Materials provide opportunities to learn, practice, and apply these skills throughout the day.
- Practice opportunities are authentically integrated throughout all other content domains.

Meets 4/4

The materials include repeated opportunities for students to practice social skills throughout the day. Materials provide students with opportunities to learn, practice, and apply these skills throughout the day. Practice opportunities are authentically integrated throughout all other content domains.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials include repeated opportunities for students to practice social skills throughout all themes. Learning prompts specific to each area of the classroom serve as guidance for supporting the integration of this practice into center time. For example, the “Writer’s Corner” and “Creativity Center” in Theme 1 encourage children to draw or create a picture of themselves in order to “show how you feel now.” Students have authentic connections with peers as they spend time together making superheroes out of connecting cubes. Visuals, such as two large charts titled “Our School Rules” and “What Pets Need,” are used to help children identify feelings and support emotional learning as they navigate the classroom. Students are explicitly introduced to breathing strategies, which they are encouraged to practice throughout the day as a self-regulation tool. “Circle Time” includes teacher suggestions for a discussion about managing emotions in stressful situations, which serves as an introduction to deep breathing. Theme 1 also includes a small group activity on how and when to use counting as an additional calm-down strategy. In the activity, students pretend to ride a bus, counting objects they might see passing by outside the window.

In Theme 1, in a Circle Time activity, the teacher shows the students emotion cards. The class works as a group to identify the emotion illustrated on each card. Students are also given an opportunity to act out how they would feel, using a prompt supplied by the teacher. Theme 6 builds upon this large group work with a small group activity, in which students explore showing empathy for one another. Students work in pairs, identifying emotions on picture cards. After

the activity, the teacher continues to talk to children about their emotions, extending their learning by encouraging partners to ask each other, “How can I help?” Students demonstrate what they might do to help their peers. The “Library and Listening” center in Theme 1 invites students to find pictures in books and discuss how the characters feel. *My BIG Feelings: In Five Small Tales* can be used as a reference for students to create “feeling masks” and act out feelings described in the story. Theme 1 also suggests the teacher ask, “Can you draw a person? How does the person feel? Can you change your picture to show a different emotion?” when students are working at the “Creativity/Art” independent center.

The materials provide opportunities for teachers to foster community and teamwork and for students to explore these concepts throughout the day. In Theme 2, students are challenged to think about their own perspective and compare it to their classmates’: They gather in small groups based on different criteria, such as favorite color, favorite food, favorite book, or favorite song. After a whole group read-aloud of *Ofrenda*, students pair up to answer the question “How is your neighborhood like Ceci’s?” This allows them to apply social skills by engaging with one another as well as understand that they are part of a larger community. In Theme 3, during Circle Time, the teacher explains that working together means sharing tasks with others to achieve a common goal and that children can learn about working together through playing games or working on a project as a team. The materials illustrate how teachers can encourage purposeful play during center time and offer children an opportunity to collaborate with peers. For instance, students may role-play, navigate a seesaw, or work with a partner to build a tower. Teachers ask guiding questions to encourage teamwork, such as “What is your goal?” and “How can working together make that happen?” Theme 7 includes a math activity in which students work in pairs to complete a number scavenger hunt in the classroom. Theme 8 includes a whole group read-aloud of *Hiking Day* followed by a class discussion about childrens’ experiences working together.

3.3 Materials include ideal classroom arrangements that support positive social interactions.

- Classroom arrangement supports daily opportunities for practice of social skills, including in daily learning centers.
- Materials give teacher guidance on classroom arrangement to support teacher-student and student-student interactions.
- Materials consider a variety of factors and components of the physical space and their impact on students' social development.
- Materials can be implemented easily and effectively within a classroom arrangement that supports positive social interactions.
- Materials provide suggestions for how to engage students in classroom arrangement in order to promote student ownership of the space.

Meets 4/4

The materials include ideal classroom arrangements that support positive social interactions, including in daily learning centers. Materials give teacher guidance on classroom arrangement to support teacher-student and student-student interactions; they consider factors and components of the physical space and their impact on students' social development. The materials also include guidance for teachers on how to easily and effectively arrange the room to support positive social interactions and student ownership of the space.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Each theme provides a classroom arrangement that includes separate physical arrangements, such as ample space for the entire class to sit together during large group time, a more intimate space to allow a smaller group to meet separately, and specific areas to allow space for individual centers (e.g., "Library/Listening," "Pretend Play," "Math/Science," "Writing," "Creative Arts," "Blocks," and "ABC"). The materials also include "Tips" that provide, upon each login, a new suggestion related to student ownership of the space. One such tip states: "A classroom environment that allows for failure and occasional child choice is one that will help children develop initiative and problem-solving skills. Creative play stations and opportunities to choose among activities are essential for developing this skill, which is critical for success in school and in life." Materials also include guidance in a supplemental document titled "Independent Reading Guide." The document contains information about literacy development in young children and provides ways to embed literacy in centers within the classroom.

The “Implementation Guide” includes “Building Relationships,” “Engaging Materials and Experiences,” and “Safe and Supportive Spaces.” These sections describe how “PreK On My Way” aligns to CLASS—fostering positive interactions including regard for student perspectives in large group, small group, and independent centers. The “Engaging Materials and Experiences” section emphasizes the importance of choosing materials that reflect classroom values and expectations: “Careful selection and placement of the right materials can lead to transformative learning experiences for children as they bring their own thinking and innovation to their use.” This section references “high-quality, authentic, and culturally diverse books” and “real-world photos” included in the materials, to be considered when setting up the classroom environment. The “Safe and Supportive Spaces” section specifies considerations such as traffic patterns, placement of materials in relation to children’s eye level, adequate supplies, storage organization, clearly delineated areas for large and small group learning, as well as independent centers, outdoor play, and a quiet space “for children to go if they need a break.” This guidance helps teachers identify areas of the room to practice social skills and to support positive social interactions. Additionally, this resource includes a “Social and Emotional Development” section dedicated to helping children self-regulate and independently make choices throughout the day.

Downloadable center signs allow for easy implementation and support positive social interaction; they provide daily opportunities for practice of social skills. Examples in Theme 1 include statements like “Can you and a partner act out two people meeting for the first time?” “Share your book of feelings. Tell your partner one thing you like about their book.” “Work with some friends to create a group friendship mural.” “What Makes Us Who We Are?” These signs are found in the “Resources” section of the materials, and similar resources can be found across all themes. In Theme 1, teachers have students store keepsakes, like family photos or favorite books, in the classroom. This provides comfort, security, and a connection to home, while promoting student ownership of the space.

The materials include posters of school rules, including one in Theme 2 titled “Our School Rules.” Some of the prompts on this poster include “We share,” “We clean up,” “We take turns,” “We listen,” “We stay safe,” and “We are kind.” The back of the poster provides the concept question “What do we do at school?” It also includes the explanation: “Rules help us get along. They help us work together, stay safe, and make sure our school is the best place for all of us to learn and play together.” These posters impact students’ social development within the physical space by providing the teacher with a visual way to assist students with self-regulation and monitoring behaviors.

Some lessons include instructional strategies and activities that integrate movement, songs, discussions, and hands-on experiences to encourage positive teacher-student and student-student interactions. In Theme 2, the teacher reads the books *Hey, Wall* and *Our Neighborhood* to initiate two large group activities. Following the whole group read-aloud of *Hey, Wall*, students pretend to draw a sketch for the wall represented in the story, sharing their thought process with the teacher. After listening to *Our Neighborhood*, students work together to act out various characters and scenes from the story, including a firefighter putting out a big

fire, a barber cutting someone's hair, and a server in a restaurant filling a customer's water glass.

Materials are structured to be used in small or large groups several times throughout the day. For example, in Theme 7, a large group activity related to the text *Happy Birthday, Moon* precedes a small group activity using picture cards where students work on dissecting compound words. Both lessons promote the practice of social skills by allowing students to work in partners and teams. The lessons also provide guidance for teachers, including directions for the activities, some questions to ask during the activity, and ways to extend learning after students complete the large or small group activity.

3.4 Materials include activities to develop physical skill and refine motor development through movement.

- Materials provide numerous daily opportunities for students to develop their gross motor skills through movement.
- Materials provide daily opportunities for students to develop their fine motor skills through tasks that do not require writing.

Meets 4/4

The materials reviewed provide numerous daily opportunities for students to develop their gross motor skills through movement. Materials provide daily opportunities for students to develop their fine motor skills through tasks that do not require writing.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include a resource kit with items to be used for developing fine motor skills, such as magnetic letters and numbers, attribute buttons, jumbo tweezers, connecting cubes, pattern blocks, and geo-boards. Guidance for the “Construction” center includes activities suggesting the use of building blocks, supporting the development of both gross and fine motor skills.

A large group activity in Theme 1 instructs the teacher: “Invite children to stand in a circle and play a happy game. Tell children to follow along and join in doing things that make us happy. Say, ‘Jumping makes me happy, so let’s jump, jump, jump,’ then say ‘Hopping makes me happy, so let’s hop, hop, hop.’ Continue with dancing, clapping and twisting.” “Circle Time” provides opportunities for students to develop gross motor skills. In this theme, students discuss feelings and explore associated movements (“How would you move if you felt scared?”). They also sing “This Is the Way We Go to School” while miming the actions in each verse (getting dressed, brushing teeth, riding the bus). A math activity in Theme 1 encourages the practice of fine motor skills by asking students to choose a number from 1 to 3 and give a partner or teacher that many of a small counter; for example, a student may choose the numeral 1 and give one counter. Independent centers in Theme 1 offer additional fine motor practice by integrating these skills into academic learning objectives. For instance, the “ABC” center invites students: “Put these letters in the order of the alphabet.”

Gross motor skill practice is integrated into Theme 2 lessons, such as with the activity “Clap the Rhythm.” The teacher demonstrates how the story is written in a rhythm. The teacher models

by clapping a simple three- or four-part pattern and then invites the students to do the same (call and response). Another large group activity in this theme invites children to sit in a circle and recall actions regularly performed on the playground. Students are invited to “pretend they are climbing the ladder or taking turns going down the slide.” Theme 2 provides an opportunity, during Circle Time, for the class to play “Simon Says” using location terms in the instructions. For example, the teacher may say, “Stand near a friend” or “Put a hand under your chin.”

Theme 6 includes a small group activity in which students use pictures to identify what various items are made of (e.g., wood, ice, paper, metal). Teachers provide an opportunity for students to practice fine motor skills by providing modeling clay, craft sticks, pipe cleaners, and paper; children build and then describe their creations. Also in Theme 6, following a whole group read-aloud of *More-igami*, students create origami out of small pieces of paper. The teacher supplies each student with a square piece of paper and demonstrates how to fold the square in half to make a triangle; the class continues through the steps required to make an origami ladybug. *The Little Red Fort* is also shared as a whole group read-aloud in this theme, which is followed by a discussion of different materials that can be used to build a house (e.g., brick, wood, mud, ice). The teacher distributes drinking straws and interlocking bricks to each student, challenging them to build with both materials and then discuss why straw is not a good building material.

3.5 Materials include activities that develop safe and healthy habits in students.

- Materials provide teacher guidance on modeling safe and healthy habits for students.
- Materials provide a variety of opportunities and activities for students to practice safe and reflect on safe and healthy habits.
- Materials communicate for both teachers and students the connection between physical and mental health.

Partially Meets 2/4

Materials offer a variety of opportunities and activities for students to practice and reflect on safe and healthy habits. While there is teacher guidance on how to model healthy and safe habits, the materials do not consistently communicate, for both teachers and students, the connection between physical and mental health.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Resources included in the instructional materials support student practice of healthy habits. For example, the poster “Let’s Make a Fruit Salad” encourages healthy eating; the poster “Keep Your Hands Clean” illustrates steps for handwashing. There are also texts included for whole group read-alouds such as *My Body*, *Please Play Safe*, and *Fire Drill*. The materials include songs like “Happy and Healthy” and “Everybody’s Body.” Some of the song lyrics are “I love to run and play and jump/It keeps my body strong” and “Your bones make up your skeleton and they help you get around/Without ‘em you can’t jump or run/You’d just be a puddle flopping on the ground.” Both songs communicate the importance of having healthy habits in a developmentally appropriate way.

The materials include lessons and activities for teachers to present, model, and teach safe and healthy habits. The majority of these lessons are located in Theme 5, titled “Healthy Me.” Following a whole group read-aloud of *How Do Dinosaurs Get Well?*, students share ways to stay healthy, such as drinking juice and taking medicine. Another whole group read-aloud, *Baby Goes to Market*, serves as a reference for a group discussion of healthy foods and foods children would buy if they went to the store. This discussion is extended to small group time, where children pretend to make fruit salad using picture cards. In another whole group discussion, the class explores a chart illustrating proper handwashing techniques. Vocabulary cards are shown to review the words *scrub* and *rinse*. The teacher then demonstrates, and students have the opportunity to practice. A small group activity in Theme 5 encourages children to identify

personal safety habits, such as nutrition, exercise, and health. During the activity, the teacher discusses playground safety and invites students to identify safe and unsafe playground behavior by holding up a red circle to indicate unsafe behavior and a green circle for safe behavior. After the activity, the teacher leads a group discussion: “You can remind your friends about how to play safely. What are some things you might tell them?” In another small group activity, centered around the text *What a Cold Needs*, students look at pictures of tissues, soup, a chair, books, and a water bottle, as the teacher asks questions related to the story. For example, while reading, the teacher may say, “Look at the picture. What do you do with tissues when you have a cold? Let’s act out blowing our noses into a tissue,” reinforcing understanding by pantomiming how to exercise safe and healthy habits. In these three examples, teachers either model or interact with students directly so they recognize and practice safe and healthy habits. However, there are unfulfilled opportunities for teachers to communicate the connection between these physical decisions and students’ mental health. The materials do not communicate to teachers the mental health benefits of proper eating, exercise, or sickness prevention; in turn, teachers do not communicate these connections to students.

A Theme 5 Circle Time is one activity where students get close to exploring the connection between physical and mental health. In this activity, the teacher points out that each of the students is an individual (“Nobody is YOU”). The teacher helps children understand that everyone is different by introducing and discussing unique fingerprints. Children then share their thoughts about what they think makes them special. To show their appreciation, the group is encouraged to clap after each child shares. The whole group read-aloud of *Happy in Our Skin* then has students explore the idea of being happy with who we are. Students are asked, “How can we move in the skin we’re in?” and encouraged to speak, draw, or write about something that makes them special. This activity allows for exploration of identity and positive self-worth, but it doesn’t explicitly build the connection between physical and mental health.

That being said, Theme 5 provides students ample opportunities to practice and reflect on safe and healthy physical habits. During large group time, teachers are encouraged: “Have fun with children, leading them to try different ways to jump 5 times. Lead them to try up and down jumps, hops on one leg, and simple jumping jacks.” A large group activity titled “Share the Mind Builder: Move Carefully Through Surroundings” involves a teacher-led discussion about students’ awareness of their surroundings, including the things and people all around them. Teachers talk about how moving carefully can be important in avoiding getting hurt or hurting the people around you. Teachers help children come up with examples of when they might exercise caution, such as if something is hot or easy to break, and model these movements for students as they discuss as a group.

In Theme 8, the students engage in a lesson focused on eating healthy foods and exercising. Led by the teacher, the students sort provided pictures into *healthy* and *unhealthy* categories. Then the students are asked to recall healthy foods. The materials include time in the daily schedule for unstructured outdoor play as an opportunity for student-student and teacher-student interactions. Additionally, the “Implementation Guide” includes teacher guidance on “Integrating Play,” “Safe and Supportive Space,” “Outdoor Time,” and physical development

through “Music and Movement.” Some references to research supporting the importance of play is also included. The materials include resources for families to support building healthy habits at home, found on the “Teacher Hub” and “Family Exchange” website. These include “Chat Band” bracelets with conversation starters such as “How can we stay healthy?” and “How can we protect ourselves and our bodies?”; “Family Bulletins” with “My Book” story starters including “When I have a cold...” and “On a fire drill...”; “Family Activities” including “Healthy Habits” and “Keep Safe!”; and “Little eReaders” including “A Good Night’s Sleep” and “Bicycle Safety.”

4.1 Materials provide guidance on developing students' listening skills.

- Materials provide teacher guidance on modeling active listening for understanding.
- Materials support and scaffold daily opportunities for students to listen for understanding.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to hear sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar in a variety of contexts.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to hear conversations that follow conversation norms.

Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide some guidance on developing students' listening skills. The materials support and scaffold daily opportunities for students to listen for understanding; they provide opportunities for students to hear sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar in a variety of contexts. While the materials provide opportunities for students to hear conversations that follow conversation norms, teacher guidance on modeling active listening for understanding is limited.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials place an explicit focus on the critical importance of language development and the essential need for conversational duets throughout the child's day. Scripted language provides teachers with guidance to support conversations with children and opportunities for students to hear sounds, appropriate sentence structures, and grammar. Under "Instructional Best Practices" in the "Implementation Guide," the materials summarize the language gap students may face and explain how being flexible with words can benefit. As a best practice, the materials explain teachers should "define new words in context as you speak" and "mix familiar words with new ones as you find multiple ways to talk about the same thing." While this practice somewhat directs teacher modeling to improve student understanding, it does not provide guidance on modeling active listening.

Digital stories ("Little eReaders") support listening for understanding and are accessible across all themes. Video presentations allow students to watch the story, interact with each page, and follow the text as it is read aloud and highlighted. "Comprehension Strategy" cards are used throughout each theme, providing students with visual aids. For example, the "Listen and Remember" card shows a child with his hand to his ear and states: "When you listen and

remember, you pay attention to the important things the author says and try to remember them.” This card provides students a scaffolded opportunity for listening to understand, but it is not an example of explicit teacher modeling. While there is some guidance on teacher modeling, it is inconsistent throughout the year.

Theme 1 includes an activity that begins with a whole group read-aloud of *A Friend Like You* and a group discussion about how friends play together. Following the read-aloud and discussion, students are given the opportunity to practice listening skills by participating in a “Friendship Roll.” While sitting in a circle with students, the teacher calls out individual names, prompting the students to roll a ball to the student whose name has been called out. As they roll, students are encouraged to say, “I have a friend whose name is…” This continues until all the children have had two turns. Here, students are practicing listening for understanding, but there is no associated guidance for teacher modeling to show students prior. Later in the theme, students get a chance to hear conversations that follow conversation norms. During a “Circle Time” activity, the teacher invites students: “Talk with (a classmate) about a time they needed to listen and remember. How did it help them?” Another Circle Time activity suggests: “Start circle time by having children move around the circle greeting each other. Demonstrate first with a child. Make sure you make eye contact, shake that person’s hand, and greet them by name. If you like, you can also have them say one compliment to each of their friends.” This example provides teachers with some modeling guidance for active listening. However, the descriptions imply a teacher model without explicitly making it an objective or focus of the teacher guidance. Similar evidence can be found during other large group Circle Times. Often there is integrated scaffolding that helps students build background understanding, activate prior knowledge, and get to know vocabulary. Some of these scaffolds, like the one above, allude to teacher modeling, but teaching modeling is rarely the lesson focus or primary objective.

During a whole group read-aloud of *Biblioburro* in Theme 2, students listen and respond to questions posed by the teacher, such as “How does Luis help the children?” “What happens when Luis gets to town?” and “What story does Luis share with the children?” After the read-aloud, students “Turn and Talk” to one another, sharing their ideas and responses to the questions asked during the reading. The materials provide teacher guidance on implementation of “Turn and Talk” as a teaching strategy within the Implementation Guide. Appropriate sentence structure and correct grammar are explored during a whole group read-aloud of *Busy Builders, Busy Week*; the text supports children in oral language comprehension through its use of rhyming and predictable patterns. Following the read-aloud, the teacher begins a small group activity, saying: “We found rhymes for words in *Busy Builders, Busy Week*. Today we are going to play a listening game. I am going to say two words. If the words rhyme, you’re going to jump up and down until I say, ‘Freeze’. If the words don’t rhyme, you’re going to sit down.” Theme 2 also offers the opportunity for students to play games such as “Simon Says” and “Freeze Dance,” role-play parts of a text to demonstrate their understanding of a story, sing songs, and engage in fingerplays. These activities allow children to demonstrate receptive listening in a multisensory way. Students are listening for understanding and are expected to respond showing their understanding, but these activities do not provide an opportunity to see an exemplar of active listening.

While there are limited examples of direct teacher modeling of active listening, large group and small group activity cards provide grammatically correct scripts supporting teachers in content delivery. Following a whole group read-aloud and discussion of *The Mitten* in Theme 3, students receive “a real mitten and color counters” to experiment with. The activity script provides teachers with step-by-step instructions to be directly communicated to students both during and after the activity. Discussion prompts include “Was it easier to count the animals in the mitten when we read the book or in this activity? Why?” These scripts often provide useful scaffolding and high-quality examples of appropriate sound structure, but rarely do they explain the steps and requirements of active listening.

Theme 3 also includes a whole group read-aloud of *Cold Crunchy Colorful: Using Our Five Senses*, which invites students to listen to and recreate sounds presented in the story. Further exploration of the senses occurs during the read-aloud of *Close Your Eyes*. The brother who cannot see teaches his brother to “see” the world using his other senses. Both of these books present an opportunity for the teacher to model active listening, especially when other senses are limited. The teacher could offer a think-aloud for understanding and comprehension, but no model is offered. Students further explore the ideas presented in the story as they work in independent centers. The “Math” center encourages students to identify colors using their senses of sight; the “Writer’s Corner” invites students to draw something they can smell. These activities provide students practice opportunities to listen, but the materials do not offer teacher modeling of active listening.

The materials in Theme 5 provide students with opportunities to hear sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar. The teacher guides students through a small group activity supporting an overarching health theme. Students practice following directions to wash their hands and consider questions posed by the teacher, such as “Why do you think you should wash your hands when you have a cold?” and “Should you wash your hands when you do not have a cold? Why or why not?” This activity connects to the overall theme and allows students repeated opportunities to hear language in a relevant context. The lesson follows a large group experience in which the teacher reviews the “Keep Your Hands Clean” poster from the “Big Chart of Big Ideas,” sings a handwashing song while following the steps to wash hands, provides extended play options for washing hands, introduces vocabulary photo cards for the words *scrub* and *rinse*, and includes guided writing related to proper handwashing and practice counting to model the amount of time needed for proper handwashing. In this activity, the teacher is modeling how to wash hands and integrating student actions into the display, but it is not exactly listening for understanding. Proper eye contact, posture, follow-up questions, and wait time would better align to a model for active listening. There are some examples of this found in Theme 8.

Theme 8 provides teacher strategies that support students with nonverbal communication. For example, teachers are instructed: “Model classroom etiquette and discuss the concept of interrupting.” Teachers guide the children in role-play scenarios, encouraging them to use the phrase “excuse me” if they would like to say something when someone else is speaking.

Teachers lead group discussions about nonverbal ways of communicating a desire to speak without interrupting. This guidance and prompting provide one end-of-the-year example where teachers intentionally model active listening for understanding. Then after a whole group read-aloud of *Hiking Day*, the students are paired with a peer using “equity sticks.” Partners “Turn and Share” answers to the question “How does the girl get ready for the hike up Hickory Hill?” The gradual release of these two activities provides an opportunity for the students to see a model of conversation norms before practicing with another student at the conclusion of the second activity.

4.2 Materials provide guidance on developing students' speaking skills.

- Materials provide opportunities for students to practice producing sounds and use appropriate sentence structure and grammar in a variety of contexts.
- Materials provide teacher guidance on corrective feedback of students' speech production, sentence structure, and grammar.
- Materials provide teacher guidance on setting up and facilitating activities that allow students to practice production of a variety of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar.
- Materials provide support and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion using conversation norms.

Meets 4/4

The materials reviewed provide opportunities for students to practice producing sounds and using appropriate sentence structure and grammar in a variety of contexts. Materials provide teacher guidance on corrective feedback of students' speech production, sentence structure, and grammar. Materials also provide teacher guidance on setting up and facilitating activities that allow students to practice production of a variety of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar. Lastly, there is support and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion using conversation norms.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The instructional materials include a list of items relating to each theme for teachers to place in independent centers. The materials include, but are not limited to, song recordings, mirrors, animal masks, paper, markers, glue, modeling clay, and audio and print books. The "Conversation Prompts for Purposeful Play," are designed to support conversation and children's language development during centers. They are available in each "Teaching Guide," and they are also available to print from the resource titled "Center Signs," found in the "Resources" area of the "Teacher Hub." These resources support questioning to prompt language development across centers, and the center signs include specific scaffolded language development questions for student use. Additionally, there are some recommendations and scripts for teachers to facilitate oral language during mealtimes, outdoor play, or arrival.

Teacher guidance supporting oral language facilitation can also be found in the "Implementation Guide." This document includes recommendations for encouraging conversation during meals,

outdoor time, and morning meetings, including pictures and ideas for teachers to engage students in conversations. Additionally, the provided “Chat Mats” can serve as placements during meal times. To extend speaking skills into the household, students can wear weekly chat bands with prompts and questions that facilitate conversation amongst family members.

Theme 2 provides an activity card with teacher guidance on appropriate ways to support developmentally appropriate speech production, sentence structure, and grammar: “Children often learn the sounds for *p*, *m*, and *w* earlier than sounds for *z*, *v*, or *th*. By the age of four, most children can pronounce all of the speech sounds, although some four-year-old children will still have problems with the sounds *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *j*, *ng*, *th*, *z*, *l*, and *r*. By age three, familiar people should understand what children are saying, and by age four most people should understand a child’s speech. Provide safe opportunities for children to practice sounds in different words and longer sentences.” Theme 2 also provides corrective feedback suggestions, such as: “To help children with auditory discrimination challenges, exaggerate the movements of your mouth as you form each letter sound, being mindful of your lip positions. Do this while saying the sound in isolation and again as you say the sound within the picture word. Invite children to move their mouths in the same way as they make the letter sound.” In a small group activity in this theme, the teacher displays pictures of varying locations, inviting students to guess where the pictures were taken. Materials provide guidance for corrective feedback: “Humans learn the grammar of language through oral language models. Subject-verb agreement is an abstract concept even for older children. It helps to lay a good foundation for children to learn the grammar of academic language during these early years. If a child says something incorrectly, such as ‘They was singing,’ respond by repeating the statement correctly, such as ‘Yes. They were singing.’”

The simple songs included in the materials use repetition and predictable patterns; some are familiar nursery rhymes. In Theme 3, the teacher guides a whole group discussion about clouds and weather, followed by a group sing-along to “Rain, Rain, Go Away.” This experience provides an opportunity for students to practice producing sounds, as the song repeats, using a different child’s name each time. In a Theme 3 small group activity, students look at several photos and answer a question using one of their five senses. The back of the activity card provides the following teacher guidance: “Speaking Support: Help children adjust the volume and intonation of their voice for different situations. Explain when it’s okay to speak loudly and when they need to speak quietly. Ask children to speak in an ‘outdoor’ voice (loud) and an ‘indoor’ voice (quiet). Ask them which type of voice they should use if they’re outside playing, at a learning center, at mealtime, and asking the teacher a question. Help them to adjust the volume of their voice as needed.” While this does provide clear guidance to support speech production, it does not reinforce the teacher’s understanding of language development. The materials include open-ended questions to pose during read-alouds and activities, which supports students’ practice of critical thinking and expressive language. During a whole group read-aloud of *Push and Pull*, a story about how things move, the teacher asks guiding questions to check for comprehension and extend learning. Following the reading, the teacher asks the open-ended question “What things can move with a push?” Materials also include prompts to adapt to

different levels of oral language. For example, instead of the open-ended question, the teacher can ask if a rocket moves with a *push* or a *pull*.

The materials utilize small and large group settings to facilitate oral language activities. Activities include shared reading and writing, songs and nursery rhymes, and playful games. Teacher strategies include “Call and Response,” “Turn and Talk,” choral response, repetition in read-alouds, and movement to support sound recall and production. A “Circle Time” in Theme 7 suggests a whole group sing-along: “What Are the Seasons of the Year” to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” During a whole group read-aloud, the teacher engages the students with open-ended questions about what she is reading. For example: “Look at the fall colors on these pages. What is happening on some trees and bushes? What has the spider done?” Following the read-aloud, the teacher asks, “What happens to plants and animals in each season?” After allowing time for Turn and Talk, providing students the opportunity to work collaboratively and engage in discussion using conversation norms, the teacher closes out the activity by picking two or three children to share. Another opportunity for collaboration is offered in Theme 7 after a whole group read-aloud of *Sometimes Rain*. This example includes teacher guidance, suggesting different ways to ask guiding questions based on varying student responses. Students Turn and Talk about the guiding question “What do the children wear in different seasons?” and follow with a group discussion.

4.3 Materials support expanding student vocabulary.

- Materials follow a progression of vocabulary development that is age and sequentially appropriate.
- Materials include a variety of strategies for strategically supporting vocabulary development that are integrated and authentically embedded in content-based learning.

Meets 4/4

The materials support expanding student vocabulary by following a progression of vocabulary development that is age and sequentially appropriate. Materials include a variety of strategies for strategically supporting vocabulary development; these strategies are integrated and authentically embedded in content-based learning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Theme 1, students are introduced to new vocabulary words and provided opportunities to meaningfully interact with them. A large group activity introducing the word *relationship* and the phrase *tell a story* begins with a whole group read-aloud of *Alma and How She Got Her Name*. Students respond to age-appropriate guiding questions such as “Alma’s daddy tells her a story about Sofia. Alma’s daddy had a good relationship with Sofia. What did Sofia teach Alma’s daddy to do?” Following the read-aloud, a small group activity reinforces new vocabulary words by inviting students to view pictures of people and discuss whether they have a good or bad relationship. Extension questions are included to provide students additional opportunities to explore vocabulary. The materials include 802 vocabulary photo cards, accessible in print and digital format, listed in the “Resources” area of the “Teacher Hub,” for teachers to integrate into large and small group settings. Teaching strategies supporting vocabulary development and instruction are authentically embedded throughout all themes. For example, the vocabulary word *together* is introduced in Theme 1 and then taught again in Themes 2, 6, and 8.

The materials include integrative content-based teaching strategies supporting age-appropriate vocabulary instruction throughout the day. For example, the word *first* is introduced during a Theme 2 whole group read-aloud of *Dad’s First Day* and reinforced through the small group activity “Build a Tower.” The activity engages teachers and students in discussion about *first*, *second*, and *third* as they build together. The “Writing” center includes the prompt “Write about your school day. What do you do first?” The “Library” center suggests the teacher ask, “In that

book, what happens first? Then what happens?” The “Pretend and Learn” center invites students: “Pretend you are getting ready for school. What do you do first? Then what do you do next?”

A Theme 3 activity introduces measurement by inviting students to use their hands, arms, and bodies to demonstrate words associated with the concept (*size, long, short, big, small, tall, short, wide, thin*). The activity includes pictures and authentic objects to support instruction. Vocabulary cards provided in the instructional materials include child-friendly definitions for teachers to use when introducing new words. For example, a card in Theme 3 reads “Empty: When something is empty, there is nothing in or on it.”

Vocabulary cards also provide visuals and guiding questions to further scaffold comprehension. A large group activity in Theme 4 utilizes vocabulary cards to introduce the words *busy* and *nibbled*. Pictures on one side of the card show the words in action, while the back of the card provides an instructional guide. “Introduce: ‘nibbled’; Repeat: ‘Say this word after me, nibbled’; Define: ‘Something nibbled has been eaten in small bites’; Describe: ‘Here is a strawberry that has been nibbled by a hamster’; Act it Out: ‘Let’s pretend we are hamsters nibbling strawberries’; Repeat: ‘Say this word after me, nibbled’; Define: ‘Something nibbled has been eaten in small bites’; Discuss: ‘Look at this picture of a hamster. Why is it nibbling instead of taking big bites? Have you ever nibbled food? Why?’ Repeat, rephrase, or expand.” Vocabulary words are related to sequential themes, which supports content-based language development. Students are given regular opportunities to hear and practice language throughout all themes and daily activities.

In Theme 7, the teacher introduces the word *fit* during a whole group read-aloud and uses photos of items that *fit* or *do not fit* during a small group activity as reinforcement. This theme encourages students to care for plants by introducing related words (*living, non-living, bud, tiny, seeds, stem, beanstalk, climbed*) through song.

4.4 Materials include appropriate strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their development of English language skills and developmentally appropriate content knowledge.

- Materials include a variety of strategies for supporting English Learners.
- Strategies include how to use the child’s first language as a foundation for learning English.
- Materials develop students’ vocabulary in both English and the home language.

Meets 4/4

The materials reviewed include appropriate strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their development of English language skills and developmentally appropriate content knowledge. Strategies including how to use the child’s first language as a foundation for learning English are limited throughout themes. Materials provide guidance to develop students’ vocabulary in both English and the home language.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Each “Large Group Card” and “Small Group Teacher Card” includes multilingual learner supports, such as this example from Unit 2 following the read-aloud of *Ofrenda*: “For children who don’t speak English at home, school may be their first regular experience outside their community and culture. *Ofrenda* offers the opportunity to foster confidence and peer-acceptance. Invite Spanish speakers to explain words like *chocolatito* (page 20) and *mijita* (page 25). They can also talk about the illustrations.” The program also includes a large number of embedded supports that are based on best practices for English language development. The “Implementation Guide” includes information on this embedded scaffolding throughout the program, including pre-teaching vocabulary, illustrative photographs, total physical response (TPR), gestures, definitions in context, vocabulary repetition, skill repetition, open-ended questions, and concept questions.

Theme 1 includes a small group activity in which the teacher shows students an assortment of realistic photos of children engaging with peers. The teacher asks the students to state what is happening in the photo. The card has teacher guidance on the back: “It’s possible that certain actions we think are important to friendship have variations in different cultures. Be sensitive to cultural differences during this activity. Invite children to share other actions that they think are an important part of friendship. They may want to share words from their home language that describe such actions.” This guidance helps to develop students’ vocabulary in both English and

their home language, but it is not consistently provided throughout the materials. An activity card in this theme uses cognates to support students transferring a familiar Spanish word to English, such as *familia/family*, *reunión/reunion*, *momento/moment*, *bebé/baby*, *nombre/name*. A Theme 1 Large Group Card promotes inclusion: “Diverse classrooms work to create a safe, nurturing environment. Sharing books like this week’s read-aloud will demonstrate how all children benefit from being exposed to other languages and cultures. Talk about the Navajo words in the story and ask children to share some corresponding words from their home language.”

A Theme 2 math activity card provides a support strategy: “Multilingual Learners: For children who need language support, limit the body parts and motions to a distinct set. Review these terms before beginning to play.” Another activity card states “Multilingual learners will often need help with culturally-specific concepts. In this book, children may be unfamiliar with concepts such as living in an apartment building, a hot dog vendor, and a cab driver. Introduce children to the setting using pages 2–5. Discuss what they see in each block and what the illustrations are made of.” Themes provided in the materials support ELs in making connections to new words. In Theme 2, students learn about things that are *pretend* and *real* by categorizing pictures of objects, which reinforces the concept as they gain new vocabulary. Materials provide some support for teachers in building connections between students’ home language and emerging literacy skills in the second language. A small group activity suggests teachers encourage children to use their home language to describe pictures from the activity or objects in the room. A Large Group Card in this theme provides an example of how to use the child’s first language as a foundation for learning English: “What children learn in one language will transfer to other languages naturally. For example, once children learn about community in their home language, they don’t need to relearn the same concepts in English. They simply need to learn the corresponding vocabulary in English.” Another example from this theme explains: “For children who don’t speak English at home, school may be their first regular experience outside their community and culture.” A shared reading of *Ofrenda* offers the opportunity to foster confidence and peer-acceptance by inviting Spanish speakers to explain words like *chocolatito* and *mijita*. ELs are further supported in Theme 2 through an invitation to talk about a drawing and tell a story using their home language as needed. A small group activity uses students’ first language as the foundation for new English vocabulary. The teacher invites students to look at realistic photos of various community vehicles and then answer questions about the vehicles. The teacher guidance states: “Children whose first language is Spanish will recognize the Spanish cognate ‘vehículo’ for the English word ‘vehicle’. Help children make this connection as well as the connection between ‘ambulancia’ and ‘ambulance.’”

Materials provide pictorial representation to reinforce learning of new vocabulary and concepts. In a Theme 5 small group activity, the teacher shares pictures of various foods, and students identify and answer related questions, such as “Is the food a fruit or not?” Students learning English are encouraged to answer in their home language. Following a whole group read-aloud of *Seed to Plant*, Spanish-speaking students are encouraged to share Spanish words for cognates

related to plants (*planta/plant, vegetales/vegetables, flores/flowers, fruta/fruit*), supporting the development of vocabulary in both English and Spanish.

In Theme 7, students are encouraged to “guess the cognate,” supporting childrens’ use of their home language. During the activity, the teacher asks questions such as “Look at the picture. What do you see?” and “In English, the word is elephant. What do you think the word would be in Spanish?” While this guidance does support students using their home language, there is no guidance for teachers who speak the student’s home language.

A Theme 8 activity offers the following scaffolding suggestion: “Multilingual Learners may have difficulty due to the kinesthetic nature of this activity and might have trouble quickly recalling letters from the English alphabet instead of ones from their home language. Before the activity, take the time to review each letter with the alphabet cards, allowing children the opportunity to see and visualize each letter.” A large group activity in Theme 8 invites students to study various pictures and identify the jobs being performed. Teachers are encouraged to accept responses in students’ home language while connecting it to English. An example of such guidance states: “Help native Spanish speakers make the connection between the words ‘police officer’ and ‘oficial de policia’. You may wish to talk about the close connection between English and Spanish terms.” Examples of differentiation are directly tied to a specific teacher action during large group time or specific instruction delivered during small group time.

5.1 Materials provide opportunities for students to develop oral language skills, including through authentic text conversations.

- Materials provide opportunities for students to listen actively and to ask questions and engage in discussion to understand information in texts.
- Materials provide consistent opportunities for students to engage in discussions that require students to share information and ideas about the texts.
- Materials provide support and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion.

Meets 4/4

The materials provide opportunities for students to listen actively and to ask questions and engage in discussion to understand information in texts. Materials provide consistent opportunities for students to engage in discussions that require them to share information and ideas about the texts. Support and guidance are provided for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Theme 3, the text *Push and Pull* is revisited and reinforced throughout the course of a week. Following the read-aloud on Day 1, students “Turn and Talk” with a partner, exploring the question “What things can move with a push?” Another whole group read-aloud of the text on Day 2 includes a teacher-guided group discussion of the concepts introduced, such as “Your muscles push and pull your body when you run, swim, and jump” and “How can a push make a ball go slower or make it stop? Show me how you can stop a ball with a push.” A collaborative extension activity concludes this text exploration, suggesting students work in teams to push and pull objects of varied weight across the floor and discuss whether objects were easy or hard to push and/or pull. Theme 3 provides additional opportunities for students to engage in discussions requiring them to listen actively, ask questions, and engage in discussion to understand information in texts. For example, in a whole group read-aloud of *Cold, Crunchy, Colorful*, the teacher asks recommended guiding questions, such as “Are the pebbles grainy or smooth?” “Scout the Squirrel loves this book because he enjoys making connections to foods he likes to eat. What connections can you make?” “We can taste many flavors. Have you ever eaten cherries?” “What other fruits are juicy?” “Have you ever eaten chili peppers?” “What foods are spicy?” “Raise your hand if you know what something minty tastes like. Often, foods that have a mint taste or flavor are colored green. Have you ever eaten mint ice cream?” A Theme 3 large

group activity following a read-aloud of *Weather* recommends the guiding question “We were curious and asked questions to find out more about weather. What is one thing about weather that you’re curious about? We can use our curiosity everywhere!”

Before reading *The Busy Tree* in Theme 4, the teacher says, “This week we read about all the animals that live in and around one tree. As we read the book one more time, I want you to think about this guiding question: ‘If you could live in any animal home, which would you choose?’” During the read-aloud, students respond to questions such as “Look at the animal in this picture. What animal is this? Where is the animal?” The teacher also prompts students: “Look at the children. The girl is pushing a boy on a swing that is on a tree. Do they look like they are having fun? Show me a thumbs up or thumbs down if you think they are.” Students then “Turn and Talk” with a peer, working collaboratively to share thoughts on the guiding questions explored in the large group discussion. Students are offered additional opportunities to engage in active listening during a whole group read-aloud of *I Am a Cat*. The teacher guidance prompts: “‘How are some cats different from others?’ Give a moment for ‘turn and talk’. Have back-and-forth conversations with children to extend language.” The materials provide an introduction to prepositions and the opportunity for students to explore the concept with their classmates: “Choose different objects in the classroom and have children take turns explaining where the object is by using a preposition.”

In Theme 7, following a whole group read-aloud of *Rainy, Sunny, Blowy, Snowy*, a small group activity invites students to sort pictures of outdoor scenes into categories: summer and winter. The teacher is encouraged to ask questions, such as “Look at the family in the pool. Is it summer or winter?” To extend the conversation, the teacher asks, “What else do you see in the picture that shows it is summer?” Students are encouraged to work collaboratively and engage in discussion throughout all themes, as evidenced in each read-aloud. For example, a Theme 7 activity card accompanying the text *Sometimes Rain* encourages the teacher to prompt: “There is a question I want you to think about as we read. We will talk about it after we read. Ready? What things do the children do in each season?” The teacher refers to the “Talk About It” section to engage students in further group discussion during and after the reading: “Let’s turn and talk about the guiding question: ‘What things do the children do in each season?’”

Theme 8 provides an opportunity for students to share information and ideas about texts following a whole group read-aloud of *I Want to Grow Up*. After the initial read-aloud, students continue to connect with the text through large and small group activities over the course of a week. In a small group, the teacher transcribes students’ speech as they tell stories explaining their likes and dislikes. In another small group, students look at several pictures, determine whether the pictured item is *tall* or *short*, and share a personal experience related to the item. The materials include opportunities for students to practice listening and speaking skills through authentic peer conversation.

5.2 Materials provide direct (explicit) instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills.

- Materials follow the research-based developmental continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness.
- Materials include a variety of types of activities that engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds.
- Materials allow for student practice of phonological awareness skills both in isolation and connected to alphabetic knowledge skills.

Partially Meets 2/4

Materials include some variety of types of activities that engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds. Materials allow for some student practice of phonological awareness skills both in isolation and connected to alphabetic knowledge skills. Materials do not contain evidence of a research-based developmental continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Implementation Guide” contains a section dedicated to “Sounds and Letters” where the materials define their research-based approach for alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness. Statements about the importance of these two topics are clearly supported with citations: “Letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and an understanding of speech-sound correspondences are essential for children to become readers and writers. (International Literacy Association, 2018.” Then there is a corresponding section summarizing alphabet knowledge as a concept and early phonological awareness as a concept. The description of early phonological awareness involves recognizing small units of sound and producing “rhyme, alliteration, and other word play.” The last subsection, within the Sounds and Letters section, is titled “Research-Based Approach.” However, this subsection focuses on the research behind alphabet instruction and not phonological awareness instruction. Emphasis is placed on the sequence of letter instruction: learning letters, letter-order, letter sound, and letter formation. This section does not describe the order in which phonological awareness skills are introduced or how instruction follows a research-based developmental continuum for phonological skills acquisition.

Within the Implementation Guide, and then repeated in each subsequent “Theme Overview” resource, there is a section titled “Year at a Glance.” In this section, phonological awareness skills are mapped out over time, organized by Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. For example, “Child separates a normally spoken four-word sentence into individual words (III.B.1)” is addressed through a language lesson in Theme 1, literacy lesson and language lesson in Theme 2, and a math lesson in Theme 6. This section does not include rationale, explanation, or description of the research-based continuum used to justify the order of phonological awareness instruction. The skill “recognizing rhyming words” is briefly addressed in Theme 2, once in Theme 3, once in Theme 4, and then consistently starting in Theme 5. When considering phonological awareness, rhyming is a foundational skill that should be focused on heavily in the earlier themes. Additionally, Theme 1 addresses the skills “children can segment a syllable from a word” and “child combines words to make a compound word.” These are more advanced phonological skills that should be introduced and reinforced later in the year if teachers are to teach phonological awareness according to the developmental continuum. Regardless of the limited explanation of phonological instruction order, the actual order of instruction does not consistently follow the research-based development continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness.

While there is a “Child Development Bibliography” in the back of each “Teaching Guide,” citations only identify what evidence was used during program development, generally. Teachers do not have access to a comprehensive summary of the research-based phonological awareness continuum used throughout instruction.

A Theme 2 large group activity invites students to play a “listening game.” The teacher introduces the activity and then models: “I am going to say 2 words. If the words rhyme, you’re going to jump up and down until I say, ‘Freeze’. If the words don’t rhyme, you’re going to sit down. Then I will say two more words. Listen to these words: ‘beep and jeep’” (teacher models jumping up and down and freezes). Students continue to practice analyzing sounds during the small group activity “Talk About Rhymes.” Teacher guidance suggests: “Talk about how much fun it is to listen for rhymes. Then ask children if they can think of a word that rhymes with a word you say: ‘Can you name a word that rhymes with “fun”? Can you name a word that rhymes with “day”?’”

Theme 4 center guidance includes questions such as “What sound does a lion make? What letter sounds do you hear when you make that sound?” “Can you sound out the word ‘baby’? What letter sound do you hear at the start of the word ‘baby’?” and “Can you find something in the room that starts with the same sound as /y/ or /z/?” These guiding questions offer opportunities for students to connect phonological awareness skills with alphabetic knowledge, integrating this practice into open-ended center play. Suggested center materials support this integration with the inclusion of images of words starting with letters *U*, *V*, *W*, and *X*.

In Theme 6, the teacher prompts: “Look at the letters in the word ‘Red’. What is the first letter? What sound does the letter ‘R’ make? What is the second letter? What sound does the letter ‘E’ make? What is the last letter? What sound does the letter ‘D’ make? Let’s put the sounds

together to read the word!” In a Theme 6 large group activity, students and teachers clap syllables: “Begin with ‘ap-ple’ and ‘ba-nan-a’. Each time, ask children how many claps they use.” These activities offer a variety of opportunities for students to practice identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds. A small group activity in this theme provides student practice of phonological awareness skills in isolation. The teacher script states: “Today we read the story *Everybunny Dance!* In that story there was a fox. The word ‘fox’ is a word made up of three sounds. We can put the sounds together to say the whole word. Listen: /f/ /o/ /ks/, ‘fox’. The word is ‘fox.’” Using the masks of a dog, cat, and fox, students then break down and combine letter sounds in each animal name. While these activities contribute to student phonological awareness, they stand alone throughout the materials and do not follow a research-based developmental continuum of phonological learning.

Before a whole group read-aloud of *Sometimes Rain* in Theme 7, the teacher prompts, “Listen for rhyming words. What words rhyme with ‘white’ and ‘night’?” A large group activity reinforces rhyming by asking students to listen to and recite the poem “Star Light, Star Bright” while identifying and inventing rhyming words. A read-aloud of *Anywhere Farm* in this theme supports students’ phonological awareness and alphabetic knowledge skills using the *Dd*, *Gg*, and *Uu* alphabet cards. Following the read-aloud, the teacher references the letter cards while modeling: “Now we are going to play a listening game. I am going to put together a beginning sound and the rest of the word. I will use the sounds to blend a word. Then you will find the picture that shows the word I blended.” Also in Theme 7, students use phonological awareness skills in isolation by separating and combining compound words: *birthday*, *bluebird*, and *lunchtime*. Following the activity, the teacher asks guiding questions: “Some of these words are words we already knew. Were you surprised to find little words inside them? Why or why not? Sometimes when we look at the little words inside of bigger words, we can figure out what the bigger word means.”

5.3 Materials provide direct (explicit) instruction and opportunities for student practice in alphabetic knowledge skills.

- Materials follow a research-based, strategic sequence for introduction of alphabetic knowledge.
- Materials provide teacher guidance on directly introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds.

Meets 4/4

Materials include teacher guidance on directly introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds is included. The product also presents a research-based, strategic sequence for introducing alphabetic knowledge.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Information included in the “Implementation Guide” outlines research that supports alphabetic knowledge instruction. The program follows four research-based instructional cycles so that letters of the alphabet are explicitly taught and reviewed multiple times across the year, following four proven advantages (Jones and Reutzel, 2012): children’s names, alphabetical order, name-sound relationship, and frequency. Specifically, the order for introducing alphabetic knowledge is as follows: 1. Sing the Alphabet Song, 2. Focus on Letters in Children’s Names, 3. Focus on the Letters in Order, 4. Focus on Letters Whose Names Make Their Sound, 5. Focus on the Letters That Appear Most Often, and 5. Review and Celebrate All the Letters. This information can be found under the “Sounds and Letters” section of the Implementation Guide. This order of introduction, primarily exposing students to each letter in sequential order, may be atypical to most current educators’ understanding of alphabet instruction. Generally speaking, alphabet knowledge is usually taught with the most common letter sounds first and an emphasis on the vowels /Aa/ and /Ii/. The primary goal of alphabet instruction is to have students recognize and form words as early as possible. With common consonants like /Ss/, /Tt/, and /Pp/ for example, children will be able to start their alphabet knowledge with basic word recognition. While sequential order does not provide the same foundation, the publisher supports their introduction sequence with research.

Additionally, the Implementation Guide outlines how alphabet lessons include these research-based elements: (1) identifying the letter name and sound in uppercase and lowercase, (2) recognizing the letter and sound in text and spoken word, and (3) producing the

letter form. There are example best practices that model letter introduction; for instance, “Let’s look at the word *cat*. Do you see the letter *c*?” and “Let’s form the letter *c*. Do we need a curved or a straight line?”

A large group activity in Theme 1 invites students to “take turns introducing themselves to their classmates, sharing what alphabet letters they like best.” The teacher is encouraged: “Model the activity by standing and introducing yourself: ‘My name is [your name]. My favorite letters are ‘Oo’ and ‘Bb.’” Another large group activity in this theme challenges students to look around the classroom for their names. Teacher guidance states: “Print name tags for children and hide them around the room. Have children take turns finding their names. Help children name the letter that begins his or her name.” A Theme 1 small group activity provides an opportunity for teacher modeling: “Show children how to trace the first letter in their names with their finger. Then give them crayons to trace that letter.” All themes throughout the materials provide a large group introduction of two letters per week followed by small group activities, such as “Show upper and lowercase forms of the letter ‘Bb’ and say, ‘This is the letter ‘Bb’. The letter ‘Bb’ makes the /b/ sound you hear at the beginning of the word ‘bike.’” Students then practice writing the letter “Bb” and draw a picture of something beginning with the /b/ sound. Teacher guidance on directly introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds is provided in several small group activities throughout all themes.

A Theme 2 activity introducing the letter *C* states: “Show the Alphabet Card for the letter ‘Cc’. Say the letter aloud and have children repeat. Say, ‘The letter *C* makes the /k/ sound you hear in the word ‘car.’” The teacher then reads *Cat Has a Cake* and encourages students: “Tap your nose when you hear a word that begins with the /k/ sound.” In Theme 3, the letters *Oo* and *Pp* are reviewed in another small group activity after a whole group read-aloud of *Close Your Eyes*: “We saw the letter ‘O’ in the word ‘own’ and the letter ‘P’ in the word ‘stop.’” Students repeat letters aloud while viewing the corresponding alphabet cards. For example, teacher guidance for the letter *P* states: “Show the alphabet cards for the letter ‘Pp’. Say the letter aloud and have children repeat. Then say ‘This is uppercase *P*. The letter *P* makes the /p/ sound you hear in the word ‘penguin’. This is lowercase *p*. The letter *p* makes the /p/ sound you hear in ‘peach.’” The materials provide various opportunities for students to experience and interact with letters. In Theme 3, teacher guidance suggests the teacher encourage students to find the first letter of their name in the “ABC” center.

In Theme 6, the teacher displays two photos of hands shaped like the letters *L* and *C*. The teacher models while saying, “In this activity, you will take turns using the scooper to dig for letters. If someone digs up a letter in your name, write it down on the line below the letter in your name.” Students collaborate by taking turns digging up, naming, and writing letters. Teachers provide an extension by referencing the photo cards: “This person is making the letter ‘L’. Is this letter straight or curved?” “What other letters are straight?” “What letters in your name are curved?” Teacher guidance closing out the activity states: “Invite children to take turns saying their names and spelling them out for the group. Doing so will reinforce the alphabet and help children remember the letters in their names along with the sequence they appear in.” Additionally, letters and sounds are introduced and taught in large groups and small

groups, and they are reinforced in independent centers, where the ABC Center and “Writer’s Corner” are supported every day.

5.4 Materials provide direct (explicit) instruction in print knowledge and concepts and opportunities for student practice.

- Materials provide direct (explicit) instruction in print awareness and connect print awareness to books/texts.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print in context to the students' experience at school.
- Materials include a research-based sequence of foundational skills instruction and opportunities for sufficient student practice.
- Materials follow a developmentally appropriate continuum for the development of print awareness knowledge.

Partially Meets 2/4

The materials reviewed provide direct (explicit) instruction in print awareness and connect print awareness to books/texts. Materials provide some opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print in context to the students' experience at school. Materials do not contain evidence of a research-based sequence of foundational skills instruction and only somewhat follow a developmentally appropriate continuum for the development of print awareness knowledge.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

During a whole group read-aloud of *My Big Feelings* in Theme 1, a puppet named Pablo aids in concept reinforcement (e.g., "Pablo enjoys books that teach us new things"). During the read-aloud, the teacher and Pablo ask questions such as "When does this boy feel shy? When do his feelings change to feeling brave?" and "Which word names the feeling the girl has about going on a picnic? Clap your hands if you feel excited when you are going to do something special." After the read-aloud, the teacher models writing sentences about feelings. While this example illustrates student practice of skills, the materials do not support research-based sequential instruction. Teacher guidance in this theme explains the importance of discussing aspects of a book's cover before reading the text. Teachers introduce new words and phrases using child-friendly definitions, such as "The illustrator draws the pictures" and "The table of contents is the list of stories in the book." The materials provide direct instruction in print awareness and opportunities to connect this awareness to books and texts; however, research supporting the development of an effective continuum is not evident.

In Theme 2, students learn about reading behaviors during a whole group read-aloud of *Ofrenda*. Before reading, the teacher models how to follow text: “I’ll move my hand from left to right and from top to bottom as I read this first sentence.” Another Theme 2 activity states: “Show children how you make a book about the park. Write a word on each page: ‘boy’, ‘kite’, and ‘dog’, reading each word to the children: ‘My story is about a boy, a kite, and a dog’. Illustrate the book as the children look on. Invite them to tell the story.” This activity somewhat connects to print awareness, although teachers do not make a direct connection to the typical construction of books and texts. Later in Theme 2, students are introduced to a “Big Chart” resembling a map: “Today we are going to read a map called ‘Our Neighborhood’. It is an informational text that uses pictures to give us information. Who can point to the library? What can you do there? A post office is where you go to mail a letter. What clues helped you find the post office? Who can point to the school bus? What building is the bus near?” This activity describes the use of pictures and figures in books and texts; however, the materials do not consistently provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print.

Whole group read-aloud teacher guidance advises pointing out letters, words, and other features of print. A large group activity in Theme 3 focusing on punctuation prompts: “This section is called ‘What Is Weather?’ Do you know what this mark is called ‘?’ A question mark tells readers that this is a question. Who can find and point to another question mark?” Print directionality is also addressed in Theme 3. For example, during a read-aloud, the teacher states: “Let’s look at the pictures and read the sentences in the same way we read and write—top to bottom and left to right. Run your finger below the words as I read.” A similar point is made in a Theme 4 small group activity: “Ask children to pick the weather they want to contribute to the book. ‘Who wants to make a page for windy? Snowy? Rainy? Sunny? Find your weather word on the board and write it at the top of your paper.’ When we read, we read from top to bottom. We do the same thing when we write.”

Materials include some posters that provide opportunities for students to connect environmental print to everyday school functions. In one example from Theme 5, a small group activity uses a poster that illustrates steps for handwashing. Teacher guidance states: “Review the 5 steps of handwashing and have the children pretend to wash their hands while singing ‘Row, Row, Row Your Boat.’” Materials do not include guidance on incorporating these posters into the classroom environment.

In general, the materials provide few opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print in context to the students’ experience in school. Under the “Classroom Environment” section in the “Implementation Guide,” there are subsections for “Morning Meeting,” “Relationships,” “Engaging Materials and Experiences,” and “Safe and Supportive Space.” These subsections do not go into depth describing how teachers can create a print-rich environment or communicate the everyday use of print. There are some examples of labels, posters, authentic print, charts, and classroom tools, but there is limited guidance connecting these resources to print knowledge and concepts.

Read-alouds include opportunities for the teacher to use print in support of vocabulary development. After a Theme 8 read-aloud of *Duck on a Bike*, the teacher presents vocabulary cards for the words *parked* and *pedaled*. Students study pictures of people performing various actions, identifying examples of *parked* and *pedaled* when they recognize them. A Theme 8 small group activity connects print and letter formation by inviting students to “uncover” hidden letters using paint. Students then “find the friend who has the same letter so that [they] will have one lowercase letter and one uppercase letter.” While the evidence gathered includes examples of explicit instruction of print knowledge and concepts, the materials do not include a clear, research-based scope and sequence.

There are examples in the resources where students identify different print concepts using “Big Charts,” “Large Group Story Time,” and “Small Group Activities.” For example, when students review the weather, the teacher states: “Each picture has a word next to it. These are called labels.” During Large Group Story Time, teachers ask questions like “Why did the other caterpillar yell at the impatient caterpillar? What text feature shows you that the caterpillar is yelling?” While these opportunities are useful for print concept understanding, there is no description or summary detailing how this instruction is organized throughout the year. Using the “Year at a Glance,” teachers can see how frequently certain print concepts are addressed throughout the year. However, there is no clear description of the research base that justifies this order and frequency.

5.5 Materials include a variety of text types and genres across contents that are high-quality and at an appropriate level of complexity.

- Text selection is at the appropriate level of complexity for students' developmental level.
- Materials include both fiction and nonfiction texts.
- Materials include a variety of types of texts, such as poems, songs, and nursery rhymes.
- Texts include content that is engaging to prekindergarten students and include opportunities for students to interact with the stories, including repeated parts.
- Read aloud texts cover a range of student interests.
- Materials include use of purposeful environmental print throughout the classroom.

Partially Meets 2/4

Materials include both fiction and nonfiction texts, including a variety of text types, such as poems, songs, and nursery rhymes. Text selection is at the appropriate level of complexity for students' developmental level. Texts include content that is engaging to prekindergarten students, and they include opportunities for students to interact with the stories, including repeated parts. Read-aloud texts cover a range of student interests. Environmental print is somewhat included, but it is limited in integration throughout the classroom.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Theme 1, *I Know Numbers* is a nonfiction text used repeatedly throughout one week of whole group read-aloud activities. This text is about places people see numbers, such as on a clock, telephone, street sign, or in a game. The text helps students understand the importance of numbers and how numbers are used every day. The text is developmentally appropriate and contains limited text on each page. The language is child-friendly, and illustrations are of everyday objects and actions. Students can connect the text to their prior knowledge and interests. Guiding questions engage students by providing opportunities to interact with the story: "Where have you seen numbers like this? They tell us how much money something costs. What kind of store do you think this is?" "Where do you see numbers in this picture? We use numbers in addresses so we know where people live. 3615 is this girl's house number." "How many children do you count in this picture?" "Do you have a favorite number? What is it? Why

is it your favorite?" This book presents teachers an opportunity to connect number recognition to environmental print used throughout the classroom. However, the materials do not make a connection to labels, tags, or charts that use numbers throughout the classroom environment.

In Theme 4, *Lola Gets a Cat* is a fiction text presented in a whole group read-aloud. Illustrations are bright, colorful, and engaging, while the text offers child-friendly, developmentally appropriate complexity. Students who have pets at home make meaningful, interest-based connections to the text. The text is about a child named Lola who wants to get a pet cat. The story depicts Lola learning about caring for cats before choosing and caring for her new cat at home. The concept of *pride* is introduced through descriptions of Lola's feelings as she prepares and cares for her new pet. Opportunities are provided throughout the reading to share and interact with the story, including a prompt to act out and explain things the students are *proud of*. The teacher invites students to make a face showing the feeling of *pride*.

A Theme 5 read-aloud of *How Do Dinosaurs Get Well Soon?* provides predictable, rhyming, repetitive text appropriate for pre-k students. The text is about what might happen if a dinosaur becomes sick. The book engages students in group discussions regarding behaviors displayed when one is sick (e.g., "Drinks a lot of juice and gets lots of rest"). Each page begins with the phrase "Does he..." (e.g., "Does he drop his dirty tissues on the floor?" "Does he fling his medicine on the floor?") The teacher guides students in making connections between personal experience and the text by posing comprehension questions throughout the reading.

Examples of fiction texts include but are not limited to:

Be Who You Are by Todd Parr (realistic fiction)
Hey, Wall by Susan Verde (fantasy)
How Big Is an Elephant? by Rosanna Bossu (math/measurement)
What a Cold Needs by Barbara Bottner (realistic fiction)
Little Nita's Big Idea by Anna Bardus (fantasy)
Water, Little Water by Jorge Tetl Argueta (folklore/translation)
The Greatest Adventure by Tony Piedra (fantasy)
Mole Catches the Sky by Ellen Tarlow (fantasy)
Hooray for Hoppy by Tim Hopgood (fantasy)
Please Play Safe by Margery Cuyler (realistic fiction)
Cloudette by Tom Lichtenheld (fantasy)
The Mitten by Tom Lichtenheld (fantasy)
This Shoe Needs a Foot by Caedyn Melach (fantasy)
Oscar and the Cricket by Geoff Waring (fantasy)

Examples of nonfiction texts include but are not limited to:

First Laugh—Welcome, Baby! by Rose Ann Tahe and Nancy Bo Flood (biography)
Baby on Board by Marianne Berkes (informational)
My Body by Andrea Pinnington and Penny Lamprell (informational)

Dentists and What They Do by Liesbet Slegers (informational)
From My Hands by East Coast Migrant Head Start (biography)
Baby Animals with Their Families by Suzi Eszterhas (scientific nonfiction)
Seed to Plant by Lisa Herrington (scientific nonfiction)
Cold, Crunchy, Colorful: Using Our Senses by Jane Brockett (informational)
Close Your Eyes by Victoria Pérez Escrivá (narrative)
Weather by Kristin Baird Rattini (informational)
How Big Is an Elephant? by Rossana Bossù (informational)
Push and Pull by Cody Crane (informational)

Examples of a variety of text types include but are not limited to:

“London Bridge Is Falling Down” (song/fingerplay)
“Open, Shut Them” (song/fingerplay)
“5 Little Ducks” (song/printed)
“Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” (song/printed)
“School Is Cool” (song/digital)
“Hola, Amigo” (song/digital)
“What’s the Weather?” (poem)
“At the Pond” (poem)
“The Changing Seasons” (poem)
“Row, Row, Row Your Boat” (song)
“Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” (song/movement)
“The Alphabet Song” (song)
“Five Green and Speckled Frogs” (song/fingerplay)
“Wheels on the Bus” (song)
“Star Light, Star Bright” (song)
“Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary” (song)
“Itsy, Bitsy, Spider” (song/fingerplay)

In Theme 1, the teacher introduces the “I like to…” poster, and then uses the poster again in a small group activity to demonstrate that print carries meaning. The teacher begins the activity by saying, “Today we read the poster ‘I like to…’ and looked at pictures and labels that go with the poem we listened to. For example, for the picture of the boy reading, we saw the label ‘read a book.’” Students then act out, without speaking, things they like to do. An extension activity suggests children draw pictures to show the things they like to do and then present their drawings to each other and discuss them. Theme 4 includes a “Big Chart” titled “The Chicks Say Pio, Pio, Pio.” The chart connects to a previous group discussion of how animal parents help their babies eat. Teacher guidance refers to the chart, suggesting guiding questions such as “How do animals help their babies learn, live, and grow?” These examples of print are utilized in isolation and are not added to the classroom after their accompanied activities. Additionally, these “Big Charts” are provided in the form of a spiral-bound “Big Chart of Ideas” for large group instruction. While described as posters, each card has a front and a back. This makes it difficult to separate each page for individual use and impractical for use as posted classroom

physical environment material. These charts are organized by theme and may be better used as teacher reference material during instruction. They are not environmental print in the traditional sense, meaning immediately understandable logos, signs, labels, and images. While there are many vocabulary tools and supports that integrate imagery, resources dedicated to environmental print, or “the print of everyday life,” are limited throughout. The “Implementation Guide” describes what it means to have a positive classroom environment, but it does not describe how to integrate and utilize purposeful environmental print within the classroom.

“Center Signs” are printable from the “Resources” area of the “Teacher Hub.” These signs show the name of each of the independent centers along with the icon that represents each center, for display in the classroom environment. While useful, these charts are specific to independent centers and not the classroom in general. With the exception of nine strategy cards, there are limited examples of labels, icons, or symbols mentioned for classroom use.

5.6 Materials use a variety of approaches to develop students' comprehension of text read aloud.

- Materials include guidance for the teacher to connect texts to children's experiences at home and school.
- Materials include guidance for the teacher on basic text structures and their impact on understanding of text.

Meets 4/4

The materials reviewed meet the criteria for the indicator. Materials include guidance for the teacher to connect texts to children's experiences at home and school. Guidance for the teacher on basic text structures and their impact on understanding of text is included.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Theme 1, during a whole group read-aloud of *Little Elliot, Big Family*, students are encouraged to make predictions and inferences about the text and explain basic text features. Teacher guidance includes guiding questions to reinforce student understanding of basic text structures. For example: "This is our new book for the week. What information is on the cover? Follow along as I read aloud the title and author's name. He wrote the words. He also made all the pictures!" and "When we guess what will happen next in a story, we make a prediction. Let's guess what might happen next! Where do you think Mouse will take Elliot?" A "Teacher Tip" states: "Reading to children from an early age is one of the best ways to help them develop the pre-literacy skills they need before they can read. As you read aloud a book's title and the names of the creator(s), run your finger below each word. While reading a story, ask children to identify key words depicted in the illustrations." Theme 1 provides teacher guidance in connecting texts to student experience during a whole group read-aloud of *How Alma Got Her Name*: "In the story, Alma's father shows her pictures of people in their family and tells her stories about them. Alma learns about what each one liked to do or what they are known for. Explain to children what it means to be 'known for' something." Students then draw a picture of themselves doing something they like to do or something they would like to be "known for." In this theme, a whole group discussion of *Clifford's Manners* reinforces the student connection between text and personal experience: "The author doesn't explain why we shouldn't talk during a movie. Let's use story clues and what we already know to make a smart guess about it. Look at the illustration. What clues can you find? Now think about a time you couldn't hear me

reading a story because someone was talking. How did you feel?" These questions guide the students to make inferences about the unknown information.

In Theme 2, the text *Me and My Cars* is revisited throughout the week, providing an opportunity for students to connect text to their everyday lives as the week progresses. During the first reading, as they listen, students reflect on "what vehicles are for." The teacher asks questions such as "What do you think this book is about?" "What do you like to ride?" "How can vehicles help people do work?" "What kind of vehicles do work?" Following the read-aloud, the teacher models a writing activity: "Write and read aloud short sentences about vehicles children recognize from their daily lives." The next reading challenges students to consider "How do the vehicles in the book help us?" as they listen. After the reading, students "Turn and Talk" with a peer to discuss the questions posed. Following the final read-aloud, students engage in an independent writing activity. Teacher guidance states: "Invite children to draw or write a story about a type of vehicle and include its special features." The materials include guidance for the teacher on basic text structures and their impact on understanding of text, such as on the skill of inferring. A Theme 2 "Large Group Activity Card" states: "Inference is a skill that extends beyond literacy. Introduce children to the idea of using picture clues to learn things that the author doesn't say with words. Combining picture clues with what they already know will help them make inferences about the story."

In Theme 3, teacher guidance for a whole group read-aloud of *Cold, Crunchy, Colorful: Using Our Senses* supports the connection between texts and students' home experiences. After the reading, the teacher states: "Today we read the book *Cold, Crunchy, Colorful: Using Our Senses* and learned about our five senses. In this activity, we will look at pages in the book and make connections to the pictures with what we see in our lives." Teacher guidance suggests: "Ask children to say what the first picture is. Then ask them if they can relate to something in their own lives. Show the pages from the book and ask the questions as children look at the pictures." Guiding questions include "Look at the picture. Does your neighborhood look like this? What does it look like?" "Do you have flowers growing in your neighborhood? Do flowers have a good or bad smell?" "Do you eat eggs for breakfast? What foods do you eat for breakfast? Do they taste sweet? Do they taste salty?" Following the group discussion, teacher guidance suggests: "Point to things in the classroom that children can identify using their senses. Invite children to discuss how they use their senses. For example, you can point to a red book on the bookshelf and ask what color they see. Or have a child get a plush toy from one of the centers and pass it around and ask children how it feels."

A Theme 8 large group activity provides an opportunity for students to connect text and school experiences. The teacher reads aloud *How Kids Grow*. Then, students walk along a "balance beam" previously taped out on the floor by the teacher. Students are encouraged to walk forward and backward along the "balance beam." Students then "draw a picture of this (walking on the 'balance beam') or something else they could not do as babies but can do now," while teachers "invite volunteers to share their drawings in an 'author's chair,'" during which students "explain in complete sentences what they were unable to do before but are able to do now."

5.7 Materials include appropriate strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their development of emergent reading skills.

- Materials include a variety of strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs).
- Strategies include use of the child’s knowledge of literacy in their primary language and ensure that knowledge is used to help them transfer to English language and literacy skills.

Meets 4/4

The materials include strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs). Strategies sometimes include use of the child’s knowledge of literacy in their primary language and ensure that knowledge is used to help them transfer to English language and literacy skills.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The program provides explicit supports for Multilingual Learners on each “Large Group Card” and each “Small Group Teacher Activity Card.” The “Implementation Guide” outlines teaching strategies for ELs, including pre-teaching vocabulary, total physical response, providing definitions in context, vocabulary and skill repetition, and open-ended and concept questions.

The materials contain a list of English-to-Spanish cognates to support Spanish-speaking students in making connections. Teacher guidance on the list states: “Sharing related words can help language learners use knowledge in their primary language to understand a second language.” Themes 1, 3, and 7 offer a variety of small group instructional strategies, including reviewing vocabulary before activities, allowing students to use physical cues, and allowing responses in the students’ first language. For example, Theme 1 teacher guidance states: “For children who may need more language support, review the numbers 1 to 5 in their home language. The group can practice counting aloud in English, holding up the number of fingers for each number said.” Theme 3 suggests: “Set aside a specific time to pre-teach new lesson vocabulary to multilingual learners. If possible, teach lesson concepts—*force*, *push*, *pull*—in children’s native language first. Video clips, interactive tools, text-to-speech, and voice output have also shown to be beneficial tools in teaching science concepts to multilingual learners.” Theme 7 teacher guidance states: “Invite multilingual learners to name the objects in their home language before they replace them where they belong. To encourage children to be proud of their home languages, ask the group to listen and then repeat the words in that language and in English.”

In Theme 1, movement and creative expression are used to support ELs after a whole group read-aloud of *Be Who You Are*. Teachers ask comprehension questions and encourage students to act out the answer: “What are the children doing in the book? (Dancing). The children get up and dance.” The materials include online resources for some texts and concepts through the “Little eReaders” link. For example, Theme 1 includes two video books: *Hi Fly Guy* and *Amazing Grace*.

In Theme 2, ELs discuss the book *Thank You Omu* in their home language after a whole group read-aloud, answering the question “Why did the neighbors give Omu food at the end of the book?” Teacher guidance states: “Encourage multilingual learners to talk about their drawings and tell the story of what they drew. They may choose to use words from their home language in the captions that they dictate to you. If necessary, get help from other native speakers of that language.” While this teacher guidance is included in the materials, it is not clearly referenced or integrated, making it difficult for new teachers and those unfamiliar with supporting ELs to locate and utilize.

In Theme 3, a small group activity begins with the teacher discussing different types of clouds and the water that comes from them. The students look at various pictures of clouds and water while answering teacher questions. Teacher guidance suggests the encouragement of peer-to-peer discussion about experiences with weather, inviting ELs to speak their primary language.

In Theme 4, students use their knowledge of literacy skills in their primary language to transfer to English language and literacy skills. Following a whole group read-aloud of *What Am I?*, students match rhyming picture cards such as *wig/pig* and *rake/snake*. Teachers invite ELs to share rhyming words in their primary language, including those found in songs and poems.

In Theme 5, during a whole group read-aloud of *My Body*, students and teachers look at and sort various pictures. Teacher guidance states: “Encourage children to use a physical response in addition to speaking. For example, invite children to point to their own hands, feet, and heads when these pictures are shown. These physical and visual cues will support language development, and children will be able to participate in the activity while their language skills grow.”

In Theme 7, students are introduced to “Cognates Strategy Cards” and how to use them in the learning process. During a small group activity, the teacher reminds students, “Today, we learned that words in different languages can sound alike and have the same meaning.” The teacher explains that they are going to look at various pictures and guess what the cognate in Spanish is. The teacher strategy suggests Spanish-speaking students can “raise their hand when they think they hear a cognate.” The teacher is then instructed: “Stop reading and discuss that cognate. Point out the subtle differences you hear between the Spanish and English words. Invite them to contribute cognates they might encounter every day.” This strategy allows students to use their knowledge of their primary language to transfer skills to their English language and literacy skills. Culturally relevant books and book suggestions are included in the

materials, such as *Alma and How She Got Her Name*, which features a little girl and the heritage behind her long name, “Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela”; *First Laugh—Welcome, Baby!*, which tells about the Navajo tradition of how a family celebrates a baby’s first laugh; and *Hey, Wall!*, which tells the story of a diverse inner-city community that brightens their neighborhood with a community mural.

6.1 Materials include a variety of experiences through which students can engage with writing.

- Materials include direct (explicit) instruction, as well as opportunities for children to imitate adult writing.
- Materials include opportunities for students to generate independent writing.
- Materials include opportunities for group writing on shared experiences.
- Materials include opportunities for illustration/drawing with detail, which transfers to writing.
- Materials include opportunities to write in response to reading and make explicit the connection between reading and writing.

Meets 4/4

Materials include direct (explicit) instruction as well as opportunities for children to imitate adult writing. Opportunities for students to generate independent writing and group writing on shared experiences are included. Materials include opportunities for illustration/drawing with detail, which transfers to writing, as well as opportunities to write in response to reading. Materials make explicit the connection between reading and writing.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

During a Theme 1 whole group read-aloud of *The Adventures of Jovani and Alejandro*, the teacher engages students in exploration of math concepts before providing a shared writing experience: “Who can come up and count the horses on this page? Can you count them in a different order? Are there still four horses in all? Jovani and Alejandro found the mega peach! Who can point to and count the one peach?” At the end of the read-aloud, teacher guidance suggests: “Share a pen with children as they draw and write number sentences about playing games with their friends.” The “superhero” theme in this text also serves as a prompt for independent writing in centers: “Write a story about a superhero who can count faster than anyone in the world.” Theme 1 provides further opportunities for independent writing with a worksheet prompt: “Who can be the people in a family?” Teacher guidance states: “Differentiate and modify as needed. Save children’s writing to display next week.” Following a whole group read-aloud of *First Laugh—Welcome, Baby!*, students engage in a group writing activity: “Let’s think of ways that our own families are special. We will make a book about our family members and show what makes them special. I’ll help you with the writing part.” Teacher guidance states: “Pass out the stapled pages you put together and go over each page with

children, asking them to dictate the end of each sentence so you can write it in. Then have them use crayons or other art supplies to decorate the pages. You can do this activity over a number of days and send the books home so that children's family members can help children to decorate the cover of the book by drawing a group picture that shows all the family members they showed inside. Invite children to share their books with the other children and talk about what makes their families special. Have them show and discuss the artwork inside the book. Share the books with children's family members at a family celebration." Theme 1 includes opportunities for students to imitate adult writing after a whole group read-aloud of *Thank You, Friend*. The teacher engages students in a group discussion about friendship and models writing a thank-you note. Students are then invited to create their own thank-you note.

Following a whole group read-aloud of *Ofrenda* in Theme 2, the teacher reviews the roles of "author" and "illustrator" by explaining that illustrations help the reader better understand the story. Students are provided a blank, three-page book and encouraged to be "illustrators" of their own story. Teacher guidance states: "Show children how you make a book about the park. Write a word on each page: 'boy,' 'kite,' and 'dog'. Read the words to children. 'My story is about a boy, a kite, and a dog.' Illustrate the book as the children look on. Invite them to tell the story." Students then take their own turns illustrating their books. After students have finished, the teacher asks questions like "How did your picture help to tell the story?" to help students understand that drawing connects to writing.

During a Theme 3 small group activity, students create a class book about things they can do in different kinds of weather. The teacher models: "I'll choose rainy weather! When it's rainy, I love to sit under a blanket in my favorite chair and read a book. I'll draw myself doing that. Now draw yourself doing something in the weather you chose." Teacher guidance states: "Find your weather word on the board. Write it at the top of your paper. Point to the top of a paper and say, 'When we read, we read from top to bottom. We do the same thing when we write. Now draw yourself doing something in the weather you chose.'" After the students have shared their writing, the teacher creates a table of contents with input from students regarding how to write the table and what pages they contributed to the book. Theme 3 teacher guidance suggests direct instruction for students experiencing difficulty writing their name. Following a whole group read-aloud of *The Great Big Enormous Yuca*, students are invited to draw something that is "great, big, or enormous" on oversized paper, and label their drawing with their name. Teacher guidance states: "As children draw, talk about other words they might use to describe their plants or animals such as 'huge,' 'tremendous,' and 'gigantic'. When children finish, help them label their drawings as a 'great, big, enormous....'" If students are unable to write their name, teacher guidance suggests writing it for them in large letters, watching as they write and practice letters that are most challenging for them. Teacher guidance also suggests talking with students after the activity about their drawings and having them think about other descriptive labels.

After a whole group read-aloud of *My Body* in Theme 5, teachers are encouraged to write and read aloud short sentences about how bodies work and how to stay healthy and safe. Students expand teacher sentences with new words and concepts introduced in the story. Teacher

guidance states: “Show children how you begin writing on the left side and add letters and words to the right.” Teacher modeling is again suggested after a whole group read-aloud of *From Our Hands*. The teacher writes and reads aloud sentences about healthy foods the teacher likes to eat. Theme 5 also includes writing opportunities in independent writing centers: “Can you write what you would tell a sick dino to do to get well soon?” “Imagine you had a real ‘personal space bubble’ that everyone could see. Can you write about what that would be like?” “Imagine you are taking care of a sick dinosaur. Can you write about it?” While these independent center writing prompts serve as evidence supporting the indicator, the skill level required is not appropriate for the typical prekindergarten student.

Writing practice is integrated into math content in Theme 8. Teacher guidance states: “Give each child a sticky note. Ask, ‘Who is your favorite character from *I Want to Grow?*’ Invite children to draw or write their answer on a sticky note. Then have children place their sticky notes on a chart or board to create a bar graph. Ask, ‘Why do you like this character?’ Encourage children to give their answer with detail and compare results: ‘Which character is most popular?’” This theme also includes an opportunity for group writing in relation to a shared experience: “‘Today we’re going to re-read *On Ed’s Bed* and create stories together with the words we see at the end of the book.’ Write down and read aloud the words on the back cover of *On Ed’s Bed*. Provide children with drawing supplies. Say: ‘Let’s create a new story together about the words that start with e.’ Invite children to write and draw the story on their paper as you create your story together.”

6.2 Materials instruct students along the developmental stages of writing.

- Materials follow the developmental continuum of how children learn writing.
- Materials provide guidance for teachers on how to nudge students along the continuum for writing development.
- Materials include guidance for teachers on how to include appropriate student contributions to writing and the writing process, as specified by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

Partially Meets 2/4

The materials include some guidance for teachers on how to include appropriate student contributions to writing and the writing process, as specified by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. The materials follow the developmental continuum of how children learn writing. However, the materials do not provide guidance for teachers on how to nudge students along the continuum for writing development.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Lessons throughout all themes combine modeled writing, shared writing, and interactive writing to move children along the levels of writing development. These lessons follow a fixed formula after each whole group read-aloud: Day 1, the teacher models sentence formulation; Day 2, the teacher transcribes student thought; Day 3, the teacher shares the pen with students for an interactive writing experience; Day 4, the teacher provides feedback as students write. For feedback, the “Implementation Guide” states: “Provide a writing prompt and give ongoing feedback as children draw and write in response to the prompt.” This is the extent of the direction found in the Implementation Guide; it does not specify the type of feedback or provide guidance for teachers to nudge students along the continuum for writing development.

Writing takes place in small groups every Day 5 where the focus is on the child’s own self-expression, identity as a writer, and growing appreciation of the value of written words and images. Children work from “Response Prompts” and have the option of “Drawing, Writing, or Storytelling” (dictating to the teacher) in order to express themselves in response to the prompt. The program includes a sleeved booklet the teacher can use to “publish” children’s writing each week, creating a class book to celebrate all children in the classroom as authors of a book related to that week’s concept exploration. This structure provides students logical

opportunities to practice writing, but it provides teachers a limited variety of instruction, intervention, scaffolding, and extension techniques.

To support their emergent writing as well as their alphabet knowledge, children practice letter formation during every Day 1 small group “Literacy” activity, focusing on the target letters for that week. “Letter Formation” guides and rhymes are available in the “Resources” area of the “Teacher Hub.” Implementation Guide research states: “As beginning writers, they progress from scribbles to marks and letter-like forms that convey meaning, to writing letters and words for different purposes (Schickendanz and Collins, 2013).” There are “Letter Formation” practice pages, along with jingles, that provide direction for writing each letter. However, there are no additional charts, diagrams, or descriptions that further explain the different stages along the writing continuum or how students are expected to progress from stage to stage. This section does not include guidance on how to assist children, who typically move back and forth across various levels of writing, through the levels.

In a Theme 1 small group activity, the teacher places magnetic letters in a bowl and indicates one student, writing that student’s name on a name card while identifying the first letter (i.e., “David starts with D”). The student finds that letter in the bowl and matches it to his name card. The student is encouraged to say his name and letter aloud while tracing the letter with his finger. Students are then provided crayons to trace the letter. While the materials include writing lessons, they do not follow the sequence of developmental stages of writing. For example, later in Theme 1, the teacher states: “Today, we are going to make thank-you notes. Think of a time when someone did something for you. Write a note to that person thanking them for their good manners.” In this small group activity children “write” a thank-you note at their own individual writing level. That may be drawing, scribbling, writing letter-like forms, or writing fully formed letters or words. This lesson occurs at the beginning of the year when most early learners are in the initial stage of writing development, including scribbling and developing fine motor skills needed to grasp writing tools.

A writing activity in Theme 2 progresses as follows: Day 1, the teacher writes and reads aloud short sentences about what people see in a neighborhood: “Give children drawing paper and have them draw pictures of what they might see in a neighborhood.” Day 2, the teacher and students complete shared writing about things students do at home that are *hard*. Day 3, students are provided a variety of tools to write about a place they like from their neighborhood. Day 4 teacher guidance states: “Provide a writing prompt about the children’s neighborhood. Give ongoing feedback as children draw in response to the prompt. Allow time for sharing writing.” This statement is the extent of suggested feedback for the lesson and does not go into further depth describing how the teacher can specifically nudge students along the writing continuum. Day 5, students complete an independent writing activity on a worksheet, answering the prompt “What do you like about your neighborhood?” Children are encouraged to write at their own level, whether that looks like drawing, scribbling, or letter-like forms.

Theme 3 provides opportunities for students to reflect on shared experiences through writing and drawing. For example, after a reading of *Where’s My Teddy?* the teacher writes and reads

aloud short, descriptive sentences about the bears in the story; students listen and draw pictures in response. A similar activity is offered after a whole group read-aloud of *Weather*, this time culminating in a shared writing experience. Here, the teacher and students share a pen while discussing and writing about their experiences with weather. Teacher guidance encourages discussion of correct directionality when writing, but teachers are also encouraged to celebrate all student attempts to convey meaning through scribbles and letter-like forms. For example, teacher guidance in Theme 3 states: “At this age, children are moving from scribbles to marks that stand for something specific. When asked, children will explain that they’ve written a grocery list, a to-do list, or some other specific type of writing. Provide daily writing opportunities, such as setting up a sign-in and sign-out routine where children practice writing their names.” Beyond letter directionality and encouraging this celebration, specific teacher guidance directing students along the stages of writing development is inconsistent.

One of the few examples where teachers do nudge students through writing is provided on a “Large Group Activity Card” in Theme 5: “Emergent writing is a child’s first attempt at writing. Children as young as two years old can imitate writing by drawing and making markings that represent thoughts. This is the beginning of the stages children progress through as they learn to write. This is an important predictor of children’s reading and writing skills.” Similar “Teacher Tips” originate on the Large Group Cards, where they illuminate the research-based purpose behind a specific action the teacher takes during that lesson. A bibliography for these “Child Development” tips appears at the back of each printed “Teaching Guide.” While they often provide useful context for teachers, their research facts often echo those found in the Implementation Guide. Teachers have limited access to specific guidance, direction, suggestions, or advice meant to help students progress along the writing continuum.

Following a whole group read-aloud of *Seed to Plant* in Theme 7, teachers transcribe student narratives as they describe the life cycle of plants. Teacher guidance states: “Ask questions to help them add correct details and revise anything as needed. Share a pen with children as you work together to write about how a plant grows. Help children add details about each stage of the life cycle. Provide a writing prompt about the things plants need to grow. Have children generate a list, drawing or writing as many needs as they can remember, based on information in *Seed to Plant*. Encourage children to experiment with punctuation marks. Invite children to draw or talk about how they can help plants grow. Encourage children to add details to their drawings or their writing.” These statements—“Help children add details about each stage of the life cycle,” “Encourage children to experiment with punctuation marks,” and “Encourage children to add details to their drawings or their writing”—do not clearly show teachers how to integrate student contributions into their writing or how to nudge students along the writing continuum. The writing advice leaves much of the intervention details up to the teacher.

6.3 Materials support fine motor development alongside and through writing.

- Materials provide a variety of opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills.
- Materials provide differentiation and guidance on how to develop students' fine motor skills towards writing.
- Materials prescribe a variety of tools and surfaces for student writing experiences.

Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide a variety of opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills. While there are a variety of tools for fine motor development, there is only some differentiation and some guidance connecting fine motor skills development to writing. Additionally, the writing surfaces to which students have access are somewhat limited in variety.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide a "Teacher's Guide," which includes a materials list for each center; these materials offer opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills. For example, suggested materials for Theme 1 include stick puppets, pretend money and register, dolls, pattern blocks, connecting cubes, clay, scissors, beads, and string. Theme 2 materials include clay, various writing and drawing tools, writing paper, tracing cards, and dry-erase boards. Theme 4 materials include clay, lined writing paper, and drawing supplies. Theme 8 materials include crayons, markers, colored pencils, drawing paper, clay, and painting supplies. While these materials are suggested, the guide does not offer ideas for incorporating them into specific learning objectives. Students often use these materials for developing fine motor skills, but these skills are not frequently connected and linked to writing.

There is a section in the "Implementation Guide" that somewhat describes materials relevant to fine motor development; however, the focus is on providing modifications for children with physical and developmental needs. Under the general section title "Meeting Individual Needs," there is a list of "manipulatives and components that can be used to give children additional support: jumbo tweezers, pattern blocks and cards, alphabet cards, microphone, Alphabet Cards and Number Cards, and Magnifiers." These supports are not specific to fine motor development, and only the jumbo tweezers clearly connect to this focus. This section does not provide additional differentiation and guidance on how to develop students' fine motor skills towards writing. An additional subsection titled "Physical Development," under the section

“Music and Movement,” suggests “children should spend at least 25% of their day engaged in fine motor or gross-motor activities (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009).” However, the next subsections are titled “Music and Song” and “Opportunities for Music and Movements.” These subsections are focused on gross-motor activities, and there are no other sections in the Implementation Guide that describe the product’s explicit plan for fine motor skills development.

Sometimes small group activities include “Fine Motor Skills” recommendations under the “Modifications” section of the activity card. This modification section also includes a section on “Multilingual Learners.” Like the guidance found in the Implementation Guide, it is more framed toward accommodating students with individual needs. While a valuable practice, this section does not provide guidance on how to develop students’ fine motor skills towards writing. In many examples, the suggestion is to replace the activity with something more accessible to one’s abilities. For example: “If children are unable to sculpt with clay, allow them to use a medium more accessible to their abilities. For example, you may provide a long paintbrush and an easel for children who have trouble making or manipulating small objects.” This suggestion completely alters the task objective.

A whole group activity in Theme 1 includes an extension to support the development of fine motor skills. Teacher guidance suggests helping students trace their hands on paper and use scissors to create a cutout. Students write their names on the back and dictate one way they have helped a friend. The teacher transcribes the student narrative on the cutout, adding it to a “Helping Hands of Friendship” class board. Teachers are provided guiding questions for center time to help students engage with learning materials: “Draw a picture of yourself doing your favorite activity with your family. How will you color it?” “What story can you tell about someone who feels calm?” “What would you say in an email to a friend you miss? Can you draw and write about it?” and “What materials will you use to make a picture of yourself? You can use paint, crayons, or pencils.” The activity itself, tracing hands and using scissors, does provide students the opportunity to develop their fine motor skills. However, none of the guiding questions provide differentiation and guidance on developing these fine motor skills. There is no clear connection to writing development.

Following a whole group read-aloud of *The Seesaw* in Theme 3, teacher guidance states: “Have children help you create the balance scale by threading the string through the cups. Then, have children use tweezers to place objects on and remove objects from the scale.” This activity offers an opportunity for students to develop fine motor skills but does not provide teacher guidance on how to support this development. There are some examples where teacher guidance does support fine motor development. In a similar activity, guidance states: “Connecting Cubes are a great way for children to strengthen their fine motor skills. If the activity is too difficult for some learners, connect cubes in a variety of lengths ahead of time. Children can line up sets of the Connecting Cubes alongside their partner’s foot. Have them try different lengths until they find the one that matches.”

During an extension activity in Theme 4, students paint an animal they have learned about. Teacher guidance says: “Give children paint and paper and encourage them to paint one animal they learned about during this theme. Ask them how many feet they are including. You may wish to add other art supplies like feathers and sequins—encourage children to use these supplies to really show those animal features!” This is one of the examples where students use tools and surfaces other than crayons, colored pencils, or markers.

Theme 6 also incorporates some use of alternative materials to increase students’ small muscle strength and hand coordination. For example, during large group time, the teacher facilitates a group discussion about materials used to build houses, such as brick, wood, mud, and ice. After presenting pictures of various houses, students are provided drinking straws and interlocking bricks and challenged to build with both materials. Following a whole group read-aloud of *Little Nita’s Big Idea*, students are reminded of the main character’s plan for making fruit salad. Students are provided a paper circle, crumpled red and white paper, and glue. The teacher models following steps to make pizza while stating them aloud. The teacher then invites students to follow the steps as well. Following a whole group read-aloud of *More-igami* in Theme 6, students create their own origami project. Each student is provided a square piece of paper; the teacher guides them through a step-by-step folding process. A math lesson in this theme includes guidance suggesting teachers help children “grasp crayons the way you will later want them to grip a pencil.” Materials further state: “Use a small piece of masking tape on the table or desk to keep the drawing paper from sliding. Model holding a crayon and adjusting children’s grips as needed. Encourage children to pick up their crayons using just their thumbs and pointer fingers; model doing this and then flipping the crayon to rest correctly against the middle finger in the tripod grasp.” This is one example where additional teacher scaffolding directly connects fine motor development to writing.

Most of the opportunities available for students to engage with writing surfaces and tools occur in the “Purposeful Play Centers.” Sometimes tools are suggested and not required; in a Theme 2 Math domain small group activity, measuring tools are suggested but not required. The teacher shows pictures of tools like timers, scales, rulers, and measuring spoons to teach the name of each item, but students do not use them in the activity itself. The incorporation of various surfaces to promote development of writing skills is not consistent throughout all themes. One example is found in Theme 8 following a whole group read-aloud of *Jabari Jumps* and a group discussion about racing. Students are each provided a tray of salt and invited to “race” one another, using their fingers to draw letters in the trays of salt. For the most part, children use different types of paper, markers, pencils, and crayons. Beyond this example of salt tray usage, students have a few opportunities to write with shaving cream, finger paint, and dry-erase boards toward the beginning of the year. These opportunities are somewhat limited and inconsistent.

7.1 Materials follow a logical mathematical continuum of concrete, pictorial, then abstract representations.

- Instruction in all mathematical competencies progresses from concrete to pictorial to abstract, with the greatest emphasis on using concrete manipulatives.
- Materials include a variety of types of concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations.
- Materials include activities that build conceptual understanding in: counting, adding to, taking away, geometry, spatial sense, measurement, classification, and pattern skills, as indicated by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

Meets 4/4

The materials include a variety of concrete manipulatives with some pictorial representations. Materials include some activities that build conceptual understanding in counting, adding to, taking away, geometry, spatial sense, measurement, classification, and pattern skills, as indicated by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Instruction in mathematical competencies progresses from concrete to pictorial, with some progression to abstract. A great emphasis is placed on using concrete manipulatives.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Implementation Guide” includes teacher guidance on the research-based approach involving varied and repeated representations to help children understand and value early math concepts. The materials include a combination of actions, images, and symbols to reinforce children’s learning and to support children’s development from concrete (actions, images) to abstract (symbols) understanding.

A Theme 1 small group activity explores number and counting concepts using concrete manipulatives: “In this activity, you will give me the number of counters I ask for. Before the activity, practice rote counting with the group. Count aloud slowly from 1–10 and repeat. Count to 20 if children are proficient counters.” Students are provided three counters each. Following exploration of the counters, they are asked to present one, two, or three counters. If time allows, teachers and students switch roles. Counters are used again in this theme to explore counting during a small group activity. Students are provided with five counters and prompted by the teacher: “In this activity, I will pretend my counters are horses. I will count out a certain number of horses. Then, I will hide my horses behind the curtain. You will count out the same

number of horses, and we will make sure our sets match!” During the activity, students are reminded that the varying colors of “horses” does not affect the number counted. Another small group activity in this theme states: “Give each child 3 two-color counters. Choose a number from 1 to 3 and say, ‘give me [that number].’ For example: ‘Give me one counter. Find one counter from your pile of counters and slide it over to me.’ Each child should count out that number of counters from the pile and hand you that number. Check that you received the correct number of counters by counting aloud.” As stated in the Implementation Guide, in “Behind the Curtain” activities, “children expand from concrete to abstract thinking as they ‘imagine’ items in a hidden area during game play.” A Theme 1 whole group read-aloud of *Nobody Hugs a Cactus* connects pictorial representations to a small group exploration of the counters. The concrete materials are used to represent characters from the story. The teacher models lining up the cubes to count them, and then provides each child with 5 to 10 connecting cubes. Students are given time to count the number of cubes given. Although examples of pictorial and concrete representations are found throughout all themes, there is no evidence of a systematic progression leading to abstract concepts in the materials. These activities are included within isolated, structured lessons and provide some teacher guidance on how to reinforce concepts throughout the day. The Implementation Guide provides a summary of guidance on cross-domain math connections through universal concepts including symbols, sequence, and comparing and contrasting.

A Theme 3 small group activity reinforces measurement concepts explored during a whole group read-aloud discussion: “As we read *How Big Is an Elephant?*, we talked about how animals are different sizes. Today we will look at how big each of you are and compare your size to others. How big are you?” Students write their name on a sticky note, and the teacher measures them using a tape measure or yard stick. Teacher guidance suggests having conversations with students using vocabulary words and math concepts such as “larger than” or “smaller than” as well as comparisons between student sizes. Measurement concepts introduced in *How Big Is an Elephant* are explored further through a small group activity using toys as measurement tools. Students line up the toy animals in order by length and use blocks or cubes to measure them. This story is also used during a whole group activity exploring spatial sense. The Day 1 reading of this book focuses on concrete size comparison, and the Day 2 reading of the book bridges to abstract size comparison, as described here. The “Extended Play” activity itself, which follows the Day 2 read-aloud, includes concrete comparisons (“Challenge children to find objects that are bigger or smaller than body parts. For example, one child might pick up a pebble smaller than a fingernail. Another child might find a leaf bigger than a hand.”) This is followed by abstract comparison (“I see that the leaf is bigger than your hand. Is it bigger than a house? How do you know?”). Teacher guidance for a small group activity in this theme includes suggestions for building conceptual understanding in counting: “Set up five books on the table. Begin counting them out loud one at a time, pointing to each as you say a number. Pause and look for children to raise their hands after each count. When you get to the fourth one, say nothing, then point to the fifth and say the number four instead. Ask, ‘Did I make a mistake? What was it? How can I fix it?’ Continue the activity, making new mistakes, including pointing to one you already counted, skipping numbers, swapping letters with numbers, and counting out of order. To extend, have children demonstrate the correct way to count for you.”

This theme also includes an activity exploring adding and taking away using concrete representation. Following a whole group read-aloud of *The Mitten*, the teacher provides each student with a mitten (real or paper) and color counters, prompting: “You will pretend these counters are cold animals. You can put an animal in or take one out using the counters. We will say how many animals are in the mitten after one joins or leaves.” This story is also referenced while students explore the concept of sorting: “You will bring one mitten or glove, whichever you wore to school today, to the table. We will sort them into two groups: ‘mittens’ and ‘gloves.’”

A Theme 8 small group activity invites students to “investigate” a partner by asking a series of questions, such as “Does your partner have a pet?” Students represent answers with sticky notes, creating a bar graph. Teacher guidance states: “Continue with different questions as time allows, graphing each question’s answers separately. Choose questions that have only two possible answers to make graphing easier.” After a whole group read-aloud of *Mole Catches the Sky* in this theme, students use 5-frames to “keep track of animal friends who are going to a party at Mole’s house.” Teachers guide and model: “‘Let’s see how many friends she can fit in her home!’ Have children count three connecting cubes and place them on the 5-frame. Guide them to use the empty boxes to determine how many more friends can join.” Examples of use of concrete manipulatives and pictorial representation are evident throughout all themes, while abstract representation is somewhat supported by prior comprehensive exploration of concrete representation. The “Year at a Glance” shows that skill dependencies are included in the sequence of the math lessons. For example, the concept of counting and the number words themselves are addressed before formal counting is introduced. Counting is practiced before the concept of counting objects in various order is introduced. Shapes are taught before the concept of sliding, flipping, and turning them is introduced. Sorting and classification are practiced before the idea of organizing and representing data is introduced. Additionally, within this progression, teachers are encouraged to use the weekly observational assessments to inform responsive instruction.

7.2 Materials promote instruction that builds on students' informal knowledge about mathematics.

- Materials prompt teachers to inquire about students' developmental status and mathematical knowledge.
- Materials include cross-curricular opportunities to authentically integrate mathematics throughout the day.
- Materials support the use of the classroom environment and materials as vehicles to explore math concepts and skills.

Meets 4/4

Materials include cross-curricular opportunities to authentically integrate mathematics throughout the day. The classroom environment and materials are used as vehicles to explore math concepts and skills. Materials provide prompting for teachers to inquire about students' developmental status and mathematical knowledge.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Instruction systematically builds on students' prior knowledge in mathematical concepts. Activities for building math background are included on Day 1 and Day 3 of the large group experiences. Math activities are often included as suggestions; for instance: "Use Pattern Blocks to help children identify squares and triangles. Flip and turn the shapes in all directions to show that orientation does not change the shape." "Observational Assessment" forms are included each week throughout the themes. The Observational Assessment indicates the math concept being introduced and contains guidance to document whether a student is "not yet," "sometimes," or "always" comprehending the concept. This supports the teacher in recognizing individualized developmental skill levels. There is no teacher guidance supporting "next steps" to scaffold student developmental progression within this tool. However, every math activity has a "Support" option to scaffold children toward development of the target skill as well as a "Challenge" option for children who are ready for more. Additionally, teachers can access the "Teacher Hub" to search for related math activities to scaffold or extend math development.

A Theme 2 large group activity connects students' prior knowledge with new math concepts. Teacher guidance states: "Help children learn ordinal numbers by teaching them in the context of their lives. When children are lined up to leave the classroom, ask them to identify who is 'first,' 'second,' 'third,' 'fourth,' and 'fifth' in line." This connection is also provided with the

Theme 2 text, *Big Book City Shapes*: “Although many children begin to learn shapes before preschool, they may not realize that they already find shapes every day. Recognizing shapes in familiar contexts helps provide children with a foundational understanding of conceptual geometry and prepares them to draw and use shapes themselves.” During a small group activity, each student receives pattern blocks in a variety of shapes. The teacher connects to the text *Whose Hands Are These?* by inviting students to use their blocks to make a building. During the activity, the teacher discusses with students how tall or wide their building will be. Guiding questions include “What shape are you holding? Where is it going to go? How can you turn it? If you flip it, will it fit better?” A suggested extension challenges students to build with one type of pattern block. Suggestions for supporting struggling students include modeling how to create an image using pattern blocks and talking out loud when modeling. Math concepts are integrated throughout the day in Theme 2 after a whole group read-aloud of *Dad’s First Day*: “Students gather objects or pictures to represent parts of the daily schedule, for instance a kickball for gym or a book for reading time. Ask children to name each activity and then place the objects or signs in sequential order. Guide children to use ordinal numbers as they discuss which activity comes ‘first,’ ‘second,’ ‘third,’ etc.” The “Pretend and Learn” center includes the prompt “Pretend you are getting ready for school. What do you do first? Then what do you do next?” During independent centers in this theme, teacher guidance includes prompts such as “Let’s create a list of all the helpers we can think of. I’ll write them, and then we’ll count them!” and “Make two towers. Which one is taller? How could you make the smaller tower larger than the tall tower?” These prompts create cross-curricular opportunities to authentically integrate mathematics throughout the day. Every day includes “Conversation Prompts for Purposeful Play” that promote children’s math learning in cross-domain centers.

In Theme 4, students explore sorting after a whole group read-aloud of *What Pets Need*. During the read-aloud, students “look at the pictures and think about the animal’s size,” comparing and deciding which is *smaller* and *bigger*. Students then receive picture cards of the animals and sort them from *smallest* to *biggest*. Rocks or buttons are offered for further exploration, inviting students to sort by various attributes. In Theme 5, students practice counting items using materials found in the learning environment. During large group time, the teacher holds up and counts aloud three connecting cubes from top to bottom and again from bottom to top. The teacher then invites students to pull pattern blocks from a bag and count them. Teacher guidance related to the “Order” vocabulary photo card includes: “One important principle of counting is that the order items are counted in is irrelevant. Help children understand that objects can be counted left-to-right, right-to-left, or randomly and that the same number will be reached, as long as every object in the set is given one count. Seeing this in practice reinforces the concept.” This guidance helps the teacher understand the powerful impact the teacher has on children when teaching these concepts during large group time.

Independent centers in Theme 6 provide students an opportunity to explore shapes in a playful way. For example, the “Creativity Station” encourages students to make a circle and a square with art materials; the “Construction” center prompts identification of shapes and invites students to choose which is easiest to build with. These opportunities support the review and practice of mathematical skills embedded throughout the learning day. Theme 6 provides

suggested center materials, such as different-size stuffed animals, measuring tools, pom-poms, chenille stems, "Pattern Blocks," five-frames, and a toy cash register. The independent center signs include guiding questions, such as "What book did you choose? Is it bigger than the book we read today?" "Can you find the largest tool in the kitchen? Can you find the smallest?" and "Can you write about a shape you see? Use words and numbers."

7.3 Materials intentionally develop young children’s ability to problem solve.

- Materials develop children’s capacity to ask thoughtful questions.
- Materials develop children’s capacity to recognize problems in their environment.
- Materials develop children’s capacity to use mathematical reasoning with familiar materials in the classroom and world outside the classroom.

Partially Meets 2/4

The materials develop children’s capacity to recognize problems in their environment and to use mathematical reasoning with familiar materials in the classroom and world outside the classroom. However, materials only provide some support to develop children’s capacity to ask thoughtful questions.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Implementation Guide” provides information on the books and hands-on play to help children mathematize, or recognize and use the power and purpose of mathematical thinking in their daily lives. Additionally, this tool outlines that large group and small group activities model asking and answering questions related to foundation math concepts the children encounter every day. While teachers often ask thoughtful questions, there is limited direct instruction or connection between these example questions and the skill of asking thoughtful questions. In the “Higher-Order Thinking Skills” section, the materials explain the various types of questions teachers ask students. Roughly aligned to Bloom’s Taxonomy, these questions move from identify and apply, through investigate, and into evaluate and extend. In this sense, teacher questioning is intentional, but instruction on asking thoughtful questions is not provided to children directly. The “Math: Mathematical Thinking” section describes the importance of recognizing and using “the power and purpose of mathematical thinking” in daily life. This section describes how the program teaches representation through action, image, and symbol. Additionally, there is a list of different daily math activities that are used intermittently to support math instruction. However, there is no description of the importance of asking questions or supports detailing the different methods of asking questions.

After a whole group read-aloud of *Five Creatures* in Theme 1, teacher guidance suggests talking about how to ascertain whether someone is *shorter* or *taller*. Students first stand in a row in order of height, and then practice sorting items by attribute. The teacher shares a group of items and asks students to divide them into *same* and *different* and then re-sort using a

different attribute. The following day, the teacher revisits *Five Creatures*, asking questions related to the concept of measurement. For example: “Which three creatures are short? Which two are tall?” “How are long and short different?” and “Who has short hair in the class? Who has long hair?” This activity is extended into a small group activity as students sort blocks from *longest* to *shortest* and build a tower. Students are instructed to put the longest block on the bottom and the shortest block on top but are not encouraged to express and explore their own interpretation of a tower. Students then make two towers, one *short* and one *tall*. After building, students count the blocks starting with the longest, and then again starting with the shortest. Teacher guidance suggests reviewing with students that the number of blocks remains the same no matter the order in which they are counted. This activity is playful, builds on students’ natural interest in mathematics with common objects and manipulatives, and helps children connect math skills such as counting with grouping. Teacher guidance provides suggested questions and extensions but does not include teaching strategies encouraging child-led language and thought.

In a Theme 2 small group activity, the teacher connects students’ learning to a whole group read-aloud: “Today we revisited *Biblioburro*, a story about a man who carries books to children who have none. He saw the problem and worked very hard to solve it by bringing the books to children who needed them. Just like Luis, we will first figure out what problem we have and then figure out steps that will help us solve it. We will persist until the problem is solved.” This prompt communicates the importance of inquiry during problem-solving but does not suggest how students can improve their capacity to ask thoughtful questions. Next, students work in pairs to put a group of numbers in order. While students are working in their pairs, teacher guidance suggests asking students, “What problem do you think you have?” and then “Help children formulate the idea that the numbers should be in order. Then ask children to work with their partners and figure out what to do.” The first question successfully prompts students to ask thoughtful questions, but there is no explicit connection to the skill. No follow-up direction emphasizes the way to ask questions or the importance of asking questions. After completion of the activity, the teacher invites children to reflect on the activity: “What was the problem we had with the numbers? How did you solve it?” Again, this presents an unfulfilled opportunity to explicitly teach students about asking thoughtful questions during problem-solving.

Theme 4 activities promote mathematical reasoning using familiar materials, such as, in a whole group lesson, encouraging students to use their fingers to count. In a similar small group lesson, students use photos of animals to sort/classify. Children have the opportunity to further explore these concepts during “Independent Centers,” using the “PreK On My Way” pattern blocks and cards. These pattern card images are aligned to each theme, with pattern blocks to encourage independent and flexible use of shapes to build images. Teachers ask guiding questions during independent centers, such as “How are the animals in your book the same? How are they different?” “Why is it helpful to use your hands to count to ten?” and “What shapes do you see? How many shapes are on your page?” While these questions offer students practice in answering questions, the materials do not include teacher guidance on how to encourage students to ask their own thoughtful questions. When problem-solving, there is little intentional connection between the teacher’s example questions and the skill of inquiry. Teachers ask

students questions to build background knowledge during “Circle Time,” to facilitate conversation during read-alouds, and through prompting during small group activities. While example questions are somewhat useful in developing children’s capacity to ask questions, students do not receive direct and explicit instruction on the skill of asking questions. This is not an explicit or emphasized step in the program's problem-solving process.

Before a Theme 4 whole group read-aloud of *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, teacher guidance suggests introducing students to the concept of subitizing. The teacher displays a one-dot number card for two seconds and asks, “How many dots?” The teacher repeats this with a two-dot number card. As the book is read, the teacher pauses to ask questions, such as “How many buttons were on the character’s shirt, Emily Elizabeth?” This exercise provides an opportunity for students to develop their capacity for mathematical reasoning in reference to a familiar concept. This is continued during a small group activity; teachers ask students to use connecting cubes to represent ducks and to create two sets of equal groups.

After a Theme 7 whole group read-aloud of *Twenty Yawns*, the teacher invites students to complete a number scavenger hunt: “Sometimes I will ask you to find a certain number of objects. Other times, I will ask you to find one object with a certain number of parts. You will work with a partner to search the classroom and bring back the correct number of objects. Then we will count them to check.” In this activity, students are searching around the room to recognize problems in their environment, but they do not receive any instruction or scaffolding meant to develop their capacity to ask questions. Independent centers in this theme encourage problem-solving through guiding questions: “Can you pretend to build a sandcastle using blocks? How many blocks will you use?” “How many flowers would you like in your garden? Can you count them out?” Similar to other independent centers, the teacher is asking students questions to prompt problem-solving and mathematical reasoning, but students are not developing their capacity, themselves, to ask thoughtful questions.

A Theme 7 whole group read-aloud of *Lola Plants a Garden* also supports the development of mathematical reasoning in the classroom. After reading, the teacher states: “You will use connecting cubes as ‘seeds’ to plant a garden. I will ask you to plant a certain number of seeds. Then you will tell me how many seeds are in the garden and how many seeds you have left to plant. I’ve planted one seed to start.” Students continue with this theme by exploring the concept of height. The teacher prompts: “Imagine that the connecting cubes you planted today were real seeds. What kind of plant would you want to grow? How tall will these plants be?”

A later Theme 7 large group lesson mentions the importance of observation but does not go as far as offering direct instruction on question-asking: “Learning about the four seasons helps children understand how time passes and how things change. Observation is an important part of learning about the seasons, including outside exploration and discussion. While outside, children can make note of changes they see and then draw pictures of their observations in science journals.” The description communicates the importance of observation but does not provide any scaffolding or guidance meant to develop students’ capacity for question-asking.

7.4 Materials build students' number sense.

- Materials provide guidance for teachers on building conceptual understanding in math.
- Materials provide frequent, spiraled, and varied opportunities for students to participate in activities that build number sense, as outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. These activities include: subitizing, counting one-to-one, comparing set size and numbers, counting on, and finding one more than a number.

Meets 4/4

The materials provide guidance for teachers on building conceptual understanding in math. They provide frequent, spiraled, and varied opportunities for students to participate in activities that build number sense, as outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. These activities include subitizing, counting one-to-one, comparing set size and numbers, counting on, and finding one more than a number.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Examples of teacher guidance in Theme 1 include the following: “Encourage children to practice their counting skills throughout the day, like when they’re waiting to use the water fountain or when they are walking home from school.” “Engage with the children’s counting readiness, encourage children to use one-to-one correspondence, counting, and cardinality throughout their day. Children are naturally so curious—asking them to count how many friends, toys, snacks, or pencils they have improves their numerical understanding.” “Have children think about situations when they know how many of something they see without counting. Many of them will be able to subitize one or two already. Have children point to examples of one item and two items around the room.” Following a whole group read-aloud of *Nobody Hugs a Cactus*, students use connecting cubes to represent characters from the story. While working with small groups, the teacher pages through the book, placing a cube on the table for each character. The teacher models, pointing to each cube one by one while counting aloud. The teacher explains it is helpful to arrange the cubes in order to count systematically and accurately. Each child then receives connecting cubes and uses one-to-one correspondence to count how many cubes they have. A whole group read-aloud of *Five Creatures* in this theme introduces the concept of subitizing. The materials suggest a corresponding small group activity to reinforce understanding: “In this activity, you will see a card with dots on it and quickly say how many dots you see.” Another lesson suggests: “Count your set of five horses, and then each child’s set.

Invite children to count with you. Make sure that each child's set also contains five horses. Ask children whether the order in which they counted affected the total number of horses. Does it matter which horse you count first when counting all of your horses? Why not?"

Mathematical learning occurs frequently throughout the day, as evidenced in Theme 5. In one example, students are introduced to the word *pattern* during large group time; it is reintroduced in a corresponding small group activity using connecting cubes. The teacher creates ABAB or AABB patterns with two colors of cubes, repeating the pattern three times. As the teacher works, students are asked for input about what color comes next in the pattern. Students practice during independent center time, where they are invited to make a pattern and explain their process ("Math and Science" center) and create patterns with colors and shapes ("Creativity" center). Materials also provide teacher guidance to build conceptual understanding of patterns during a whole group read-aloud of *I Got the Rhythm*: "Children can recognize, create, and copy simple patterns on their own, even before they know the word 'pattern'. To identify and extend more complex patterns, children do best with the guidance of an adult helping them see and understand the patterns." The text *Dentists and What They Do* is utilized in this theme to reinforce number sense and counting. Teacher guidance includes suggestions for building students' conceptual understanding: "Place 20 connecting cubes in the center of the table. Have children count with you as you place each cube in the center. The teacher can ask: 'How many teeth in all?' Next, invite a child to start the count by picking up one connecting cube from the pile and holding it while saying the number. Direct the next child to continue the count, picking up another 'tooth' to hold. Repeat until the group reaches 20, and there are no more 'teeth' in the pile. Ask, 'How many teeth are there in all?'" The text is referenced again in this theme during a small group activity: "Set up 20 Connecting Cubes as though they were a set of teeth, with one equal set on top of the other. Give one child the pointer. Say, 'Use the pointer to count each tooth. Let's start with this tooth!' Guide the child to count each tooth. Ask, 'How many teeth are there in all?' Give another child the pointer. This time, have the child start with a different tooth and count in the opposite direction. Ask, 'How many teeth are there in all?'" Following a whole group read-aloud of *Baby Goes to Market*, students and teachers create and explore a number line: "Then, we will tell stories about shopping at a market. We will add food to our basket, and take some away to eat. We will move our fingers along the number line to help us count the foods we add and take away." This text is used again to guide teachers in building conceptual understanding of addition and subtraction: "Using a group of connecting cubes, model adding and taking one cube away. Ask children to count with you to find the new amount. At this early stage, it's important to focus on teaching children the basic concepts of addition and subtraction: putting together and taking away. Telling stories and using concrete objects to show numbers being added or taken away is a great way to encourage children to start using these concepts in the real world."

Students have an opportunity to build number sense in a Theme 8 small group lesson. Students assume the role of "architect" and build connecting cube towers of a specific number represented on number cards. Teacher guidance states: "Hold up a number card and say, 'This is how many connecting cubes you will use to build your tower.'" Students explain their thought process as they connect the number counted with the corresponding number card. Students

demonstrate conceptual understanding in math during a small group activity in this theme. Students view photos of various items and determine whether each is *tall* or *short*. As students discuss, the teacher encourages students to share an experience: "Have you ever been inside a very tall building? Share that story with us!" After the activity, students compare size and number of the sets: "Have children sort the Activity Cards into two piles: 'tall' and 'short'. Guide children to create a row with the tall cards and a different row for the short cards, creating a bar graph. Ask, 'Are there more tall things or more short things? How can you tell?'" This activity provides an opportunity for students to connect number sense to other mathematics concepts. This theme provides another opportunity for students to create and compare set size after a whole group read-aloud of *Ducks in a Row*. Students use connecting cubes to represent ducklings, working in pairs to split 10 "ducklings" into two equal groups. The teacher probes, "How did you separate your ducklings into two groups? How can you tell there are the same amount of ducklings in each group? Can you count to make sure they are equal?"

7.5 Materials develop students' academic math vocabulary.

- Materials include repeated opportunities to hear math vocabulary.
- Materials include repeated opportunities to practice using math vocabulary.
- Materials include guidance for teachers on how to scaffold and support students' development and use of academic math vocabulary.

Meets 4/4

The materials include opportunities to hear and practice math vocabulary. Materials include guidance for teachers on how to scaffold and support students' development and use of academic math vocabulary.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In part, math vocabulary is taught with point-of-use supports that guide teachers through prompts and questions. This teacher guidance supports students' development and use of academic math vocabulary. The "Implementation Guide" describes daily math activities that support learning, including "Act it Out," "Graph It!," and "Writing/Drawing/Storytelling," among other activities. This resource also clearly describes how "Math Activity Cards" are intentionally structured with teacher guidance meant to scaffold and support student development. Each card has a "Support, Challenge, and Extend" prompt meant to meet students where they are in their mathematical development. These practices are in line with the publisher's general system of scaffolding, which integrates pre-teaching vocabulary, using photographs, leveraging total physical response, teaching gestures, defining words in context, and utilizing intentional question-asking strategies.

During a Theme 1 whole group read-aloud of *The Adventures of Jovani and Alejandro*, the teacher introduces the words *order* and *in all*. The teacher asks guiding questions, such as "In what order are Jovani and Alejandro going down the slide? Is Jovani first, or Alejandro?" "Who can come up and count the horses on this page? Can you count them in a different order? Are there still four horses in all?" After the text is read, students "Turn and Talk" with a peer to discuss, "How do Jovani and Alejandro use counting in their game?" This gives them an opportunity to practice using math vocabulary.

Students are also introduced to the word and concept of *weight* in Theme 1. The materials include a "Vocabulary Card" that states "Weight is how heavy or light something is." The card

also includes a description of a photo on the front of the card: “The rocks in the picture have more weight than the feather. They are heavier than the feather.” Teacher guidance suggests having students act out the word: “Let’s act like we are a scale. Pretend to hold a feather in one hand and rocks in the other. Which side will be heavier?” A small group activity in this theme invites students to look at several pictures, putting them in order from *lightest* to *heaviest*. Teacher guidance states: “Ask, ‘Is this heavy or light?’ This is a relative question (one child may think the bananas are heavy while a different child may think they are light)—the important thing is that children are talking about weight and using words like: weigh, weight, heavy, heavier, light, lighter.” There is additional guidance to scaffold students by using a smaller number of photos or physical objects from the classroom to demonstrate the heavy and light terms.

During a whole group read-aloud of *How Big Is an Elephant?* in Theme 3, students are exposed to vocabulary words pertaining to measurement. Teacher guidance states: “Point out height and length in context and ask children to make informal comparisons of animal sizes. Preschoolers understand that lengths and sizes of objects vary and can be compared. Children start by informally comparing the length, height, and size of objects and people around them. Help children develop this skill by using measurement vocabulary and asking children to measure using non-standard units of measurement.” Following the read-aloud, the teacher reviews the words *measure* and *how big*. Students use paper clips to measure body parts and discuss their observations using the phrase *how big*. The teacher asks guiding questions, such as “How big is your foot? How many paper clips is it?” Suggested center materials in this theme include mathematical artifacts such as measuring tools, two-color counters, pattern blocks, and various sizes of blocks. These materials foster opportunities for students to use math vocabulary as they work independently and with peers during center time.

Teacher guidance in Theme 6 states: “Giving children proper mathematical vocabulary lays essential groundwork for their long-term understanding of math. Teaching children the names of shapes and helping them become comfortable identifying both the names and the qualities of shapes is key in preparing them for more advanced geometry.” This theme provides several opportunities for students to hear and practice using math vocabulary following a whole group read-aloud of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. During large group time, the teacher facilitates a discussion about patterns: “We found a pattern in the way Goldilocks and the bears looked at the things in the house: large/medium/small, large/medium/small.” In independent centers, teachers support student exploration of these vocabulary words with guiding questions: “Can you find the largest tool in the kitchen? Can you find the smallest?” A small group activity reinforces the exploration: “We will say that the size of your hand from your tallest fingertip to the end of your palm is ‘just right!’ You will find one object in the classroom that is ‘too long,’ one object that is ‘too short,’ and one object that is ‘just right.’ Have children search the classroom for objects that are ‘too long,’ ‘too short,’ and ‘just right’ when compared to the size of their hand. Then, use the childrens’ objects to make a pattern.” Following a Theme 6 read-aloud of *Every Little Thing*, students practice using shape vocabulary words during a small group activity. The teacher reviews new vocabulary words (*circle* and *square*) while displaying corresponding shape cards on the table. Students match the cards and shape. The vocabulary

words are introduced before the read-alouds in large group. They are then revisited during the read-aloud in “Circle Time,” where the teacher re-introduces the words that are then practiced in the small group activity. The “Small Group Teacher Card” gives teachers support strategies for differentiated instruction at point-of-use.

In Theme 8, students are introduced to location words during a whole group read-aloud of *Ducks Away*. During the reading, the teacher facilitates back-and-forth conversation integrating math vocabulary and concepts by asking guiding questions, such as “How many ducks are looking down in the picture? How many are looking up? Let’s count!” After the reading, the teacher says, “When I look up, I see.... When I look down, I see....” Students look up and down, describing what they see. A small group lesson in Theme 8 builds upon students’ subitizing skills and expression: “Choose manipulatives for each child, and give each child a set of five. Ask, ‘How many vegetables do you have?’ Encourage children to answer without counting. Ask a child to give you a certain number of vegetables: ‘Please add three of your vegetables to the soup. How many vegetables do you have left? Can you tell me without counting?’ Request different numbers of vegetables from each child, and always ask, ‘How many do you have left?’” The back of each activity card gives the teacher strategies for differentiated instruction. In this particular example, the suggested support is to start the child with three manipulatives and model adding to it. It also offers a challenge for those students that are developmentally more advanced.

8.1 Materials build science knowledge through inquiry-based instruction and exploration of the natural world.

- Materials develop children’s observation and questioning of their environment.
- Materials develop children’s ability to communicate ideas.
- Materials include exploration with scientific tools.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to explore physical science, life science, and earth and space science through hands-on experiences.

Meets 4/4

The materials develop children’s observation and questioning of their environment and ability to communicate ideas. Materials include exploration with scientific tools and provide opportunities for students to explore physical science, life science, and earth and space science through hands-on experiences.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

During a small group activity in Theme 3, students have an opportunity to use a variety of scientific tools: “Place one or two drops of paint on your paper using the eye dropper or pipette. Blow gently through a straw as you move it around to push the paint. Repeat, blowing a little harder.” Teacher guidance states: “Explain that the painting does not have to look like something real. Children should just have fun being creative.” As students explore, the teacher scaffolds with guiding questions, such as “What do you notice about how the paint moves when you blow gently and when you blow hard? How can you make the paint move in a different direction?” A small group activity in this theme engages students in hands-on exploration following a whole group read-aloud of *Weather*. The teacher models using a clear cup prefilled with water: “Tell children that the water represents the air. Ask the children, ‘Let’s be curious together! What do you think will happen if I add the shaving cream to the water? (adds a thin layer of shaving cream) Why do you think I used shaving cream? What does shaving cream remind you of? (adds a few drops of food coloring) What do you think will happen now? Let’s see what happens!’” The teacher facilitates a group discussion, providing students an opportunity to ask questions and describe their observations of the experiment: “What questions do you have? How does being curious about the weather help us learn more about it?” This theme offers students another opportunity to question their environment and communicate ideas during a small group activity about *force* and *motion*. Teacher guidance states: “Use masking tape to mark a ‘starting line’ that runs across a section of floor and carpet.

Let children choose a car. Tell children to decide how much force they will use. Give each child a turn to push their car on the floor to see how far it rolls. Mark the end point with tape. Before using the carpet, remind children to try to use the same amount of force as they did on the floor. Then ask if they think their car will go farther on the carpet than on the floor. After each turn ask, 'On which surface did your car go farther? I wonder why?' The teacher then asks guiding questions, such as "Whose car went farther on the floor? Why do you think that is? Do you think your car would go farther on the carpet if you used more force to push it? Why or why not? What two things can change how far the car rolls?" In this theme, the teacher guides students in a discussion about the poster "See! Hear! Taste! Smell! and Touch!" before introducing a related small group activity. The teacher gathers items identifiable through the use of various senses, such as a bumpy sensory ball, soft scarf, bell, flower with a strong scent, sticky marshmallows, keys, cinnamon sticks, cotton balls, sandpaper, and a tambourine. Students blindly select one item at a time as the teacher asks guiding questions: "Can you see it? Smell it? Hear it? Touch it?"

Following a whole group read-aloud of *The Busy Tree* in Theme 4, students work in pairs to examine natural objects such as seeds, rocks, dirt, and leaves. The partners investigate using a magnifying glass while discussing their observations. The teacher scaffolds with observations and guiding questions, such as "When you look through a magnifying glass you can see more detail. Look at something you are curious about. What special details did you see when you looked at it through the magnifying glass?" This activity provides an opportunity for students to explore earth science using a scientific tool. This text is used again in Theme 4 to support intentional planning of inquiry-based explorations: "Talk with children about why animals need homes. Work together to identify the different places animals live. Children are curious about young animals and their metamorphoses. *The Busy Tree* shows organisms at different stages in their life cycles. Given time to observe the development of caterpillars and seeds, children will begin to construct an understanding of life cycles on their own." Student-led inquiry is further supported during a whole group read-aloud of *Penguin Day: A Family Story*. The teacher facilitates a group discussion with guiding questions, such as "Mama penguin swims in cold waters with big waves. What do you see mama penguin doing?" Following this large group activity, students "Turn and Talk" with a peer, discussing how penguins take care of their young. A "Teacher Tip" states: "When children explore the world around them, they begin to develop their observational skills. When children ask 'why' animals behave in certain ways, they are building curiosity and strengthening their learning. Teaching children about animals is an opportunity to let them become cognizant learners and beginner behaviorists."

The materials provide planned opportunities for children to observe the natural environment to explore science concepts. For example, in Theme 7, teacher guidance states: "Have children grow their own beanstalk! Gather clear containers, cotton balls, water, and dried lima beans. Have children hold their beans and describe what they see. Then, guide children to fill their container with cotton balls and place several beans around the edge. Add just enough water to moisten the cotton balls. Encourage children to watch as their plants grow taller over the next week." Also in this theme, during a small group activity exploring space science, students use a sheet of blue construction paper and cotton balls to create a representation of the daytime sky.

Students present their pictures to the class; the teacher builds upon concepts through a discussion of Earth's reception of light from the sun, moon, and stars.

8.2 Materials build social studies knowledge through study of culture and community.

- Materials follow a logical sequence of social studies, beginning with self and moving to family, community, city, state and country.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to explore commonalities and differences in individuals.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to learn about routines and events, both past, present, and future.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to explore the roles of consumers in their community.

Meets 4/4

The materials provide opportunities for students to explore commonalities and differences in individuals. Materials provide opportunities for students to learn about routines and events, past, present, and future, and explore the roles of consumers in their community. The materials follow a sequence of social studies, beginning with self and moving to family, community, city, state, and country.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Implementation Guide” summarizes the eight monthly themes used to structure social studies instruction across the year. In combination with the “Year at a Glance,” teachers have access to an overview of the logical sequence of social studies instruction. When examining the Year at a Glance, beginning-of-the-year instruction focuses on “People, Past, and Present” before moving into community and city lessons through “Economics.” This instruction continues alongside “Geography” instruction that touches upon city, state, and country topics. The last category of social studies instruction falls under “Citizenship” and rounds out the study of culture and community. Students receive logical instruction for all of these categories first, and then periodic review spread throughout the year.

In a Theme 1 large group activity, students explore commonalities and differences. Teacher guidance suggests: “Talk about being like someone else. Give examples, such as ‘I like purple; clap if you’re like me,’ ‘I like fruit; clap if you’re like me,’ and ‘I like to draw; clap if you’re like me.’” During a whole group read-aloud of *Be Who You Are*, teachers guide discussion with questions such as “How are you like the children in the book?” and “Sometimes we are different from our friends. These children eat tacos, noodles, and pizza. Which of these foods do you like

to eat? How are the foods you like to eat different from what these children like to eat?” Teacher guidance in this theme states: “As children develop and experience more social interactions, they begin to notice differences between people in gender, race, traditions, language, and culture. Research shows that teaching children to respect and appreciate differences early on in their development is key to preventing future bias and intolerance.” During a whole group read-aloud of *Be Who You Are*, materials guide the teacher: “Ask children to tell how they are like the other children at the table. Prompt them with questions, such as ‘John likes to look at books. Do you like to look at books like John does?’” Suggested guiding questions accompanying the text *First Laugh—Welcome, Baby!* include “How many of these things do you do with your own families? Who does them in a different way than the people on the card? Tell us how it is different. Let’s think of ways our own families are special.” Teacher guidance for a small group activity in this theme states: “Ask children to draw a square on a piece of paper. Draw a square for children to use as a model or help them with their drawing. Now have children look at the ‘I like to...’ poster and talk about things they like to do. Have children draw a picture inside the square of one thing they like to do.” Teachers then use the drawings to create a class poster, transcribing student descriptions as captions. Students identify commonalities and differences among families during a whole group read-aloud of *Alma and How She Got Her Name*. The teacher asks guiding questions, such as “How many grandmothers does Alma have?” “Who in her family left the city? Where did the person go?” and “How can we learn about other people?” Theme 1 provides opportunities for students to explore the roles of consumers through dramatic play. Following a whole group read-aloud of *I Know Numbers!*, students play “store” using a toy cash register, paper money, and items to “sell” and “buy.”

During a small group activity in Theme 2, students connect concepts introduced during a whole group read-aloud of *Hey, Wall*. Students study photographs of people performing a variety of community roles and discuss their observations. The teacher scaffolds with guiding questions such as “How do you think planting a tree will help make the neighborhood beautiful?” or “How do you think watering plants will help make the neighborhood beautiful?” This theme continues its exploration of community roles and consumerism during a whole group read-aloud of *The Muffin Man*. The teacher begins, “Today we’re going to think about where we live. We’re going to think about the different stores and buildings in our town.” Teacher guidance states: “Tell children that bakeries are stores that sell bread, cakes, and muffins. Ask if children have a bakery in their town. Then lead them in singing ‘The Muffin Man.’ During extended play, have children draw a picture of themselves in front of a building in their neighborhood to show that they are aware of their own body within their surroundings. Encourage children to draw other buildings in their community to add to their neighborhood map.” Planned opportunities to expand upon the concept of community helpers and their roles are provided in this theme. For example, teacher guidance states: “Have children choose the job of a community helper that they would like to do, then have them draw a picture of that job.” During a Theme 2 small group activity, students are reminded of the class poster “Super Jobs” and the book *Thank You, Omu!* The teacher presents picture cards depicting various community helpers (e.g., firefighter, doctor, teacher, baker, bus driver, pilot); students describe what they see. The concept of routines is explored in Theme 2 during a whole group read-aloud of *Ming Goes to School*. Students choose

one routine from the story and compare it to similar routines in their own school day. The teacher asks the guiding question “Which activities do you think Ming does every day at school?” During another small group activity in this theme, the teacher says, “Now we are going to sing about things some children do every day at school.” The students are invited to sing and pantomime alternate lyrics to a familiar song with “This Is the Way We Go to School” (e.g., “This is the way we paint at school, paint at school, paint at school. This is the way we paint at school, when we’re in our classroom”). The teacher concludes the activity by asking, “Which of these things do we do in our class every day?”

Teacher guidance for a Theme 8 large group activity states: “Show the U.S. flag and the flag for your home state. Invite two children to hold the flags. Play lively music and invite everyone to march in a ‘flag parade.’” Following a whole group read-aloud of *Kindergarten Countdown*, students recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The materials also include a Texas poster for daily use addressing the United States flag and Pledge of Allegiance as well as the Texas state flag and Pledge of Allegiance (along with the state flower, the bluebonnet). World cultures are explored in this theme after a whole group read-aloud of *Imagine*. Teacher guidance states: “Emphasize the idea that children speak different languages all around the world. Tell children that one day, they may travel to a new place: ‘Learning other languages will make it easier to make new friends!’” The examples provided in this theme support state, country, and global social studies concepts.

8.3 Materials expose children to fine arts through exploration.

- Materials include a variety of daily experiences through multiple mediums (dance, music, dramatic play, painting, sculpture, drawing, and other movement).
- Materials emphasize the students' engagement in the process of creating rather than the product that is created.

Meets 4/4

The materials include a variety of daily experiences through multiple mediums (dance, music, dramatic play, painting, sculpture, drawing, and other movement), emphasizing the students' engagement in the process of creating rather than the product that is created.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

During a small group activity in Theme 2, students manipulate clay to recreate items from the story, *Biblioburro*. The teacher scaffolds with guiding questions, such as "What word names what you made?" Teacher guidance states, "If children can't answer, say something, such as 'I see you made a beautiful butterfly.'" Students compare items they might encounter on a walk to school with items from the story. During a large group activity, the teacher encourages students: "Sing (to the tune of 'London Bridge'): 'circles, squares, and rectangles/rectangles, rectangles/circles, squares, and rectangles/don't forget triangles!'" Another large group activity in this theme integrates dance: "Ask a few volunteers to share their motions and have the group guess the job. Sing 'Old McDonald' and guide children to use their arms to show the size of each animal. Have children use comparison language like bigger/smaller than." During a Theme 2 read-aloud of *Hey, Wall*, students "act out the things they read about: dancing, building a snowman, eating an ice cream cone, and painting." Teacher guidance suggests: "Have children act out different people and events in *Hey, Wall*. Have children pretend to draw a sketch for the wall. Have them pretend to be a firefighter putting out a big fire, a barber cutting someone's hair, and a server in the restaurant filling a customer's glass with water." Movement and music are used again in Theme 3 after a whole group read-aloud of *Five Senses*: "We have been learning about the five senses. Let's take a few minutes to celebrate with some dancing! Use your sense of hearing to start. Use your sense of touch to wave your scarf and move it fast or slow as you dance to music. When the music stops, freeze. Listen for the new beat and start dancing again. Use your sense of sight to watch out for your friends." The materials provide opportunities for students to draw as a way to express their personal experiences, thoughts, and ideas. For example, in Theme 2, materials instruct: "Tape a large piece of paper or a poster

to the wall and gather drawing tools. Work with children to create a class drawing of a neighborhood using shapes. Prepare children to draw by tracing each shape in the air as you name it: 'square,' 'rectangle,' 'circle,' 'triangle.' Help children label the places in the neighborhood."

The materials provide teacher guidance in planning for process-focused art. For example, in a Theme 6 small group activity, students receive a piece of drawing paper, crayons, and/or colored pencils. Teacher guidance suggests demonstrating how to draw in long, loose lines, using all of the paper, explaining: "First, make a long, loose line all the way across your paper. Next, draw some short lines going up from that line. Now add some flower shapes at the top of each short line. Finally add any colors you want." During another small group activity in this theme, students think through the steps of building a house: "Ask children to think about what the first step might be in reaching their goal of building a house. 'Once we have our modeling clay, what's the first thing we should do?' Model thinking and choosing the color of your house: 'First, I'm going to decide which color my house will be.'" The activity concludes with a group discussion about steps students took while building their house.

The materials embed music and movement through a variety of activities. For example, a Theme 8 small group activity reinforces the concept of "waiting patiently" by inviting students to participate in a "Freeze Dance." The materials provide a wide selection of songs and music in the form of CDs, lyrics with simple instructions, and suggestions of complimentary props such as rhythm sticks and egg shakers. Dramatic play is integrated into this theme when students use dress-up clothes and props during a small group activity: "Today we talked about imaging something you might want to do or be in the future. Now we're going to play a game where you dress up as what you want to be." During a whole group read-aloud of *We Have Soup* in Theme 8, students discuss the variety of things that can go in soup while sharing their personal experiences. Teacher guidance suggests "Provide paper and drawing or painting materials. Ask children to draw their own recipe, showing which ingredients they will use and the final dish. Invite volunteers to share and explain their recipes with the group."

8.4 Materials include technology applications.

- Materials provide opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience.
- Materials provide students the opportunity to explore and use various digital tools.
- Technology supports and enhances student learning as appropriate, as opposed to distracting from it, and includes appropriate teacher guidance.

Meets 4/4

The materials provide opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience. Technology enhances student learning with appropriate teacher guidance. These applications provide students the opportunity to explore and use various digital tools.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Families have access to a portal containing over 30 digital songs, family bulletins, and activities for each theme. The student e-reader portal is accessible through the parent portal and is offered in both English and Spanish. Additionally, the “Little eReaders” are accessible both at school and at home. Each theme includes four stories accessible to students on the digital platform, also available in English and Spanish. Each theme includes two audio and video stories that students can read and view independently. Students have access to these resources from the login screen and can switch between languages during use. The stories and platform are user friendly; through the “Implementation Guide,” teachers have guidance to support student use and access. In this document, there are separate sections describing the Little eReaders, “Song Collection,” and “Family Exchange.” These various digital tools enhance student learning, link to the classroom experience, and include appropriate teacher guidance.

During a Theme 1 whole group read-aloud of *Little Elliot, Big Family*, the teacher asks, “Have you ever taken a picture with a lot of people? What do people use to take pictures? Let’s pretend to take a picture with cell phones. Get ready! Click!” Teacher guidance for a large group activity suggests: “Transcribe children’s speech as they talk about how Mouse’s family took turns at the family reunion. Together, visit the author’s website to learn about other *Little Elliot* books.”

Teacher guidance in Theme 3 supports the use of technology to enhance student learning: “Set aside a specific time to pre-teach new lesson vocabulary to multilingual learners. If possible, teach lesson concepts—‘force,’ ‘push,’ ‘pull’—in children’s native language first. Video clips,

interactive tools, text-to-speech, and voice output have also shown to be beneficial tools in teaching science concepts to multilingual learners. Preview digital tools before sharing with children.” Guidance accompanying a whole group read-aloud of *Cold, Crunchy, Colorful* states “Invite children to talk about what they learned about their five senses. Use digital tools to reinforce learning. Provide time and technology opportunities for children to use and learn about their five senses.” A group discussion about weather in this theme is enhanced by the use of computers. Students share their questions about weather as the teacher transcribes. Transcriptions are converted into digital form and printed for students to share with peers.

Before a whole group read-aloud of *A House in the Sky and Other Uncommon Animal Homes* in Theme 4, the teacher is encouraged to bookmark “websites about animals” in preparation for an accompanying small group activity. The teacher states: “I will give each of you an animal card. You will think of something you wonder about for that animal. Then we’ll look for an answer together.” Student-generated questions are researched by the teacher, who models navigating the previously bookmarked websites. An extension activity suggests: “Have children think of follow-up questions now that they have answers to a first question. ‘What new things do you wonder?’ For example, if they found out zebras have tails to swat flies, they might wonder if dog tails also swat flies.”

A Theme 7 whole group read-aloud of *Lola Plants a Garden* provides teacher-student collaboration and a hands-on student experience: “Have children help you do some research! Tell children that later this week, they will start to grow their own plants. Before that, you need to find out the best ways to care for a plant. Ask children to help you do online research to learn how to grow and care for a lima bean plant. Guide children to safely use the digital tools you have available.” Before a large group activity in this theme, the teacher shows students a variety of electronic tools. The teacher asks, “How does your family keep you safe when you use this digital tool?” This group discussion supports students’ understanding of safe technology use. After a whole group read-aloud of *Follow That Garbage* in Theme 7, the teacher facilitates a group discussion about the importance of a weekly garbage collection schedule and purpose of a landfill. Teacher guidance suggests referring to a list of provided websites to help children learn more about garbage and recycling.

9.1 Guidance for teachers and students to monitor progress.

- Materials include a variety of diagnostic tools that are developmentally appropriate (e.g., observational, anecdotal, formal).
- Materials provide guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration of diagnostic tools.
- Materials include tools for students to track their own progress and growth.
- Materials include diagnostic tools to measure all content and process skills for prekindergarten, as outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

Partially Meets 1/2

The materials include some developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools, but there are limited tools for students to track their own progress and growth. These tools measure most content and process skills for prekindergarten, as outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. There is guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration for the diagnostic tools included.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Implementation Guide” somewhat advises teachers on how to conduct formal and informal assessments. To support informal assessment, guidance is given for observational assessment in large group, small group, independent centers, meal time, outdoor time and independent reading. “Teachers can observe and assess children through large group circle time: music and movement activities can reveal phonological awareness, pattern making, gross motor and creative expression skills; children demonstrate their read-aloud comprehension and language, math, writing and executive function skills. Small group activities: children can be observed using the target skills for each week. Independent centers: manipulatives, books and conversation prompts can be used to support children’s learning and create opportunities for self expression.” Although the Implementation Guide provides this general guidance, references to additional formal or informal assessments are not included in the materials themselves.

The weekly “Observational Assessment” tool covers all five areas of focus (reading, writing, language/communication, health/wellness, and mathematics) and includes a comment area where teachers can record anecdotal comments as part of their informal assessment. Assessment checklists, unique to each week, are used to record student mastery (“Not Yet,” “Sometimes,” or “Always”) of specific Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. However, the materials

do not provide detailed guidance on using these checklists. The Implementation Guide broadly suggests “great times to observe and assess individual children”: large group circle time, large group activities, independent centers, meal time, outdoor time, and independent reading. However, there is limited description of observation frequency, no definition of Not Yet, Sometimes, or Always, and no suggestion for students to track their own progress. Under “Tips for Pacing Your Observations” the program acknowledges the difficulty of pacing weekly observations, but only suggests choosing three to five children to observe each week. There is no guidance describing which three to five children to observe. “Writing Portfolios” are another tool suggested for informal assessment, but guidance is limited to the statement “You can use this writing portfolio during writing conferences with individual children or family meetings to celebrate children’s emergent writing across all areas.” There is no suggestion that students can use these portfolios to track their own development. For these portfolios, children respond to prompts such as “What is your favorite place to visit in your neighborhood?” “Write a story about finding your favorite shape in your neighborhood” (Theme 2) “What can you do to your friends to help them feel proud of their artwork?” “If you could build anything, what would it be?” (Theme 6) While these examples are connected to weekly learning objectives, teachers do not receive guidance on which skills to assess each week.

In Theme 3, the materials highlight the alignment of math activities and the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. For example: “Introduce tools for measuring height: rulers, yard sticks, measuring tape. Demonstrate measuring objects using the appropriately-sized tool.” Materials list this activity as aligned to the following guidelines: “Recognize and compare heights or lengths of people or objects (TX.V.D.1); Recognize how much can be placed within an object (TX.V.D.2); Informally recognize and compare weights of objects or people (TX.V.D.3).” While this connection provides general reference guidance, the materials do not include strategies for ongoing anecdotal note taking for diagnostic purposes.

A Theme 4 Observational Assessment guide states: “Phonological Awareness: Can segment a syllable from a word; Alphabetic Knowledge: Names at least 20 uppercase and at least 20 lowercase letters in the language of instruction; Conversation: Demonstrates understanding of terms used in the instructional language of the classroom.” This assessment guidance is not accompanied by specific strategies to ensure consistent and accurate administration of diagnostic tools.

During a Theme 7 small group activity, students observe photos of people in a variety of weather environments. Teacher guidance suggests inviting students to share how they might play if they were in the environment pictured. The teacher then connects this activity to real-life experiences by asking children “if they have ever been in a place like the ones shown in the picture (or if they have ever been in similar weather).” If they have, the teacher asks “whether they did activities like the ones they acted out.” “How does remembering that weather or activity make you feel?” This activity does not include an assessment tool or teacher guidance suggesting the collection of informal data about student progress toward standards.

9.2 Materials include guidance for teachers and administrators to analyze and respond to data from diagnostic tools.

- Materials support teachers with guidance and direction to respond to individual students' needs in all domains, based on measures of student progress appropriate to the developmental level.
- Diagnostic tools yield meaningful information for teachers to use when planning instruction and differentiation.
- Materials provide a variety of resources and teacher guidance on how to leverage different activities to respond to student data.
- Materials provide guidance for administrators to support teachers in analyzing and responding to data.

Partially Meets 1/2

The materials somewhat support teachers with guidance and direction to respond to individual students' needs based on measures of student progress. Diagnostic tools yield some meaningful information, and teachers have some resources dedicated to student data response. While there are tools that are useful for administrators, there is no administrator-specific guidance to support teachers in analyzing and responding to data.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Teachers indicate level of student mastery using weekly assessment checklists throughout all themes; however, guidance supporting the incorporation of checklist data into planning, instruction, or differentiation is limited. The materials provide some guidance regarding administration of the checklists but little guidance for data analysis. Teachers measure student achievement in different domains by assigning them a value of "Not Yet," "Sometimes," or "Always." This data is only somewhat meaningful since measurements are anecdotal and may vary day to day, teacher to teacher. Under the "Anecdotal Comments" section of the "Implementation Guide," the materials describe the most useful notes as "brief, evidence-based, and focused on what children can do rather than what they cannot yet do. Noting specific evidence of a child's strengths also helps us guard against unintended bias, either positive or negative." While useful, this guidance is limited and does not tell teachers how to leverage their notes. Additionally, the checklist data is not collected in reports to be utilized by administrators at the program level. The materials do not include recommendations to develop action plans targeting student intervention, teacher coaching, or content-area-based

professional development opportunities. While the program materials acknowledge the importance of formal assessment, they do not offer a formal assessment structure of their own.

Under the “Responsive Teaching” section of the Implementation Guide, the “Teacher Hub Skills” area is the main tool teachers use to respond to assessment. It is present as the option for reteaching after assessment, but guidance is lacking. There is no description connecting the results of the Observational Checklists to the specific search results or resources found in the Teacher Hub. That being said, teachers can search this Teacher Hub by skill and locate related lessons, resources, and activities to support that specific skill. This resource is also available for administrators to help teachers respond to data, but there are no suggestions for how administrators can help teachers analyze data.

During a Theme 4 small group activity, students study photos of various cats, such as a lion, a cheetah, and a domestic cat, while considering their common attributes. Teacher guidance includes suggested questions to support various levels of learners along with general assessment information: “For younger or developmentally delayed children, read aloud the ‘Support’ section of each (photo) card. Then ask children to tell what else they know about the cat or what they see in the photo. Encourage as much conversation as possible.” While this activity does provide scaffolding strategies, suggestions are not connected to student progress data collected from checklists.

9.3 Materials include frequent, integrated opportunities.

- Materials include routine and systematic progress monitoring opportunities that accurately measure and track student progress.
- Frequency of progress monitoring is appropriate for the age and content skill.

Partially Meets 1/2

The materials somewhat include routine and integrated opportunities to monitor student achievement. These tools are systematic and measure student progress. The frequency of progress monitoring is somewhat appropriate for the age and content skill.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Theme 1 includes a suggestion to track skills using a weekly assessment checklist with objectives such as “regulates his own behavior with occasional reminders or assistance from the teacher.” The “Implementation Guide” suggests using these “Observational Checklists” weekly, and they stay consistent over time. The only thing that changes throughout is the list of skills being assessed each week. In this sense, the resource is routine and systematic.

Theme 2 observational assessment checklists encompass a variety of domains, including Literacy and Math. Teacher guidance states: “Use information learned from books by describing, relating, categorizing, or comparing and contrasting. (Literacy) Demonstrate use of location words such as ‘over,’ ‘under,’ ‘above,’ ‘on,’ ‘beside,’ ‘next to,’ ‘between,’ ‘in front of,’ ‘near,’ ‘far,’ etc. (Math)” While student mastery of these observable skills is recorded on the individual weekly checklists, data collected is not revisited or used to inform further instruction or targeted student support. Teachers have the option to search related skills through the online “Teacher Hub.”

Teacher guidance for a whole group activity in Theme 3 identifies specific standards: “Earth and Space Science: Identify, observe, and discuss objects in the sky. (TX.VI.C.2)” “Observe and discuss what happens during changes in the earth and sky. (TX.VI.C.3)” The teacher asks guiding questions while reading a text about clouds and extends learning into centers, where students speculate how they might create a cloud using various materials. While the standards are listed on the teaching guide, there is no reference to collecting data or monitoring students’ progress. At the end of each week in Theme 3, students produce a written response to prompts in each subject area (literacy, language, and math), such as “What did you learn this week about

measuring things?” The Implementation Guide suggests using these written responses to fill a “Writing Portfolio.” This assessment strategy is not completely appropriate for all skill levels/ages, and supporting teacher guidance is not specific: “differentiate or modify as needed.”

Guidance for a whole group activity in Theme 7 suggests the teacher and students use the internet to access “garbage and recycling” websites. While the technology standards are listed on the weekly checklist, there is no mention of using data collected for progress monitoring following the activity. The materials do not include a formal progress monitoring recommendation (BOY, MOY, EOY).

10.1 Materials include guidance, scaffolds, supports, and extensions that maximize student learning potential.

- Materials provide recommended targeted instruction and activities for students who struggle to master content.
- Materials provide recommended targeted instruction and activities for students who have mastered content.
- Materials provide additional enrichment activities for all levels of learners.

Meets 2/2

The materials provide guidance, scaffolds, supports, and extensions maximizing student learning potential. Materials provide recommended targeted instruction and activities for students who struggle to master content. Materials contain many examples of recommended targeted instruction, activities for students who have mastered content, and additional enrichment activities for all levels of learners.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Implementation Guide” includes a summary of different large group and small group scaffolds throughout the program. Primarily through a color-coded system defining opportunities for “Support” and opportunities for “Challenge,” students receive targeted instruction and activities when they struggle to master content and when they have already mastered content. Throughout the program, there are integrated enrichment activities and supports that help students access and understand materials. Some of these practices include pre-teaching vocabulary, vocabulary repetition, skill repetition, and total physical response. Additionally, there is a section titled “Meeting Individual Needs” that summarizes how the program provides modifications for children with physical and developmental needs. Some manipulatives and components listed in this section include jumbo tweezers, alphabet cards, number cards, and magnifiers.

Materials provide recommended targeted instruction and activities for students who struggle to master content. The materials include teacher guidance for scaffolding instruction, such as multisensory cues of pictures and concrete objects, to differentiate activities based on target areas in which children are developing. Support for this instruction occurs in additional practice opportunities across instructional settings. For example, in Theme 1, teachers utilize sticky notes during a whole group class voting activity. Children hold the notes while the class counts

together. Students reference the notes in order to visualize the correlation between each child and their vote as well as to combine the total. The teacher takes note of children who are struggling to identify their feelings. The teacher supports these students by prompting them with scaffolding questions (e.g., “How do you feel when you play your favorite game?” “Yesterday you fell and scratched your knee. How did you feel when that happened?”) as well as with visuals (e.g., a paper plate with a happy or a sad face).

Materials provide additional enrichment activities for all levels of learners in the form of small group activities with hands-on materials and a list of suggestions and resources for enrichment in independent centers connected to each theme. In Theme 1, following a whole group reading of *A Friend Like You*, suggestions for the “Pretend and Learn” center include having two children imitate the animal characters from the book and explore how they might play together in these roles. Students are also invited to draw a picture of something they recall from the story and then reference their picture while retelling the story to peers. Additional suggestions for center materials within this theme include “feeling” cards to support the identification and expression of emotions, various colorful dress-up clothes to aid students in expressing their feelings, and audio and print books including stories about fictional and real friendships.

In Theme 3, students are introduced to several concepts, including size, measurement, and shoe tying. These concepts are extended in centers through purposeful play. Children use a ruler to measure their feet in the “Math and Science” center and draw a picture of their favorite shoe in the “Creativity” center. A “Let’s Investigate” math activity card provides teachers with suggested scaffolding for students struggling to master the concept of comparing objects. The card instructs teachers to “model comparing objects by placing them side by side for size, and holding one in each hand for weight” while verbalizing observations (e.g., “The book is heavier.”)

In Theme 7, after the whole group reading of *Sometimes Rain*, a “Large Group Card” gives two options for downward scaffolding. The guiding question “What things do the children do in each season?” can be adjusted to “The children look at cl... (clouds) in spring.” Additional supports suggest the teacher provide a possible answer for the child: “The children look at clouds in spring.” Downward scaffolding also occurs in an activity plan suggesting the teacher explain: “Remember, a compound word is a big word made of two smaller words. I will show you a picture of a compound word. Then we’ll take the word apart and put it back together!”

All themes include extension ideas to incorporate into whole group story time for children who have mastered content. Recommended questions are included on center signs to support teachers in expanding student learning beyond large and small group settings throughout each week. The materials also provide guidance for engaging students in challenging writing or literacy activities. The “Creativity Station” in Theme 1 includes an extension activity suggesting students work with peers to create a group friendship mural. This collaboration among peers promotes deep understanding and complex communication skills through authentic connection and rich conversation. Students problem solve with peers as they make decisions, share materials, and work together to describe how their creative choices relate to the idea of

“friendship.” Complex language and communication skills are further supported in Theme 3 through an extension suggestion after a whole group read-aloud of *Cloudette*. Following the reading, the teacher poses a guiding question to the whole class: “What could Cloudette do that bigger clouds couldn’t do?” For those students ready to dig deeper, the teacher offers the challenge question “What are some other advantages of being little?” Teamwork and collaboration are again encouraged in Theme 7 when partners are assigned to collaborate on alphabet books *N*, *I*, and *C*. Student partners are instructed to find a picture of an insect and the corresponding word in each book.

10.2 Materials provide a variety of instructional methods that appeal to a variety of learning interests and needs.

- Materials include a variety of instructional approaches to engage students in mastery of the content.
- Materials support developmentally appropriate instructional strategies.
- Materials support flexible grouping (e.g., whole, small, individual).
- Materials support multiple types of practices (e.g., guided, independent, collaborative) and provide guidance and structures to achieve effective implementation.

Meets 2/2

The materials reviewed contain a variety of instructional approaches to engage students in mastery of content. These instructional approaches are developmentally appropriate and take advantage of flexible grouping. Materials also provide guidance to support multiple types of practices and structures to achieve effective implementation.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials provide guidance in the “Implementation Guide” on how to use manipulatives, multi-modal approaches, learning through music and movement, and supports for meeting individual needs. This guidance summarizes a variety of instructional methods that appeal to a variety of learning interests and needs depending upon the learning goal, specific context, and needs of individual children. The various materials are designed for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic/tactile learning. Visual instructional strategies are integrated into vocabulary photo cards, activity photo cards, read-alouds, and big books. Auditory learning is integrated with movement daily during “Circle Time.” The materials offer a “Songs and Fingerplays booklet” as well as the “PreK On My Way Song Collection” of 32 songs. Evidence of kinesthetic/tactile learning is found through the use of manipulatives like attribute buttons, connecting cubes, finger paint, and “Act It Out” activities. In these Act It Out activities, children use their bodies to create letter shapes, both capital and lowercase. As for grouping strategies, the Implementation Guide summarizes instruction for whole group Circle Time and “Story Time,” small group activities, and then individual and independent purposeful play centers.

In Theme 2, in a large group math activity, students discuss how vehicles move and then transition into a group song about vehicle sounds. The teacher then reads *Me and My Cars*, prompting students to interact with the text throughout the reading. Afterward, students

connect with peers regarding work performed by vehicles explored by the group. By including the use of music and peer discussion, this activity offers a variety of instructional methods that appeal to a variety of learning interests and needs. The concepts explored during this activity are reinforced through the integration of the “vehicles” theme into independent centers (e.g., building a car in the “Construction” center and looking for vehicles in books). An activity card introduces the concept of using shapes to build a vehicle and carries the learning into the small group setting. The teacher gives each child a selection of pattern blocks and says, “Let’s start with one hexagon. Find a hexagon and move it far from the pile. You’ll need a lot of space to build!” The lesson model follows a developmentally appropriate gradual-release model to demonstrate the concept.

Strategies presented in the materials include “hands-on” approaches, teacher modeling, discussion of new and prior background knowledge, open-ended questioning, and allowing for student problem-solving and critical thinking. For instance, children have the opportunity to deepen their connection to new concepts by exploring freely in independent centers and engaging in planned activities during teacher-directed small group time. In Theme 3, during small group time, children compare the size of a bowl and the size of a spoon, measure different objects, or write about something that is really big. During center time, students can “Pretend you just got a great idea” in the “Pretend and Learn” center or “Write about something beautiful in your neighborhood” in the “Writing” center. The “ABC” center promotes engagement of mastery of content by inviting students to determine “What letter makes the sound you hear at the beginning of the word different? Can you write it?” These concepts are tied to previously presented concepts: Children are first taught the letter *Dd* in Theme 2, Week 1. In this lesson, they are taught the letter name, letter sound, and letter formation. The conversation prompt cited in this example comes from Theme 3, Week 3, and asks children if they can identify the sound at the beginning of the word *different* and name the letter that makes that sound. This is an opportunity to revisit this previously taught sound and letter.

Large group lessons consistently follow a predictable sequence in order to provide routine. Movement, music, and student collaboration are incorporated into large group activities, aiding in engagement through multiple types of practices and learning modalities. Theme 3 includes a large group activity, which begins by activating students’ prior knowledge about their five senses and leads into singing a song about senses and the introduction of two new vocabulary words. In another example, the teacher reads *Cold, Crunchy, Colorful* and engages students in deepening their knowledge, using questions like “What do our eyes tell us? What colors do we see here? Can you find the patterns in these pictures?” and “Which senses do we use when we cut out cookies? When we take a walk outside?” After this activity, flexible grouping is utilized when students “Turn and Talk” with a partner, revisiting the question “What do our eyes tell us?” While each specific activity does not always support children who need one-on-one attention, the Implementation Guide does include information to support teachers on how to provide responsive instruction meant to meet those individual needs.

Independent centers integrate concepts and information introduced by the teacher during large group time, extending learning throughout the day. To extend learning through free play and

exploration, center signs include questions explored during large and small group times. Some of the questions introduced in Theme 5 include “Can you name three fruits? Can you name three vegetables?” “Can you make a collage that shows the ingredients of your favorite dish?” and “Could you build a refrigerator out of blocks? What foods would you put in it?” The materials provide lists of suggested learning tools to add to independent centers, including representation of body parts for the “Math” center; various “doctor’s office” props for the Pretend and Learn center; and books about farming, groceries, food preparation, food delivery trucks, and machines in the “Library” center.

The materials provide teachers tips for small group activities. In a Theme 7 small group activity, the teacher models a block pattern and encourages children to recreate it based on ordinal number descriptions. The teacher prompts the students with questions such as “Can you set up your fall leaves like mine? Here is my order: first is a yellow leaf, second an orange leaf, third a green leaf, and fourth a red leaf.” The materials provide teacher guidance about which activities best support varying group sizes while allowing for flexibility in students’ learning outcomes.

10.3 Materials include supports for English Learners (EL) to meet grade-level learning expectations.

- Materials must include accommodations for linguistics (communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded) commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency.
- Materials provide scaffolds for English Learners.
- Materials encourage strategic use of students' first language as a means to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in English (e.g., to enhance vocabulary development).

Partially Meets 1/2

The materials reviewed provide some scaffolds for English Learners (ELs) and some use of students' first language as a means to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in English (e.g., to enhance vocabulary development). While there are some accommodations for linguistics (communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded), they are not commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Theme 2, teacher guidance encourages strategic use of students' first language as a means to develop linguistic and cognitive skills in English: "Young children who are learning more than one language reap many long-term cognitive and social benefits. Create a learning environment where children can use both English and their home language. Let parents know that the use of another language will not delay their children's growth in English." While this theory is presented in such overarching examples, evidence supporting teacher implementation is limited throughout the materials. Additional information can be found in the "Multilingual Learners" section of the "Implementation Guide." The introductory paragraph focuses on research explaining the growing number of multilingual learners, the importance of integrating the home language into the classroom, and the benefits of being bilingual. The materials explain why multilingual students may appear to lag behind their peers: they experience a non-verbal phase, they may have a smaller vocabulary, and they may require additional wait time. To help ELs, the program states: "In the English and Spanish versions of the program, support for multilingual learners is built into large group and small group lessons, including general comprehension strategies as well as a specific strategy for cognates (cross-language connections)." However, this section does not describe *how* the support is accomplished. Materials list five suggestions from the U.S. Department of Education, but the resource does not describe strategic and

intentional accommodations, strategies, scaffolds, or teaching strategies. There are sometimes “Child Development: Multilingual Learners” tips found at the bottom of lessons, but these suggestions are not commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency.

Evidence of some teacher scaffolding in Theme 2 occurs when the vocabulary words *sort* and *vehicle* are introduced. During the activity, the teacher presents photos of various vehicles while asking guiding questions such as “What is this vehicle called?” The back of each photo includes a support statement for students who may need it. For example, the back of a photo of a bicycle states, “This is a bicycle.” Teacher guidance states: “For children who need language support, review each vehicle picture by naming it and pointing to that vehicle in the book. Have children repeat the vehicle names aloud. Talk about what each vehicle is used for.” While these types of strategies are used to support ELs throughout the materials, they do not scaffold in an intentional, research-based way. A “Teacher Tip” in Theme 2 encourages teachers to invite students to share personal experiences as a way to connect to learning. For example, the whole group activity includes invitations such as “Sometimes a fire engine makes loud noises. A fire engine makes different noises than an ambulance. Let’s all make fire engine noises!” The teacher is told: “Children from different cultures and with different home languages may have different ways to make the sounds for each vehicle. Encourage children to share and compare the vehicle sounds. Comparing these sounds provides an opportunity for children to share an aspect of their home languages with the class.”

In Theme 3, teacher guidance for a whole group read-aloud of *Quack! Quack! Quiet!* states: “Stop at each word that begins with the letter ‘Qq’. Have children say /kw/ and the word. For a challenge, after reading each story, ask children to recall all the words that begin with the target sound and letter. Then invite children to name any other words they know that begin with that letter and sound. Modifications: In Spanish, the letters ‘qu’ have a /k/ sound and never make the /kw/ sound. Have children practice saying words that begin with ‘qu’ and have them emphasize the /kw/ sound.” Specific activities provide scaffolding suggestions, but scaffolds are not integrated into mealtimes, outdoor play, or arrival/dismissal. Additionally, these modifications and suggestions are not divided into more detailed supports based on the child’s English language proficiency level. There is no variance for students who are beginners to the language and those who are more advanced.

The materials provide general accommodations and supports built into the large group and small group lessons throughout the program, but they are not specific to English Learners. For example, there is guidance on how to use scaffolded responses to support learners who are struggling. Prior to a read-aloud in this theme, the teacher introduces a variety of measurement tools, such as a ruler, yardstick, and measuring tape. The teacher demonstrates using the tool, providing authentic representations. The students then participate in a “Freeze Dance,” making their bodies *big* or *small*. During the read-aloud, students are asked, “What is an example of a really big animal?” and express their thoughts via a “Turn and Talk” with a peer after the reading. The materials include a scaffold: “1. How big are elephants? 2. Elephants are b... (big) animals. 3. Elephants are big animals.”

In a Theme 8 whole group activity, there is one example of teacher guidance encouraging the use of students' first language as a means to build their English skills: "Allow children to take turns writing answers to the questions on the board. Encourage conversation connecting English and Spanish. Multilingual learners may enjoy adding to the discussion of cognates by sharing similarities between their native language and English. Explain that while cognates make it easier to talk to friends, we can also use nonverbal methods. Give examples of common nonverbal communications, such as waving hello and nodding in agreement." While this suggestion is a good general teaching tool, there is no strategic use of first language knowledge as a means to English acquisition. The student is not using a specific aspect of native language to leverage for English understanding. Then, during a small group activity, the teacher is told: "If children in your class speak Spanish as a first language, encourage them to identify the scene from the book (read during large group) using Spanish if they want to. Celebrate the diversity of language in your classroom! Encourage children whose first language is neither English nor Spanish to act out scenes from the book or from other events in the classroom. Doing so will enhance a sense of social and global connection between all children." Again, this example remains general and does not use the specific native language as a vehicle. While there are examples of general English support throughout all themes, this support is not commensurate with the various levels of English proficiency. The product provides a comprehensive scaffolding structure based on age and child development. However, the product does not have a similar structure built based on level of English acquisition beyond the Spanish version of the product.

11.1 Materials include year-long plans with practice and review opportunities that support instruction.

- Materials include a cohesive, year-long plan to build students' concept development and consider how to vertically align instruction that builds year to year.
- Materials provides review and practice of mathematical knowledge and skills throughout the span of the curriculum.

Partially Meets 1/2

The materials include a year-long plan to build students' concept development. They include review and practice of knowledge and skills in all domains. They do not include year-to-year vertical alignment instruction guidance.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "PreK On My Way Year at a Glance" provides a high-level summary of skill coverage across the year and how the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines outcomes are introduced, reviewed, and practiced across themes. The materials include 32 weeks of instruction and a Year at a Glance tool. These documents support teachers in incorporating specific learning targets into a full year of instruction. For example, the following Texas Prekindergarten Guideline is identified as a learning target in Themes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8: "Child shows understanding by responding appropriately. (II.A.1)"

Targeted guidelines in each theme are consistently reinforced in subsequent themes, and teacher guidance accompanying each lesson includes suggested instructional time. For example, a large group lesson on the five senses suggests allowing for 20 minutes of instruction. Related small group activities connect concepts from the large group activity; materials suggest guiding questions to support students during center time exploration. Examples include asking students what they feel when they touch a surface or what they see in the classroom. Teacher guidance is not provided for vertical alignment to build upon instruction from year to year. If the curriculum were used more than one year at a time, content and instruction would repeat for returning students. While the program may be somewhat vertically aligned, there is no section in the "Implementation Guide" or "Program Guide" detailing this connection.

During a Theme 3 whole group read-aloud, students are introduced to compound words: "'Thunderstorm' is a special kind of word called a 'compound word.' What two words do you

hear in the word ‘thunderstorm?’” Students explore the concept further through a “Weather-Word Picture Clues” game where they are encouraged to think of additional weather-related compound words. Day 3 of this theme revisits the concept during a whole group read-aloud: “What two words do you hear in the word ‘rainbow’? Who remembers what this kind of word is called? ‘Sunlight’ is a compound word, too. What two words do you hear in ‘sunlight?’”

In addition to the Year at a Glance, the materials include a “Week at a Glance” tool throughout all themes, specifying daily learning goals within each domain (Language, Literacy, and Math). For example, teacher guidance for a Theme 5 large group activity states: “In this lesson, you will use circle time to build background, engage children with a song, and introduce vocabulary (protects, sends). Begin story time by introducing the book and asking, ‘What body parts help us move?’ Read for enjoyment and entertainment, noticing vocabulary in context. Share the daily writing option.” This theme provides opportunities for review and practice of the Science domain: “Talk with children about parts of their bodies. Encourage different students to name parts they know, such as arms, legs, and head.” Also: “Invite children to sing ‘If You're Happy and You Know It.’ Include directions with body parts, such as ‘stomp your feet,’ ‘nod your head,’ and ‘clap your hands.’”

Recommended center activities also include some daily opportunities for child-led, play-based review and skills practice. For example, suggested center materials in Theme 6 include kitchen sets, play food, cleaning supplies, play money, and a cash register (“Pretend and Learn” center) and crayons, pencils, paper, and markers (“Writer’s Corner”).

11.2 Materials include implementation support for teachers and administrators.

- Materials are accompanied by a Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines-aligned scope and sequence outlining the essential knowledge and skills that are taught in the program, the order in which they are presented, and how knowledge and skills build and connect across grade levels.
- Materials include supports to help teachers implement the materials as intended.
- Materials include resources and guidance to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials as intended.
- Materials include a school year's worth of prekindergarten instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines.

Partially Meets 1/2

The materials are accompanied by a Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines-aligned scope and sequence outlining the essential knowledge and skills that are taught in the program and the order in which they are presented. There is no guidance on how knowledge and skills build and connect across grade levels. Materials include a school year's worth of prekindergarten instruction, including pacing guidance and routines. Materials include some supports to help teachers implement the materials as intended, but there are limited resources or guidance to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials as intended.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials include a correlation document with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines along with a "Year at a Glance" tool. The scope and sequence outlines weekly activities and corresponding guidelines, with four to eight activities or links for each guideline. Materials include a variety of learning experiences in numerous group settings including large group, small group, and center-based activities. All guidelines are addressed within the materials, and teachers can use the online "Teacher Hub" to search the resources by skill. However, there is no teacher guidance supporting connections to standards in kindergarten and beyond. There is some evidence suggesting how the skills build and connect within the different thematic units, but there is no explanation connecting the materials to the next year's set of standards.

The materials provide three documents supporting implementation of the curriculum: a "Program Guide," an "Implementation Guide," and a "Program Walkthrough." The Implementation Guide includes the following sections: Program Overview, Research

Foundations, Component Walk-Through, Assessment Guidance, Instructional Best Practices, Classroom Environment, Year at a Glance, Supporting Each Child, Glossary of PK Terms, and a Bibliography. The Program Guide outlines all aspects of the curriculum, highlighting unique features of each portion of the instructional materials. Learning materials indicated in the guide include but are not limited to pattern blocks, two-color counters, connecting cubes, jumbo tweezers, magnifiers, geoboards, attribute buttons, magnetic letters and numbers, English and Spanish alphabet cards, posters, big books, puppets, and “equity sticks.”

Each week includes an “At a Glance” overview indicating a high-level overview of the guidelines, suggestions for centers, and other materials. Each day includes a “Teaching Guide,” providing teachers an overview of daily lessons along with a list of required materials. An entire instructional year is represented in the materials, with eight themes covering four weeks each. Each week encompasses five days of instruction for a total of 160 days of instructional materials, allowing for some flexibility in implementation and pacing of themes. Each theme presents four topics over the course of four weeks. For example, the topics for Theme 3 are “5 Senses,” “Weather,” “Measure It!” and “Make It Move.” The topics for Theme 7 are “Day and Night,” “Seasons,” “Caring For Plants,” and “Protect The Earth.” Themes are color-coded on the digital materials only; print materials are clearly labeled.

These resources help support the teacher in implementation, but there is little guidance to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials as intended. Administrators can use the Implementation Guide in the same way a teacher can, but there is no section in the guide or on the online portal providing additional resources, permissions, or guidance specifically intended for administrator tasks. The “Instructional Routines” section of the Implementation Guide provides a two-page overview of the different aspects of the program (Hand Signal Strategy Cards, Vocabulary Cards, Equity Sticks, Independent Centers, etc.) but this does not vary at all from a support to help teachers implement the materials as intended.

11.3 Materials provide implementation guidance to meet variability in programmatic design and scheduling considerations.

- Materials provide guidance for strategic implementation without disrupting the sequence of content that must be taught in a specific order following a developmental progression.
- Materials are designed in a way that allow LEAs the ability to incorporate the curriculum into district, campus, and teacher programmatic design and scheduling considerations.

Meets 2/2

The materials provide guidance for strategic implementation, with limited flexibility regarding the sequence of content presentation. Materials are designed in a way that allows LEAs the ability to incorporate the curriculum into district, campus, and teacher programmatic design and scheduling considerations.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include recommendations for introducing skills and content in a progression that follows the learning continuum. For example, a multi-page PDF outlining alphabet letter formation includes “number of strokes” and a short rhyme to recite with each letter. The materials do not provide guidance regarding the developmental progression of skills or how to adapt the sequence of themes to account for varied classroom needs and dynamics. The materials include sufficient content to provide a full day of instruction and suggest flexible implementation options and recommended pacing in the “Implementation Guide.” The materials provide a variety of large and small group activities as well as guiding questions for teachers to incorporate throughout the day. A daily lesson planning template is provided for teachers; it includes four sections: “Circle Time,” “Story Time,” “Small Group,” and “Centers.” The template is completely blank for the teacher to fill in from scratch if desired. In addition, the interactive lesson planner enables teachers to digitally alter existing lesson plans and details. Teacher guidance for large and small group activities throughout all themes includes scaffolding suggestions for three- and five-year-olds as well as for students with varying developmental needs and multilingual learners. Information included in the information guide supports teachers in identifying and understanding the developmental progression of content. The materials do not offer support to allow Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to easily use the materials in different programs.

11.4 Materials provide guidance on fostering connections between home and school.

- Materials support development of strong relationships between teachers and families.
- Materials specify activities for use at home to support students' learning and development.

Meets 2/2

The materials support development of strong relationships between teachers and families and specify activities for use at home to support students' learning and development.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include a "Family Connection" section with weekly parent resources to enhance at home-learning for each theme. "Family Bulletins" (in English and Spanish) are sent home with students and provide information, questions, and conversation starters related to classroom activities. "Chat bands" are placed on student wrists at the end of each day to encourage conversations with parents. For example: "How do we measure 'how big,' 'how much,' or 'how many?'" and "Ask your child about their friends at school. What makes them friends? How is your child a good friend to them? Talk about the ways you are a good friend to your friends. Have your child draw a picture of themselves with their friends. Ask what your child has in common with these friends and what makes each friend unique." The materials include online access to interactive resources through the "Pre-K On My Way Family Engage" site. On this site, there are ebooks and songs to be shared by families and students at home.

Each "Week at a Glance" throughout themes includes a "Family Engagement" section providing available resources to share with families. For example, in Theme 1: "Invite families to reinforce this week's learning by talking about the feelings characters have in a TV show or movie! Share these family resources: '1.1 Family Bulletin,' '1.1 Family Activities,' and '1.1 Chat Bands.'" Tips supporting the development of relationships with families are incorporated into teacher guidance throughout themes: "Each family is unique and consists of different members. Families can build a sense of belonging and sense of security. One of the guiding principles for school readiness is that learning occurs within the context of relationships, both at home and school. These interactions are essential to children's learning."

"The Family Exchange" in Theme 3 includes digital versions of theme-related songs, including "The Senses," "Wiggle Jiggle," (English), "Mira el clima," and "Las dos vacas" (Spanish). This

resource also includes a link to “Little eReaders,” providing students and families access to digital stories accompanying each theme. The family activities for Theme 3 range from exploring senses using items around the house to pointing out measurement items while cooking and shopping. Each activity specifies typical household items and requires minimal preparation on the part of the family. For example, in this theme, students are investigating their senses, the weather, measurement, and movement. A corresponding family activity suggests: “Put an item in a brown paper bag: a cotton ball, a carrot slice, or a scented crayon. Ask your child to use their senses to guess what object it is. What does this feel like? Smell like? Have your child find objects to play the game with you.” A “Family Bulletin” in this theme extends this exploration by encouraging families to share Little eReaders fiction and nonfiction books about investigation: *Danny and the Dinosaur*; *Is It a Dinosaur?*; *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*; and *Rock Collecting*.

11.5 The visual design of student and teacher materials (whether in print or digital) is neither distracting nor chaotic.

- Materials include appropriate use of white space and design that supports and does not distract from student learning.
- Pictures and graphics are supportive of student learning and engagement without being visually distracting.

Meets 2/2

The materials include appropriate use of white space and design that supports and does not distract from student learning. Pictures and graphics are supportive of student learning and engagement without being visually distracting.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include clear, concise tables, charts, and visuals. Days of the week are color-coded: Monday/orange, Tuesday/lime green, Wednesday/blue, Thursday/purple, and Friday/teal. “Large Group Cards” are organized by background color: pink/“Circle Time” and blue/“Story Time.” This color-coding system is consistent throughout all themes. Alphabet cards display the letter only on the front and an authentic photo of a corresponding object and word on the back. For example, the letter *A* card includes a photograph of an apple above a dark-colored box with *Apple* in white font. Theme 2 materials include but are not limited to vocabulary/alphabet/number/strategy cards, posters, and prompt response worksheets.

All student-facing materials include limited text and are visually stimulating without being distracting. For example, a poster titled “Our School Rules” utilizes age-appropriate photographs with simple text. Number cards include a variety of number representations ranging from fingers to dots/lines arranged in an array of formats. Each number card has an appropriate amount of white space and encourages student engagement. Student prompt response worksheets include a large area of open white space for students to record their thoughts. Teacher-facing large group and activity cards in Theme 3 are easy to read with appropriate amounts of white space. The materials include boxes to break up the sections of each lesson. “Teacher Tips” on the bottom of each Large Group Card provide support strategies for various learners, including dual language students.