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# Frog Street 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 fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure and include detailed guidance that supports the teacher's delivery of instruction to three- and four-year-old children.
- Materials are supported by child development research 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 provide activities to develop physical skills, fine motor skills, and safe and healthy habits.

### **Section 4. Language and Communication Domain**

- Materials provide guidance on developing students' listening and 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 explicit instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills, alphabetic knowledge skills, and print knowledge and concepts.
- Materials include a variety of text types and genres across contents that are high quality and at an appropriate level of complexity; materials use a variety of approaches to develop student comprehension of texts.
- Materials include strategies to support ELs with their reading skills and guide 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 teachers instruct students along the developmental stages of writing.
- Materials provide support for fine motor development alongside and through writing.

### **Section 7. Mathematics Domain**

- Materials follow a logical mathematical continuum of concrete, pictorial, then abstract representations.
- Materials promote instruction that builds on students' informal knowledge about mathematics.
- Materials intentionally 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 and allow students to explore and use various digital tools.

## **Section 9. Progress Monitoring**

- Materials include developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools and guidance for teachers and students; materials include tools for students to track their own progress and growth.
- Materials include guidance for teachers and administrators to analyze and respond to data from diagnostic tools.
- Materials include frequent and 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 a variety of instructional methods that appeal to different student learning interests and needs.
- Materials include accommodations for linguistics commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency.

## **Section 11. Implementation**

- Materials include a year-long plan with practice and review opportunities that support instruction.
- Materials include implementation support for teachers and administrators; implementation guidance meets variability in programmatic design and scheduling considerations.
- The materials include 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 are cross-curricular and integrated in an authentic way to support students' unified experience throughout the day. They include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections to create a unified experience for students. Materials name the domains that are purposefully developed or reinforced in each learning activity.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Theme 2, the focus is on "My Family and Friends." In Week 1, the "Brain Smart Start Greeting Time" includes a song about family members called "My Mother Is a Baker," involving music and movement. The lesson includes social, music, movement, and social studies connections. The read-aloud is a nonfiction book titled *Families*. During "Morning Message," students read sentences such as "My family is fabulous." "Families play together." Students identify target letters *Ff*, *Gg*, and *Mm* as they learn about putting spaces between words. This lesson connects literacy instruction to the theme of "families." In math, students engage in a cross-curricular lesson connecting measurement to the social skills concept of family; the lesson is designed around the Story Folder *The Three Bears*. Math, literacy, and social studies are intertwined in activities focused on teaching key vocabulary, family structure, roles of family members, and comparing different family members. In each theme and throughout all of the practice centers and lessons, the materials include explicit connections to multiple and varied Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, including the domain, skill, and outcome. These guidelines are listed and connected to multiple center areas, including the "Listening" center, "ABC" center, "Writer's Corner," and the "Creativity Station."

In Week 1 of Theme 5, students read different construction books; design and construct a house; learn and use construction-related vocabulary words; and take part in music and movement with various construction-related songs, including "Jazzy Shapes," "Tree House," "This Little Pig," and "Big Toe Truck." Three read-aloud books are *Under Construction*, *Three*

*Little Pigs*, and *Mighty, Mighty Construction Site*. After each read-aloud, students answer questions, participate in extension activities, and participate in planned activities in learning centers to connect their knowledge through meaningful play interactions. For example, in the Writer's Corner, students are architects and design a strong house for the three little pigs; meanwhile, the teacher asks them questions such as "Where are the doors and windows?" Students then describe their design to their peers. In the "Math" center, students create frames for houses or other buildings using paper strips, use a ruler and markers to draw their building design on graph paper, and wear a hard hat while building. The instructional materials name which domains that are purposefully developed and reinforced in each learning activity throughout Theme 5. The Week 1 read-aloud lists multiple domain area connections, including "Language and Communication," "Emergent Literacy Reading," "Mathematics," and "Emergent Literacy Writing."

In Theme 9, the lessons are organized around the theme of seasons and weather. Lessons support students' abilities to build background knowledge, make connections, and explore concepts in a variety of ways. During the "Pretend and Learn" center, students practice personal safety, engage in dramatic play, and compare and categorize. In a science-focused lesson, students explore the differences between winter and summer clothing choices, with a connection to the mathematics domain. Students compare how thick or lightweight fabric feels on their skin as they have fun dressing up in the clothing. When they finish dressing up, students sort clothing by season. Teachers ask, "Why is winter clothing heavy and thick? How is it different from summer clothing? Why do we wear hats in the winter? Why do we wear hats in the summer? Why do we wear sunglasses?" As students explore rainy weather clothing, teachers point out how rainy weather clothing is waterproof. Materials include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections to create a unified experience for students. The materials contain content-building information for teachers about the domains being taught or reinforced and explain how multiple domains are integrated/connected. Each week, options for practice centers provide ways to integrate the week's learning goals into practice time. Practice center activities are directly tied to multiple domain areas, including "Social and Emotional Development," "Language and Communication," "Mathematics," and "Technology," and give students an opportunity to explore their interests, learn cooperatively, make their own choices, and develop independence.

**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

The materials utilize high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include multiple genres of text, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, poems, songs, and nursery rhymes. The “Welcome Guide” states: “The library features a balance of literature (fiction) and informational text (nonfiction) that includes well-loved trade titles, books with engaging photographs, and books with a variety of artistic styles. The complete library includes 156 books, 14 bilingual Story Folders, 3 Developmental Storybooks, six stories (2 per book) each told at three different levels, available in English and Spanish, Songs and Stories, Poems and Rhymes, Little Books, Listening Library, and three video e-books.”

In Theme 2, the focus is on family and friends, and the texts represent both fiction and nonfiction genres. With the nonfiction book *Families*, during “Morning Message,” the students write sentences about how families work together. Teachers use the story to introduce the vocabulary *relatives*, *aunt*, and *uncle*; it is used in sentences during the literacy small group. In math, students refer to *Families*, count how many people are in each family, and compare the numbers. The text connects learning in math, language, social studies, and emergent reading. The book is available in digital format for parents to read at home with their children. It includes high-quality, clear pictures; pictures are culturally diverse, including representations of different types of families. The read-aloud fiction book *The Relatives Came* introduces vocabulary such as *grandmother*, *grandfather*, and *cousin*. In a social studies lesson, students use a map to identify where the relatives live. In a shared writing lesson, students brainstorm and list places they would like to go; then, they write a story about an adventure or trip they would like to take. This text connects learning in social studies, emergent reading, and emergent writing. *The Relatives Came* is an authentic children’s book and winner of the Caldecott Award — an illustration award for distinguished picture books.

In Theme 3, Week 2, the theme is “Kind and Helpful Me.” The read-aloud is *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller, a fiction picture book about the power of kindness. The idea of kindness is the focus of the Morning Message; students hear sentences about Tanisha spilling juice on her dress; how helping people is always joyful; and how they will be learning about kindness this week. During two small group literacy lessons, students complete a shared writing activity with the teacher, following the recipe for making “bird ‘donuts.’” In the second lesson, students participate in a guided writing activity, using their journals “to illustrate and label where they will hang their bird treat.” The concept of kindness continues during a STEAM lesson; students make a fruit basket for the school staff members. *Be Kind* is an authentic text and a winner of the Golden Kite Award for “Best Picture Book Text.” Evidently, the instructional materials utilize high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration. In Theme 3, Week 3, the nonfiction text is *ABCs of Food*. During the Morning Message, students write and hear sentences about nutritious food, how to make orange juice, bread, food from different countries, and grains. During “Music and Movement,” students sing and hear songs like “Go Bananas!” “Stone Soup,” and “The Lunchtime Rap.” In shared writing, students plan a meal, choosing food from each food group. During a math small group, students discuss which food does not belong in the group. During a STEAM lesson, students “draw or create a paper collage of an animal using the shapes and colors of nutritious food.”

Theme 5 includes a variety of books for teachers to use during read-alouds, small groups, math, and other areas. The popular fiction book *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie* by Laura Numeroff has been awarded the Colorado Children’s Book Award, the Georgia Children’s Picture Storybook Award, and the California Young Reader Medal; the author is also a #1 *New York Times* bestseller. In Week 3, with this read-aloud, students learn new vocabulary, make inferences and predictions, retell stories, connect the book to real-life experiences, act out the story, and more. A large taped rectangle on the floor activates the students’ imagination; students use wooden blocks to create a bathtub for this tape “creature.” Teachers build on the story structure and provide contextual support with the sentence frame “If you give a creature a bathtub, it will . . .” Theme 5 also includes a variety of nonfiction books. *Under Construction* is a nonfiction video e-book that engages students with the topic of construction. Students plan their own construction site in the “Sensory” center, and teachers reference *Under Construction* to activate prior knowledge. Students use construction vehicles to dig and excavate small stones and small twigs in the sand. Students continue to consider construction happening around them when the class takes a neighborhood walk to view building sites and materials used in buildings. The class takes pictures to bring back to the classroom to inspire later building experiences.



## 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 support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains as laid out in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. The materials include a variety of opportunities for purposeful play that promote student choice; they provide guidance to teachers on how to connect all domains to play; they provide guidance to teachers on setting up and facilitating activities to meet, reinforce, or practice learning objectives; and they have an intentional balance of direct (explicit) instruction and student choice, including purposefully planned learning centers, as appropriate for the content and skill development.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Theme 2, “Family and Friends,” students have many opportunities to discuss family units and caregivers and engage in related theme-based activities across domains including math, science, and social studies. In this theme, the teacher directly teaches letters and vocabulary related to family. Children have the opportunity to practice with embedded student choice in centers. In the “ABC” center, students choose word cards that represent different family members and try to spell the words with plastic letters. In the “Construction” center, students use blocks, boxes, or other building materials to create family members, houses, and communities. Teachers facilitate these activities to meet, reinforce, or practice the learning objectives of the week. In the “Listening” center, children have the choice to engage in previously read texts, *Families* and *Lucy and Copito*, to practice pre-literacy skills and reinforce new concepts. Following these teacher-directed read-alouds, the teacher uses “wh” questions (e.g., who, what, and where) to support comprehension and facilitate thinking in the “Writer’s Corner,” as the students draw a favorite memory with a family member. The children are able to decide what materials they would like to use to draw their memory; materials include pencils, markers, and crayons.

In Theme 5, “Creative Me,” students focus their learning around a common theme of construction, community workers, and building while engaging in learning that spans multiple domains, including math, science, and social studies. In a whole group lesson, students listen to a story about construction and the process of building something. *Mighty, Mighty Construction Site* explains how many different trucks it can take to construct a building; students practice consulting blueprints. A variety of learning centers provide student choice and playful activities. In the “Sensory” center, students dig and excavate in sand; in the Construction center, students build tall and short buildings; in the “Creativity” center, students further practice this skill to build city skylines of tall and short buildings with rectangle and square paper shapes. Students use the story of *The Three Little Pigs* to further investigate different types of homes. During a whole group lesson about tools, students investigate simple machines. Students listen to an informational nonfiction book that builds background knowledge on four simple machines (wheel and axle, lever, inclined plane, wedge) and how they are used for work and play. Students choose to practice this learning by drawing and writing about tools in the “Writing” center, engaging with balance scales and tools in the “Science” center, and using tools to build ramps (inclined planes) in the Construction center. In a lesson connecting math and literacy, students count frogs using counters and match them to the corresponding ten-frame mat. Teachers guide thinking, asking students how they figured out how many frogs to count out. After this explicit practice, students create their own pictorial representation by illustrating their number sets and orally telling their own stories. Teachers ask students reflecting questions during their exploration.

In Theme 8, students explore animals. In Week 1, this concept extends into math, science, and social studies as students learn about different ways mammals move, learn about their sleeping patterns, and explore changing quantities. During a whole group fiction read-aloud, *I Am a Mammal*, students discover various animals’ habitats, including those of land, sea, and farm animals. To extend this teacher-directed learning, students choose between playful activities in a variety of learning centers. At the “Creativity Station,” students press animal cookie cutters on paint-soaked paper towels and then press the cookie cutters onto drawing paper to make a print. This activity includes an embedded opportunity for written expression as students are encouraged to label their creations. In another authentic practice experience, in the Construction center, students explore farm animals by building farm animal housing. Teachers provide guiding questions for when students are setting up the farm; they ask about the decisions made to fence in certain animals. During a math small group lesson, teachers lead instruction on patterns and changing quantities. Students sing “Five Silly Monkeys” and use their fingers to act out and model the decreasing number of monkeys in each verse. Students continue to build on this concept by adding chain links to visually represent their quantities. Teachers facilitate practice as students discuss the pattern; they ask, “What is changing? What stays the same?” In a practice activity, students play a game with manipulatives to practice counting and adding and taking away from a set, using frog counters, an egg carton “boat,” and dice. Students roll a die and add frogs to their side of the boat; they must then determine how many frogs they need to gain or lose to make the sides equal. Teachers facilitate this activity by asking guiding questions.

## 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

Although the materials are intended for four-year-old children, the materials provide differentiated instruction for children throughout all themes and lessons. Materials have suggested schedules for both full-day and half-day programs that meet the needs of children performing below, on, and above level.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” shows that the instructional materials can be used for three-year-olds, but they place more of an emphasis on four-year-olds in the prekindergarten stage. According to the guide, early brain development research for three-year-olds shows, “The brain of a three-year-old child is two and a half times more active than an adult brain.” The materials provide “Windows of Opportunity” that support how brains are wired at developmental milestones correlated to age. This information is used in the materials to support the introduction of content and skills. The guide states, “What you teach birth to three will be what matters most to me. What you teach three to five will be what helps me grow and thrive.” Although the instructional components focus on four-year-olds, the “Assessment Checklists” include progress monitoring tools that identify skills observed from birth to five years and provide strategies and activities for differentiated instruction based on the information gathered from the observations.

Although the materials do not explicitly state the age level for which the materials are intended, the provided differentiation allows for young children to be accommodated. The instructional materials provide differentiation, such as challenges for students who have mastered the skills and content taught and support for students who are struggling in various areas. This is identified in two defined sections labeled “Support” and “Challenge.” For example, in Theme 1, students explore using chain links; the teacher asks students to describe and compare the materials. The teacher supports students by encouraging participation, attaching the links, or

adding them to another particular collection of greater interest to the students. In this same lesson, the teacher challenges students by encouraging them to draw a picture of the design that they create with the chain links and record the number of links for each design. In Theme 9, during a literacy small group, teachers support students by assisting them in writing their names while asking them to name each letter. After a lesson about preparing for a baby to come home, teachers challenge students to share a task that their family would do together.

In the “Welcome Guide,” the “Planning Your Day” section provides differentiated recommendations for a full-day schedule and two options for a half-day schedule to support instructional planning. The half-day schedule has two options: 165 minutes of instruction time and 182 minutes of instruction time. The 182-minute option shortens the second read-aloud by five minutes but extends the practice center and math small group from 40 minutes to a full hour. The half-day schedule does not include quiet time, STEAM, or lunch. The half-day schedule also recommends just two read-alouds as opposed to the three that are found in the full-day schedule. The materials provide differentiated use recommendations; they allow teachers to log into the *Frog Street Portal* and create a customizable daily plan to fit their schedule and preferences.

## 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

The materials include detailed guidance that supports the teacher's delivery of instruction. Materials include explicit instructional strategies for teaching prekindergarten skills; detailed and explicit guidance for teacher and student actions that support student development and proficiency of content and skills; and detailed guidance for connecting students' prior content knowledge and experiences to new learning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials provide guidance for teachers and explicit instructional strategies for teaching prekindergarten skills, such as the use of concrete materials, exploration of pictures, connection to prior knowledge, and use of story props to support retell. In Theme 2, in a math small group lesson, the focus is "Measurable Attributes, Comparing Size." Teachers give students two frog counters and direct, "Find a small frog counter." Teachers challenge students to justify how they know an object represents the attribute, asking, "How do you know that is small?" In Theme 4, in a language and literacy small group lesson, the focus is on distinguishing between living and nonliving things. The teacher invites students to "look through a collection of books to identify images of living and nonliving things." Materials provide reflection questions to ask students; for example, students explain how they know whether a selected image is of a living or nonliving thing. To extend the lesson midweek, students use story folder props to retell the story *The Great Enormous Rock*. Materials give further guidance to support English Learners; teachers can use a checklist to support children's classification choices. In Theme 7, midweek, in the Week 1 "Language and Literacy" center, children retell *Little Ants* using story folder props. Students can "tell the story in any sequence as long as they begin with marching and end with waving." After this, materials suggest that students can play a game with the story props: Students "place the props facedown on the floor and take turns picking one up and imitating the movement."

The “Welcome Guide” includes charts to support teachers’ understanding of appropriate developmental levels for instruction and to support teacher actions. For example, teachers are guided to refer to the provided developmental continuum when teaching phonological awareness and to use the included strategy cards; guidance supports teachers’ understanding of skill progression for both English-speaking and bilingual students. The guide also supports teacher actions when teaching comprehension; teachers are to refer to Bloom’s Taxonomy chart during read-alouds. In addition to guidance regarding developmental levels, the materials include explicit instructions for teachers to follow to be prepared to support learners. For example, in Theme 4, students go on an outdoor scavenger hunt to find living and nonliving things. The materials guide the teacher to prepare for this lesson by reviewing previously learned concepts, including picture cards of living and nonliving things. After the review, students can successfully apply their learning to find living and nonliving things and then chart what they locate. In Theme 9, in a small group literacy lesson, materials guide the teacher to use concrete materials when engaging students with the alphabet. Following teacher instruction, students match specific letter cards to the letters on the “Letter Wall.” Teachers instruct students to say the name and sound of the letter as they match. Next, teachers display only the lowercase letter cards and invite students to match to the uppercase letter. Then, following guidance in the materials, teachers facilitate a conversation about how certain uppercase letters and lowercase letters look similar and different. Teachers continue to guide students, demonstrating what happens when the letter card is turned upside down. Teachers model how to hold the white space of the card so that the letter is in the correct position. Students show their mastery by choosing a letter card, saying its name, and making its sound. Teachers provide continued practice by inviting children to sort the sound cards by the beginning sound. In the following week’s literacy small group, students use the Letter Wall to explore and practice the skill with their peers or on their own; lesson materials support teachers with suggestions for interacting with children as they work. Teachers provide songs and clues as scaffold support.

In Theme 2, teacher guidance supports connecting prior knowledge to new learning about travel. The teacher reminds children that this week, they are talking about the importance of relatives (extended family members) and how they might travel to visit them. This is then connected to new learning about modes of transportation. In Theme 4, during a math lesson about circles and ovals, students connect to prior knowledge by sharing shape pictures that they created in an earlier lesson. The teacher uses this experience to support comparing and contrasting circles and ovals. Building on this knowledge, students then create ovals and circles with chenille stems and describe, compare, and contrast their shapes. In a later lesson within this theme, the materials guide teachers to begin the lesson by reviewing all of the shapes; students show how they could make each of the shapes with AngLegs or chenille stems. Students then sort picture cards into triangles, curved shapes (i.e., circles and ovals), and quadrilaterals. In another example, materials provide detailed guidance to connect students’ prior content knowledge and experiences to new learning about changes that people go through as they grow. Materials support a teacher-led discussion about what the children know about babies and how they grow and change. Following materials’ guidance, the teacher brings

in baby items for students to experience. This builds students' knowledge and supports concrete and connected understanding of new concepts related to change.

**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 are supported by child development research on children’s development within and across all domains. They 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. The research is current, academic, and relevant to early childhood development. The materials include a bibliography.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include a clear description of how the curriculum is supported by child development research. In the “Welcome Guide,” “Early Brain Development Research” section, materials share five major findings and their relevance to the development of young children and to those who work with young children from *Rethinking the Brain: New Insights in Early Childhood Development*, published by the Families and Work Institute (1996): “(1) The brain of a three-year-old child is two and a half times more active than an adult’s brain. (2) Brain development is contingent on a complex interplay between genes and the environment. (3) Experiences wire the brain. Repetition strengthens the wiring. (4) Brain development is non-linear. (5) Early relationships affect wiring.” Materials explain that application of these findings optimizes learning for children. The materials apply the research to the program structure, guiding the teacher to “ensure children feel safe, keep the learning environment free of clutter, present information in ways that challenge learners to use multiple senses, keep lessons short, nurture curiosity, tap into prior knowledge, provide time for practice, encourage



children to think about information in complex ways, teach to both the left and the right hemispheres, and make sure learners are properly hydrated and have opportunities to exercise.”

The research used from *Rethinking the Brain* is consistent with the guidance from the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. It tells us that children acquire concepts and skills in varied ways that are not always linear and evenly paced. Children need exposure to new concepts multiple times and across a variety of contexts in order to solidify their understanding. A teacher models, demonstrates, and “thinks aloud” for learners to understand the thoughts behind the actions. When children practice skills or concepts with the teacher beside them to guide their practice, scaffolding or supporting the children’s learning, they are successful. When teachers provide many opportunities for practicing the concept, the concept moves from something the child can do slowly to something that he or she can do quickly and easily. Thoughtful planning is required for children to have the multiple opportunities needed for this transition from a task that is hard to a task that is very easy for a child to accomplish without assistance.

In addition to research-based guidance that serves as a foundation for instruction, the materials list leading consultative experts in the early childhood field as the materials’ authors and contributors. The Welcome Guide cites research from experts. Experts include an engineering curriculum specialist, an anti-bias specialist, an early brain research consultant, a conscious discipline master instructor, a bilingual education leader, a singer-songwriter, and a Peruvian children’s musician, among others. Cited research is current, academic, relevant to early childhood development, and applicable to Texas-specific context and demographics. The authors and contributors for the Spanish program include Lorena Vidaurre (program author), Emilia Rivas (Spanish translations and adaptations), and F. Isabel Campoy and Alma Flor Ada (bilingual education leaders). Other experts who contributed to the program include Pam Schiller, Dianne Patterson, Brian Mowry, and Marlene Williams. The research from the Families and Work Institute (1996) coincides with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines on providing diversity and instructional strategies that meet the needs of all learners.

Research-based learning is evident in lessons throughout the materials. In Theme 3, during the small group “Literacy” center, children learn via a research-based routine; the routine prescribes providing literacy experiences as the foundation for learning to read. The experience emphasizes the key predictors of early literacy, including phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, vocabulary, and writing. On Day 1, teachers display the four “Vocabulary Cards” of the week. Preschool teachers should identify a small number of words as the focus of direct instruction. Teachers encourage students to create riddles out of the words to build memory. During Day 2, students use chants and hand movements to respond to and play with sounds to build compound words. On Day 3, students discuss two pages of a previously read text. After the discussion, teachers use modeled writing and an anchor chart to organize the class’s thinking. During Day 4, after the class spent multiple days learning how community helpers provide helpful services, teachers provide note cards for children to write thank-you cards to helpers. Students build upon conceptual knowledge when they learn that writing has a purpose, and print is meaningful. On the last day, students build their alphabet knowledge by singing an

alphabet song, reviewing letters used during “Morning Messages,” tracing letters on alphabet cards and drawing the letters in the air. Students then play a matching game with a partner. Their last experience with letters invites the students to construct their own letters out of letter-building shapes.

In Theme 7, during a math small group activity, on Day 3, students use connecting cubes to compare quantities and to subtract objects from a set of 0–5. They use the “Number Story” work mat. On Day 4, the students again use the Number Story work mat to retell the story from Day 3. This time, the teacher invites volunteers to select a numeral card that represents what is happening on each section of the work mat (6 grasshoppers; 3 grasshoppers fly away; 3 remain). On Day 5, students make their own grasshopper number stories. Students illustrate a scene, such as a garden, on the paper to match the setting of their story and write words or use a number sentence to represent what is happening in the story. Research supports this activity; this is an evidence-based practice for deepening mathematical thinking through the use of concrete representation. In addition, by using these work mats, children can reflect on and represent their thinking with mathematical symbols and visual models.

A bibliography is present and can be found in the Welcome Guide. The Welcome Guide explains the foundations for implementation of the materials.

**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 provide direct social skill instruction and explicit teaching of skills throughout the themes. The materials include full lessons on self-concept skills, self-regulation skills, relationships with others, and social awareness skills, as laid out in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. The materials provide guidance on teacher modeling of these skills and include appropriate texts to support the development of social competencies to understand and respond to emotions.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

For each theme, the day begins with a “Brain Smart Start,” which includes an opportunity to “Unite, Calm, Connect, and Commit.” In Theme 1, teachers use full lessons to explore social competencies with students. The teacher scaffolds the welcome activities and models appropriate social interactions. The class is welcomed by meeting, greeting, and getting to know each of their classmates. Students take part in singing the “My School Family” song to promote class unity. Next, students do a calming strategy called “Stop, Take a breath, and Relax” (STAR) to learn about self-awareness skills, practice introductions to reinforce social awareness skills, and participate in goal setting to commit to positive experiences and self-regulation during the day. These components are essential to the morning routine. They provide social learning experiences and reinforce social skills instruction. They also address each of the social competencies outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Daily read-alouds connect to current themes and support social skills instruction. For example, in Theme 1, the texts *Chloe Gets Ready for School* and *Sara Sidney’s First Day of School* are examples of stories that identify common emotions that students experience at the beginning of the year. These texts also develop social competencies, emotional understanding, and responsiveness. The characters

self-regulate their feelings and serve as an example for the student to connect to and learn coping strategies from; they also provide reassurance. Visual prompts such as “Balloon” and STAR are available during modeled lessons and routines as well as for student self-regulation. A full lesson in Theme 1 utilizes the text *Feelings Are Real*. Teachers model and scaffold learning to identify and name feelings. Materials provide scenarios for students to cope with complex emotions and offer suggestions on how to manage emotions once they are identified. Digital resources are available for parents to extend learning. During Week 4 of Theme 1, the digital book *Feelings Are Real* is shared with families to facilitate discussions at home about emotions their child may experience. The associated family newsletter offers explanations and guiding questions to guide family discussions about emotions; it also suggests activities to provide emotional support. Photo cards with pictures of children expressing different emotions, labeled with text, are used to facilitate instruction and discussion about feelings that students experience. The “Songs and Stories” resource has many examples of songs and stories that connect to the students’ emotions and feelings, such as “If You Are Happy and You Know It,” “I Wish You Well,” and “I Like Me.”

In Theme 2, teachers facilitate, and learners explore a full lesson on classroom agreements. Students can access a visual anchor chart for support. Students are able to focus on one commitment for the day; their choices include “listening ears,” “walking feet,” “helping hands,” and “big voice.” This allows for students to follow their classroom agreement and manage their own behaviors. During the “CONNECT” section in Theme 3, the learners sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Familiar songs are another form of text that can be used to develop social competence and emotional understanding. The teacher models how children should represent the song with their bodies. One student is the boat, and one student is the passenger. When the seas get rough because of a storm, the “boat” wraps his/her arms around the “passenger” to promote self-concept, self-regulation, and social awareness; this also strengthens relationships with others.

The instructional materials provide a “Cultural Responsiveness” section throughout all themes. Explicit modeling of responsiveness by teachers promotes relatability to all learners and their backgrounds. For example, in Theme 6, the “Cultural Responsiveness” section suggests that teachers model responsiveness by displaying the word of the week in multiple languages, use languages spoken by families of students in the classroom, and have families help with the translations. The materials include instructional practices that support child self-concept, self-regulation, relationships with others, and social awareness. The teacher models these practices in each theme, building and reviewing. For example, the teacher models how to take deep breaths and slowly releases the breaths as a strategy for reducing stress and building self-regulation. Posters with visual prompts such as Balloon and STAR calming strategies are available for modeled lessons and routines as well as for students who need to use the strategies throughout the day. After explicit instruction, students are able to use the resources around the room to review, remind themselves, and take control of their emotional responses. The teacher instructs students on how to utilize anchor charts. The instructional materials include instructions and suggestions for teachers to use as guidance for teaching and demonstrating social behaviors. Teachers first present instructions as a guide for students, then

lead students to follow them on their own. For example, in Theme 6, the teacher models the “Unite” piece of the morning circle, in which students sing “The Wheels on the Bus,” review a previous walk-and-stop activity, and think of other ways that they could move and stop to the song or a different song.

In Theme 7, in the “COMMIT” section of Brain Smart Start, teachers invite students to think about how they keep the “School Family” safe throughout the day through “how they *do* and *don’t* move their body.” This promotes self-awareness and self-regulation as well as builds positive relationships with others and social awareness. The instructional materials provide additional resources to support the development of social competencies. Portions of Dr. Bailey’s *Conscious Discipline*, which connects with each of the pieces of “Unite, Calm, Connect, and Commit,” are accessible for support. The materials include texts that are culturally relevant to children as well as developmentally appropriate books that support emotional literacy and self-control, such as *Wild Feelings*, *How Lucy Feels*, *Taking Control*, and *Role Playing*, among others. A list of additional books to reinforce and/or extend learning for each lesson and throughout the themes is located in the curriculum resources and digital books materials.

**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 a variety of opportunities for the student to build an understanding of, practice, and apply social skills throughout the day and in a variety of content areas. Lessons support the “Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.”

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” gives teachers explicit direction on how to incorporate social skills instruction throughout the day. Children begin the day with special greetings led by the student-assigned greeter. This experience provides a student model and builds natural relationships. A “Kindness Tree” is established in the classroom to bring attention to kind interactions and experiences that occur during the day. School jobs are assigned; they include positions such as line leader, kindness recorder, STAR (“Stop, Take a breath, and Relax”) leader, door holder, greeter, and new child buddy. These whole group and individual experiences build understanding and community and support social skill practice in a variety of ways. Students are given many opportunities to work together in both whole group and small group settings. This promotes natural interactions with peers and teachers; children demonstrate their competence in self-concept, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationships with others. Daily routines, such as the “Brain Smart Start,” are structured to lead the students in a morning ritual of uniting as a school family. Whole class practice of calming strategies, connecting with classmates, and making a daily commitment is the focus. The day ends with a “Closing Circle” that reviews morning commitments, new learning, and family connections, thus providing an essential application component. Throughout the day, the children have access to “The Safe Place” to practice self-regulation. Weekly ideas are given for “Brain Breaks,” which model and facilitate self-regulation and social awareness skills throughout the day and during transitions.

A “Safe Place” is set up in the classroom and introduced to the students in Theme 2, Week 1. It utilizes guidance from the *Conscious Discipline* resource. The area has comfortable seating, a

“we care” basket, and visuals and posters with calm-down strategy icons to assist children with self-regulating as needed. The resource guides teachers to explicitly introduce each component of the area and provides ways to encourage students to go to the area when they need to practice or apply the skills throughout the day. After the introduction and a read-aloud, song, or role-play lesson focused on emotions and appropriate responses, the teacher engages in play with students. Modeling and encouragement for each student to express themselves are naturally experienced in the “Pretend and Learn” center.

In Theme 3, the teacher introduces new vocabulary by providing a vocabulary routine scaffold: The teacher points to a new vocabulary word and names it; the teacher invites students to use a hand gesture to signal their response to the “Reflect” question; the teacher invites students to select a partner to take turns expressing the vocabulary word with their bodies. Students are given many opportunities to practice the skills that have been learned. For example, in Theme 3, students are reminded that calming strategies are healthy habits. Students are taught the calming strategy “drain,” in which they hold their hands out in front of them with their fists tightly closed, then relax, exhale, and relax their fingers by opening them and making a swishing sound. Students are able to continue to practice this strategy throughout the day and are encouraged to practice with their classmates. In Theme 3, during an outside activity, the teacher invites students to pair up and pass the ball back and forth to each other without letting it drop; students count the passes made before a miss. This provides an experience that allows children to work together in small and large groups to practice turn-taking, which builds social awareness, relationships with others, and self-regulation. Weekly ideas are given for Brain Breaks that facilitate self-concept, self-regulation, and social awareness skills throughout the day and during transitions.

In Theme 8, students practice counting while working on self-regulation: They count out loud as a feather falls to the ground. Students refocus their attention and use their entire body to “fly,” flapping their arms, to calmly transition from one activity to another. This provides purposeful practice opportunities that are authentically integrated throughout content domains.

In Theme 9, the teachers facilitate a discussion centered on change and how to care for people who are not at school or absent. Students apply their understanding of relationships with others and sing the “We Wish You Well” song to build and support their classroom community. Students are provided a tangible way to view their growth throughout the year. In Theme 1, during the first weeks of school, in the “Writer’s Corner” practice center, students are encouraged to draw a self-portrait. Teachers are encouraged to save this artwork. During Theme 9, children draw another self-portrait and discern their self-concept development.

### 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. A variety of materials, such as posters, lessons, texts, and routines, are included to meet the diverse needs of the students; they are consistent with developmentally appropriate practices as laid out in the domain of “Social and Emotional Development” in the “Texas PreKindergarten Guidelines.” The students have responsibilities and input into their learning environment through daily routines, materials management, social skill interactions, and peer celebrations for kindness. Guidance on instructional arrangement is included throughout all of the themes in the teacher guides and include support strategies based on learner needs, abilities, and interests.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the “Welcome Guide” instruction guide, there is a section on “Practice Centers” that supports classroom arrangement; daily opportunities for the practice of social skills through daily learning centers are provided. Students manage their choice preferences by using a choice board. This allows the student to be independent and self-directed, cooperate with others, and engage in conversations with adults and peers, thus practicing a variety of social skills. Opportunities to practice self-regulation and self-management skills are modeled and then reinforced as the students participate in the practice centers. Materials state: “Child-centered and guided play suggests an approach to early learning that refers to the child-directed nature of free play with a focus on learning outcomes and adult scaffolding. ‘Free Play’ and ‘Guided Play’ focus on the child as an active participant, leader, and problem-solver.” The materials



include specific guidance for the practice of social skills in daily learning centers; for example, throughout the themes, for each week of instruction, the materials provide meaningful opportunities to participate in six core learning centers as well as resources to place at “Listening” centers and “Technology” centers. The materials provide resources to aid the teacher in identifying specific areas of the room where students practice social skills. For example, in the “STEAM” center, students are presented with a problem to solve using the engineering design process. Students meet as a whole group to brainstorm solutions to the problem, then explore ideas at the STEAM center, and finally reconvene as a whole group to share discoveries. In “Welcome Guide,” instructions on developing a center management system include ideas to provide for the learners; for example: “Provide a visual center management system that helps children manage choices about what they want to explore” and “Encourage children to be independent and self-directed, build cooperation skills as they work with others, engage in conversation with other children and adults, and use their names and print in a meaningful way.”

The Welcome Guide resource gives specific direction to assist teachers in arranging the classroom in such a way as to promote and support teacher-student and student-student interactions. Learners make decisions about where they want to play and with whom they want to play. The resource offers guidance on how to facilitate cooperation, conversation, and collaboration. The centers in prekindergarten focus on practicing learning goals after children have received intentional small group or whole group instruction. Practice centers offer opportunities to “develop decision-making and problem-solving skills, individual instruction, scaffolded learning, encourage contextual use of language, informally assess children’s progress, provide a playful setting where children socially engage with both peers and adults, and practice skills and reinforce new concepts.” The Welcome Guide materials state: “Recent research on child-centered explorations and guided play suggest an approach to early learning that refers to the child-directed nature of free play with a focus on learning outcomes and adult scaffolding.” Materials further state: “Adults design the setting to highlight a learning goal while ensuring children can choose to explore within that setting;” “Adults observe child-directed activities and comment, question, and extend children’s interest.” In Theme 2, the teacher introduces the class “Safe Place.” Calming strategies, visuals, flexible seating for more than one student, proximity to other “quiet areas,” and procedures to access the Safe Place by teacher, peer, or self-initiated recommendation is explained, practiced, and then made available to the students. The Safe Place creates an environment for individual self-regulation and reflection. It also provides a space for problem solving and conflict resolution between peers. The instructional materials provide various resources for teachers to use as a guide for creating meaningful interactions in the classroom. The materials provide suggestions for small and large group gatherings, centers, and what teachers should be doing during the times that learners are in their learning centers.

In the Welcome Guide, the teacher is given directions and procedures to put into place to support the students’ independence and self-direction, which builds their social development. The resources consider a variety of factors and components of the physical space and their impact on students’ social development. For example, materials are labeled so that children can

locate and put away materials independently. It is suggested that the room is divided into loud and quiet areas to better facilitate cooperation and conversation. It is suggested that culturally responsive materials are displayed in the areas to help support the family community and build peer acceptance and understanding. Materials suggest that areas are set aside to facilitate independent, partner, and small group play structures to build social skill development. On page 87, the Welcome Guide gives specific guidance on establishing the environment and also on the introduction of the centers to the students: "Walk children through the classroom to introduce a few of the centers. Discuss the types of activities available in each center. Model the rules for using the materials in each center.... Introduce additional centers as children develop their self-regulation skills. Invite children to play in the center without a management system before you actually begin a formal approach. Provide practice sessions to introduce centers and invite children to practice the management system. Practice transitions you will use to move children into and out of learning centers." In Theme 6, the instructional materials provide opportunities for teachers to conduct whole group read-alouds with all learners and talk about personal physical space. For example, in Theme 6, teachers read aloud *The Numeral Dance*; students are introduced to other content areas while also exploring personal space and learning how to not invade others' personal space. In the "Dance It Out" activity, students act out the story while learning how to maneuver without getting into others' personal space.

Materials can be implemented easily and effectively within a classroom arrangement that supports positive social interactions. Rituals are in place each day, in the same location and time, to build positive social interactions. Materials such as posters and charts utilize photographs, pictures, and recognizable icons to facilitate independence, self-regulation, and positive social interactions. Examples of these visuals include job chart posters, practice center sign-up charts, and calming strategy posters for the "Safe Place" located in the classroom. The "Kindness Tree" celebrates children for participating in acts of kindness with adults and peers throughout the school setting. The "Class Jobs Chart" fosters children's leadership and responsibility as members of the classroom community. All of these resources are defined with directions in the Welcome Guide. There is also detailed introductory support in the lessons during the daily "Brain Smart Start" time. Students have opportunities to interact socially in large and small groups as well as participate in them individually. The materials include resources that teachers can use to set up effective organization and management to support positive social interactions. For example, in Theme 6, students learn about ways they can move and maneuver their bodies. Students become aware of their own personal space and how to be respectful of the personal space of others. The instructional materials include suggestions for the teachers to use labels for center materials so that students can recognize the materials and access them independently. Materials include opportunities for students to participate in "Greeting Circle" time, where they are able to unite as one family and connect with each other through various activities. For example, in Theme 9, during the "Brain Smart Start," students take part in the "Mr. Sun" activity with a partner: They draw a sun on their partner's hand as they sing, connecting with each other, communicating their feelings, and showing empathy and caring for others.

In the Welcome Guide, as well as in the individual themes, students have opportunities to participate in the classroom arrangement. Much of this is done as posters and charts are introduced for the children to facilitate. Some routines that invite student participation, ownership, and engagement are the “Wish You Well” board, which marks attendance; the “Kindness Tree,” which is dependent on the students identifying the kind acts of others; and the “Class Job Chart,” which gives students responsibilities for things such as clean-up, lights, holding doors, and welcoming new friends. The materials provide suggestions for how to engage students in classroom arrangement in order to promote student ownership of the space. In each theme, new weekly practice centers are introduced to the learners. The hallmark of the practice centers is student choice and responsibility as students navigate different practice centers of interest to extend their learning. The students make key decisions about how to use, manipulate, and take care of the materials in the centers. Opportunities for social interaction, including compromise, sharing, problem-solving, and turn-taking, are abundant in each of the areas. In Theme 1, teachers introduce students to a “safekeeper” ritual in which students learn more about classrooms and how each person works together to keep the classroom and themselves safe. Students make promises to keep the classroom safe and put their name into the “safekeeper box.” The students and teacher also co-create classroom agreements and learn how to make commitments throughout the year by deciding how they want the classroom to look, sound, and feel. The guidance in the materials presents a balance of classroom setup before children arrive at the beginning of the year and what is done with children throughout the year. For example, the “Writer’s Corner” should be large enough to accommodate two learners, a teacher, a table, chairs, and many types of writing materials. The resource also suggests bringing novelty to the center throughout the weeks by changing the materials, writing implements, and paper options.

**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 include opportunities for students to develop gross motor skills through purposefully planned outdoor activities, music and movement activities supported with songs, and a “Gross Motor” practice center. These opportunities are planned daily and support the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Fine motor skills are developed throughout content-specific activities such as using manipulatives to extend patterns, count, and sort in math. The practice centers, such as the “Creativity” and “Sensory” centers, give students the opportunity to explore a wide variety of materials and use fine motor skills.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” provides resources for children to use to practice gross motor skills, such as multiple games and outdoor activities for teachers to plan and include. The guide also recommends “using music and movement activities throughout the day to pull children together as a group, engage them during a waiting time, or offer a break between lessons.” Materials state: “Music rhythms, patterns, varying tonalities help children remember new information presented in this way.” Materials provide these playful movement opportunities. The guide states that crossing the midline happens during movements “such as wiping off a table, sweeping the floor, or reaching across the body for passing or retrieving objects.” The materials provide play ideas that help children develop coordination and balance, and “crossing midline is reflected in correctly forming specific pre-writing shapes and symbols.” By using “playdough, shaving cream, stamps, stickers, magnets,” playing “velcro matching games,” and “cutting (tape top edge to a surface) on vertical surfaces,” students strengthen the small muscles of their hands in preparation for writing. Many of the math manipulatives, such as connecting cubes, chain links, frog counters, and shape stencils, provide opportunities for students to develop fine motor skills.

The materials include a resource kit to develop gross motor skills with beanbags and pattern blocks. In Theme 3, in the Gross Motor practice center, students throw bean bags onto a horizontal target and then progress through the week to hit a vertical target. In an outdoor activity, students ride tricycles or scooters and respond to red, yellow, and green signs that indicate when to stop and go. In Theme 3, during the “Outdoor” practice center, students “ride a tricycle around an obstacle course, crawl under, over, around and through an obstacle course, perform animal antics, such as hopping like a bunny, jumping like a frog, and bouncing like a kangaroo, play circle games like ‘Duck, Duck Goose’ or the ‘Hokey Pokey.’”

In Theme 5, during centers, students develop gross motor skills by creating floor designs with dots. After creating the design, students are encouraged to walk around the design to see it from a different view. A midweek extension utilizes masking tape to create a throw line about five feet away; students toss bean bags in an attempt to land on a dot. A transition idea from Theme 5 is to “invite the children to count the number of giant steps it takes to reach their center or large group area activity.” The materials include a resource kit with eye droppers, tweezers, connecting cubes, and chain links to be used for developing fine motor skills. In Theme 5, in the Sensory practice center, materials use resources like “sand, small plastic shovels, tongs, medium-sized stones, tongue depressors, and rolling pins.” Also in Theme 5, teachers are told to “invite children to use connecting cubes to measure the length of their shoe....”

Materials provide songs that incorporate large movements in addition to singing. In Theme 6, “If You Are Happy and You Know It,” “Tooty Ta,” and “I Can Dance” are a part of the first week and give the students an opportunity to sing, dance, and use large motor movements. The Sensory centers and Creativity centers include opportunities to use tools such as scissors, glue, paintbrushes, sponges, paint, and playdough to create and explore. These activities develop fine motor skills and support content areas. In Theme 6, the students build transportation pictures with shapes and explore water with funnels and toy boats. Materials provide pre-writing activities, including tracing cards for letters and numbers, which are incorporated into small group literacy lessons. In Theme 6, during a small group literacy lesson, the teacher “invites children to write the letter with their finger on the floor.” Also in Theme 6, during a small group literacy activity, the teacher “invites volunteers to demonstrate the movements from *The Numeral Dance*.”

In Theme 7, some transition activities are: hop or jump like a flea from one location to another; walk together as a joined group of three to a destination; a game of “Hop, hop, hop... Stop!” in which students hop and freeze when they hear the word *stop*. The instructional materials provide suggestions for gross motor learning and development throughout all themes through the learning and play centers. The instructional materials provide suggestions for teachers to use in the classroom to help grow and develop students’ fine motor skills through purposeful activities such as in the learning and play centers. For example, in Theme 8, students are encouraged to feed “chicks” using tweezers: Students pick up worms, which are chenille stems, then drop and feed them to the hungry chicks, which are in the holes in the boxes.

In Theme 9, students use eye droppers to drip colored water onto white coffee filters to create a colorful design. Thus, materials provide suggestions for daily opportunities to develop fine motor skills through tasks that are not limited to writing. These suggestions are integrated within the lessons and are also included as separate support in the Welcome Guide. For example, in Theme 9, one of the multiple opportunities to develop fine motor skills in the learning center suggests teachers fill one small bowl with small objects and then challenge the students to use tweezers and tongs to transfer each small object to another bowl. This activity also includes a list of materials to use.

**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.

## Meets 4/4

The materials reviewed include opportunities for health and safety procedures to be discussed, modeled, and practiced throughout the day and in multiple lessons and themes. Materials include posters, read-alouds, and full lessons on safety and health topics. Opportunities to reflect and practice are within content areas such as reading and writing but also embedded throughout the practice centers. A connection between physical and mental health is made for the teachers and the students through read-alouds, class discussions, and related experiences.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” gives teachers the rationale for outdoor activities. The guide explains the connection between physical and mental health: “Children’s social, psychological, academic, and physical health is positively impacted when they have daily contact with nature.” In the “Connection” description and rationale for the “Conscious Discipline” structures, the Welcome Guide explains that “connecting activities provide opportunities for children to interact with each other, which builds healthy friendships, increases attention span, and fosters cooperation.... Working with others allows children to practice social engagement.”

Theme 1 includes guidance for teacher-student discussions on healthy eating as part of the “Pretend and Learn” practice center, where students pretend to make school lunches. Theme 1, Week 2, is titled “My Body” and is about identifying the parts of the body, their function, and the importance of staying healthy. In this unit, a lesson on handwashing includes posters, discusses the importance of skincare, and provides opportunities to practice. For example, in a post-activity reflection, the teacher is prompted to ask the following questions: “Which body part helps us breathe? Which body part holds our food after we swallow it?” In a lesson on skincare, the teacher reads *Your Fabulous Skin* and then facilitates the following discussion and activity: “Talk about protecting our skin by wearing sunscreen. Demonstrate the power of the sun by placing a block on top of a blue sheet of paper and leaving it out in the sun for three or

four hours. The paper will fade in the areas not protected by the block. Explain that the block protected the paper from the sun just as sunscreen protects our skin.” In Theme 1, students are able to talk about playground positions and being safe. While students are discussing the different locations and positions that they are doing on the playground, they are able to practice personal safety while playing outdoors. The instructional materials provide book suggestions in Theme 1, such as *Sara Sidney’s First Day of School*, *Chloe Gets Ready for School* (in which feelings and emotions can be discussed), and also “Conscious Discipline” as a resource for teachers.

A “Transition”/“Brain Break” idea in Theme 3 guides the teacher to create a classroom job called “traffic control person.” This student will “give classmates directions on how to get to the center of choice or provide safety signals indicating to slow down or stop.” Theme 3 is titled “Safe, Healthy, Helpful Me” and has lessons about community helpers who keep students safe and help them and about eating healthy and staying active. Students identify different food groups through class discussions; these are included in the practice centers to guide students’ play. Songs and dances like “Hop, Jump, Leap, Bounce, Pounce” and “Cool Cat Boogie” encourage students to be physically active. The practice centers in Theme 3 provide opportunities for the students to identify community helpers and learn about their jobs and how they keep people safe. Materials embed lessons with activities that help children identify with the act of helping others. Additionally, students can act out the roles of community helpers in the Pretend and Learn center as they explore ways that others help keep them safe. Read-alouds such as *Workers in My Community*, *What’s For Dinner?* and *ABCs of Food* support the concept of safe and healthy choices and are available in digital format for the students to share at home with families. Writing activities give students the opportunity to respond to prompts about staying safe and making healthy choices. In Theme 3, the materials provide guidance for the teacher to communicate the connection between physical and mental health. In the “Facing Challenges” lesson, the class reads a story about a character who can’t do something. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate a discussion for personal connections: Students discuss not being able to do something physically and thinking that you can’t do something; the lesson identifies that both physical and mental reasons can make something difficult. The follow-up lesson, “Not Yet,” encourages a growth mindset to overcome things that you may not be able to do physically or that you think you can’t do. The instructional materials provide family connections for each theme. For example, in Theme 3, the family connections include helping to make dinner, creating healthy grocery lists, and identifying foods from each of the food groups. The instructional materials provide many suggestions throughout each theme that allow teachers to connect with students, teach them, and encourage them by discussing feelings and emotions. For example, the instructional materials use a “Brain Smart Start” every morning in which students are able to connect with one another and discuss feelings and emotions.

The materials include resources that the teacher can use to support children in developing safe and healthy habits. For example, the materials suggest teachers add the “Calm” strategy to “Greeting Circle” every morning to practice healthy habits. The materials provide information for teachers about the importance of developing physical skills as a connection to mental



health. The materials provide, throughout the themes, a “Brain Booster Box,” where explanations and resources are given for a better teacher approach, connection, and understanding. For example, in Theme 3, one of the Brain Booster Boxes explains the following: “Students are exposed to an abundance of completely new information each day. Young students need ‘downtime’ to process new knowledge in order for it to ‘stick.’ When bombarded with too much new information and no downtime, memories will be hazy at best.” The materials communicate the connection between physical and mental health to children in an appropriate way, providing support for teachers to learn about the importance of planning and encouraging physical activity to promote the teacher-child relationship. For example, the materials suggest teachers help students stay on task and gain mental alertness by having students stop and take a deep breath, and then put their hands over their heart to feel the beat.

The instructional materials provide suggestions for teachers to incorporate outdoor activities into their daily schedules. In Theme 6, one suggested outdoor activity for both students and teachers is to have students stand in a line, extend their right arm, and create a wheel. The teacher guides the students in a circle, and they sing “The Wheels on the Bus” to represent land travel. The materials encourage children to identify safe and healthy habits, covering personal safety, nutrition, exercise, and personal health. For example, the “7 Steps” poster has pictures of how to wash hands. There are also photo cards of doctors, nurses, firefighters, dentists, among others. In Theme 6, the students “move within their space and respect the space and safety of peers” as they learn moves from *The Numeral Dance*. In Theme 9, during the outdoor whole group activity, there is a safety note for the teacher: “Talk to children about things they should not pick up, such as sharp glass or metal pieces.”

#### 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.

## Meets 4/4

The materials provide a variety of opportunities for the students to participate in and practice listening skills, including sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar. Materials support and scaffold teacher guidance on modeling active listening and provide daily opportunities for students to listen for understanding. Materials highlight opportunities for students to hear conversations that follow conversation norms.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Throughout each theme, the materials provide opportunities to develop students' listening skills in a variety of ways. Students hear sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar in every theme. Each day begins with the "Morning Message," which includes three parts: The teacher prepares a sentence and reads the sentence out loud, focusing on targeted letter sounds and print features; the students listen to the sentences and make connections to personal experiences and engage in class discussion, prompting conversation and practice in listening to others; the teacher models listening for understanding before a read-aloud. The materials include guiding questions that prompt the teacher to encourage the children: "Listen for ... as I read the story." During read-alouds and class discussions, students share their understanding, and the teacher models appropriate sounds, sentence structure, and grammar; the materials provide question prompts and sentence stems to support student responses.

In Theme 1, the materials provide guidance on modeling active listening and understanding. For example, in the "Brain Smart Start" activity, there is an introduction to the "School Family Commitment Board." Having "Listening Ears" is one of the commitments for the students to consider. The teacher models Listening Ears in the following lesson by demonstrating what

Listening Ears look like, sound like, and feel like. The teacher asks a volunteer to say something “to which you pay close attention.” Then the teacher models a non-example by asking a student to talk while the teacher fidgets and looks elsewhere. The teacher provides different examples throughout the week. Throughout the day, the teacher observes the students, notices examples of Listening Ears, and promptly provides feedback to children. At the end of the day, the class reflects on how well they did following this commitment. The teacher places a visual support showing Listening Ears on the School Family Commitment Board to build student autonomy. Fanny Frog, the puppet, invites students to play “Name, Name,” in which they introduce themselves to another person; the teacher points out the importance of students making eye contact with the person to whom they are speaking. The materials also include examples of “teacher think-aloud” to support lesson understanding and active listening for comprehension. For example, the teacher models how to fill in a sentence stem prompt by thinking out loud about the inferences he/she is making as he/she observes the context of the picture in the text. Through these examples and interactions, teachers are able to engage with students and model active listening through a variety of behaviors.

Theme 2 includes child-led conversations. The materials prompt the teacher: “Engage children in conversations about their family” and “Ask: ‘Who lives in your home?’” This allows the teacher to engage in and model active listening. Teachers provide accommodations for students who struggle with communication or have an identified communicative special need by providing clarifying prompts to support a student's ability to listen and comprehend the content. Further discussions happen in the practice centers, such as in the “Pretend and Learn” center, where students listen to peers and adults discuss family roles, traditions, and celebrations and then have the opportunity to respond, demonstrating comprehension of the context of the discussions. Emphasis is on making personal connections to the content as it relates to books, lessons, and discussions. The materials and lessons provide multiple daily opportunities for the students to listen for understanding in both academic and social contexts.

Throughout the instructional materials, all themes include digital audiobooks that allow students to listen to and read books independently. In Themes 5, 6, and 8, the materials provide video ebooks that focus on the themes “Creative Me,” “On the Move,” and “Animals.” For example, Theme 5 is about “Creative Me,” and the provided video ebook is *Under Construction*; students listen and watch, learning about the stages of constructing a house. These materials provide opportunities for students to hear sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar in a variety of contexts. Additionally, multisensory strategies throughout the materials support listening skill practice. In Theme 5, children use finger puppets for the story *The Three Little Pigs*, first when they practice listening to the story, and then later to demonstrate comprehension through retelling. When singing the song “Jazzy Shapes,” students hold various shapes and listen to the directions in the song; students move their shapes and bodies accordingly. Fanny Frog, a large stuffed frog puppet, talks to the children in a daily ritual to determine who is present and absent; students listen to participate and welcome back those that have been absent. The materials include a variety of activities to promote and practice listening skills through the use of songs, puppets, books, and storytelling.

The materials provide opportunities to practice listening for understanding across learning settings throughout the day, including in large groups, small groups, and individual learning areas; some examples are “Greeting Circle” (whole group), centers (small groups), and “Writer’s Corner” (individual learning). The materials provide guidance for teachers to recognize that children can demonstrate receptive listening skills in a variety of ways. For example, in Theme 8, the teacher holds up two fingers to signify listening with “rabbit ears;” students should hold up two fingers and be quiet when they see the teacher holding up two fingers. In Theme 8, at the “Construction” practice center, students build housing for farm animals. A “Reflect” box guides the teacher in a conversation with the students that is connected to play behaviors: “Tell me about how you arranged the farm animals. Which animals did you fence in? Why did you put the horse here?”

Throughout the themes, teachers and students take part in read-alouds in which teachers question students to support their listening and comprehension abilities. In Theme 9, the teacher reads *Nature’s Giants*. Before reading, students discuss their knowledge of vocabulary terms in the text. After reading, students discuss the story deeply, ensuring comprehension. For example, after reading, the teacher asks questions from three levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (remembering, applying, and evaluating): “Which giant lives in the sea? Which giants are in the sky?” Through these read-alouds and questioning, teachers are able to support and scaffold daily opportunities for students to listen for understanding. In Theme 9, active listening during “Transitions”/“Brain Breaks” is highlighted. The instructional material prompts children to “get settled and show they are ready (listening ears, eyes watching) to begin a new activity.” These are examples of a teacher modeling active listening for understanding.

## 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 provide opportunities for students to practice their speaking skills with peers and adults in multiple contexts throughout the day. Lessons, discussions, experiences, and personal connections are used to facilitate opportunities for students to speak and participate in class discussions and conversations. Materials provide guidance on corrective feedback and opportunities to practice.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the "Welcome Guide," the materials provide corrective feedback for students' speech production, sentence structure, and grammar through individual, small group, and whole group opportunities within the lessons and class structures. The materials guide teachers to "engage in conversations about learners' interests by asking questions and sharing personal interests to build connections with children." Teachers guide and scaffold student responses in myriad ways. For example, teachers "model and encourage children to use descriptive words (e.g., color words, size words)." Another strategy is to "model language and practice with the child for specific situations in which the child appears to be frustrated." This models correct examples and offers choices of oral responses. With the slotting technique, "the teacher begins a sentence and leaves a blank for the student to complete the sentence;" the materials guide: "If you do not understand what a child is saying, do not look away or act frustrated... Assist the child by verbalizing what they may be feeling." The teacher gives guidance on saying the sound or sentence and then asks the student to repeat it so that the student can practice the appropriate sound, sentence structure, or grammar. Teachers "use simple sentences and ask the child to repeat" what the teacher said. A teacher can also "teach children some simple sign

language to bridge the communication gap between nonverbal language (signs) and verbal language (spoken words).”

In Theme 2, practice centers correspond to the themes. Materials provide “Midweek Options” for practice centers; these encourage the teacher to further extend students’ learning opportunities, such as by providing different materials or settings for the students to practice their use of oral language authentically. In the “Pretend and Learn” center, the teacher asks the group “who does these chores at their home” and prompts students to “think of tasks they can help with (setting the table or putting their toys away).” This provides support and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion using conversation norms. During an outdoor activity, the teacher models *safe* and *unsafe* by playing the game “Mother May I?” and invites children to ask questions with “Teacher May I?” This game models turn-taking during conversations.

In Theme 3, teachers use sentence stems to support the development of speech production and sentence structure. For example, teachers offer a sentence-stem example like “Samuel is kind to me when (he says thank you).” Students are encouraged to fill in the end of the sentence “My friend is kind to me when ...” Through this activity, teachers provide guidance and give corrective feedback to students regarding their speech production, sentence structure, and grammar. Additionally, within this theme, during “Closing Circle” time, the teacher models and engages students in daily conversations. For example, students respond to the question, “How did you help a friend on the playground?” On another day, the teacher asks, “What was your favorite cooperative game played outside this week?”

In Theme 4, during the Closing Circle, the teacher uses the sentence stem “Tomorrow I will ...” to prompt appropriate sentence structure in response to the class discussion of progress on daily commitments. The materials provide guidance on organizing the classroom environment to provide opportunities to practice and use oral language for authentic purposes. Teachers are instructed: “Encourage learners to act out the stories.” Teachers provide props and dress-up costumes to scaffold the students’ responses for differing verbal speaking abilities. The materials’ guidance supports teachers’ understanding of language development. During a “Read Aloud” lesson, teachers share *The Gruffalo*. As the teacher reads the story, students join by saying the predictable line, “There’s no such thing as a gruffalo.” After reading the story, the teacher displays the vocabulary card for *make-believe* and asks a volunteer to remind others of the definition. The class discusses which parts of the story are real and which are make-believe; the teacher uses a T-chart to record children’s ideas. The materials also include music as a vehicle for increasing speaking skills and speech production.

Throughout the themes, the materials provide suggestions and shared writing opportunities for students to practice appropriate sentence structure, grammar, and the production of a variety of sounds. For example, in Theme 5, during the literacy small group shared writing activity, teachers preview and then read the book *Giants Made by People*. Teachers lead a shared writing activity with the prompt, “I see a ...” Students complete the sentence, using the book as visual support. The teacher records students’ responses and writes their names next to their

responses. These shared writing activities allow students to practice appropriate sentence structure, grammar, and the production of sounds.

The materials and lessons include open-ended questions to support students' oral response to read-alouds and practice of critical thinking and expressive language. For example, in Theme 6, teachers use words to identify each 'Move and Go' card. As children engage in the activity, teachers describe what they are doing ("You are marching along the line"). Teachers encourage children to respond by describing what they are doing ("I am marching along the line"). The materials utilize both small and large group settings to facilitate oral language activities. For example, after students complete an activity in centers, the teacher invites volunteers to verbally share their creation during "Closing Circle," students thus practice their speaking skills.

In Theme 7, the teacher asks, "How many body parts do you have?" Students count and discuss their answers. The teacher provides a mystery word. The teacher repeats the sentence, and students listen for the mystery word. The teacher says the onset, pauses, and says the rime; students are invited to blend the onset and rime to find the mystery word. In another example, the teacher reads the sentence "Insects have three body parts" and gives emphasis to new or difficult sounds and words; students repeat the complete sentence multiple times. Students then answer questions such as "How many parts do you have?" in complete sentences. In a shared writing activity, students brainstorm a list of insects that they would like to invite to a birthday party. During the discussion and pre-writing part of the lesson, students are asked to state who they would invite to the party in a complete sentence. An extension for advanced students challenges them to create a complex sentence using a list of insect names. Activities allow students to practice the production of a variety of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar throughout the day in both academic and social contexts. For example, the teacher teaches the "Insect Song" and gives each child a vocabulary card. The class sings the song and points to the body parts of each insect as they sing. The materials support multiple opportunities to use and practice speaking skills across content areas. During class lessons and discussions, the materials provide guidance for students to work with their peers and adults to engage in discussion using conversation norms. During a STEAM lesson, students are challenged to create an insect as a collaborative group, using a variety of materials and what they know about insects. Discussion and planning with peers and adults is a required component of the STEAM process in the materials. To facilitate discussion and conversation, teachers ask the following questions: "How will you show that your insect crawls?" "Why did you choose to make your insect these colors?" "What can you tell me about your insect's eyes?" These activities allow students to engage in discussion and practice conversation norms in both academic and social contexts.

Throughout the instructional materials, there are a variety of opportunities for students to collaborate with others and engage in discussions using conversation norms. In Theme 8, in the "Creativity Station," it is suggested that students with visual, fine motor, or hand-eye coordination challenges collaborate with others to create a reptile. The teacher models the language that is needed to interact with other learners during this activity. Through collaboration with others, students are able to engage in conversations that are necessary for

their development. The materials include instructional strategies and materials to set up theme-related centers to support conversations. For example, in Theme 9, after reading *Nature's Giants*, teachers ask, "Why do you think some animals are endangered?" Teachers facilitate a discussion about possible reasons and model how to engage in conversations with a partner during the discussion. The materials provide guidance for the teacher on how to use all parts of the day to facilitate child-to-teacher and peer-to-peer conversations.



#### 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 vocabulary expansion through a progression that is age and sequentially appropriate. Materials provide guidance, supporting materials, and planned lessons to introduce, connect, and extend the understanding of new vocabulary words throughout the day. Children use the words in content-based lessons; words are then integrated into the play-based practice centers.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” provides research-based strategies: “Children need to have opportunities to hear words multiple times in a meaningful context (Wasik, Iannone-Campbell, 2013);” “Children learn vocabulary from having conversations with adults, who encourage them to talk and give meaningful feedback on their remarks that support linguistic and cognitive development (Dickinson, 2011);” When high-quality conversations take place during times like “free-play or book reading, [they are] connected to [the] gains in the children’s language production (Dickson, 2011);” “Findings indicate that interactive reading, including talking before, during, and after a story, can help build a child’s speaking vocabulary (Gonzalez et al., 2014).”

The guide further states: “Displaying the words on a Letter Wall is a great way to keep the word collection organized and easily accessible throughout the day,” at the eye level of the learner; “Add theme Vocabulary Cards to the Letter Wall at the end of the week;” “Each Vocabulary Card includes a photograph to support word meaning.” The materials provide “Photo Cards,” which “offer rich opportunities for vocabulary development.” The guide explains what the cards look like: “The front side of each Photo Card features a large colorful photograph;” “The back side of each Photo Card includes a variety of language development prompts [to] connect to new knowledge [and] engage in conversation that deepens understanding;” “Each Vocabulary Card includes a photograph to support word meaning.” Each week has one “Word of the Week” that

relates specifically to the week's theme; the guide states: "Preschool teachers should identify a small number of words as the focus of direct instruction (Loftus-Rattan, Mitchell, and Coyne, 2016)." Thus, materials specify vocabulary words as a focus of instruction and for thematic relevance.

The materials include meaningful ways for children to interact with and use new vocabulary words in context. For example, in Theme 1, the teacher introduces vocabulary for "My School and Me." The teacher displays the vocabulary card *awesome* and provides a child-friendly definition, explaining that *awesome* is something that is *extremely good* or *impressive* and gives relevant examples, such as "My mom is awesome." The teacher invites children to create sentences using the word. To scaffold support, the teacher uses the sentence stem "... is awesome." The teacher supports understanding by telling students about something awesome, such as "A rainbow is awesome," and invites students to repeat the sentence. Children are encouraged to share why they think something is awesome. For example, "Miguel is awesome because he can hop on one foot."

These strategies for introducing new vocabulary can be seen across themes. For example, in Theme 2, when discussing families, students are taught the word *fabulous*. The teacher uses a vocabulary card that includes the word, a descriptive picture, and synonyms of *fabulous*. The teacher also introduces the word *family* and uses both words to talk about what a *fabulous family* looks like. Each day, students are able to increase their vocabulary through intentional and meaningful interactions. In Theme 2, the vocabulary ranges from high-frequency words like *mom*, *dad*, *sister*, and *brother* to new and rare words like *ethnicity*, *fabulous*, *horizontal*, and *vertical*.

In Theme 4, during the "Sensory" center, the teacher asks, "Is your pet rock alive?" and "How do you know?" This bridges the vocabulary word *alive* from an earlier theme. In Theme 6, during the "Construction" center, the teacher asks, "Which movement did you use to *maneuver* around the streamers?" These are both meaningful ways for children to interact with and use new vocabulary words in context and content. The Theme 4 "Greeting Circle" introduces the three vocabulary words *alive*, *living*, and *nonliving*; then, those words are used during the "Morning Message" to write sentences; finally, they are used during the "Language and Literacy" center. Students "select an image and tell if it shows a living or nonliving thing." Teachers are prompted: "Challenge children to explain how they know whether it is living or nonliving." In Theme 8, during Morning Message, the first sentence of the week is "A mammal is an animal with fur or hair." By the third day of the week, the sentence has become more specific and detailed: "An anteater scoops up ants with its long tongue." This scaffolding supports children in learning more complex language usage. There is evidence of recurring vocabulary: *Living* and *nonliving* are used in Theme 4, then again in Theme 7, when students explore and categorize living and nonliving things during their first read-aloud.

The materials provide a variety of strategies to support teachers in modeling a wide variety of rich and rare vocabulary words, including activities to support vocabulary development organized around a strong theme to provide repeated opportunities to hear and practice

language within a relevant context. For example, in Theme 5, teachers are prompted: “Display the Vocabulary Cards (construction, skyscrapers) and remind children that construction is the process of building something.” Teachers explain that a skyscraper is a very tall building and encourage children to watch and listen carefully to find out how many steps it takes to construct a building. Then, during a read-aloud, teachers invite volunteers to use their fingers to trace along the top of the building (skyline) in the photo. Volunteers identify tall and short buildings. The materials provide a suggestion: “Children are familiar with the word ‘stories’ defined as tales told in a book or movie. Point out that this same word is used to describe the floors of a building. The word ‘stories’ has two different meanings.” The materials suggest strategies for scaffolding vocabulary throughout the year. Beginning in Theme 5, “Little Books provide a theme-related vocabulary story line with simple structure in a rebus format.” At the end of every “Little Book,” there is a question prompt that “invites children to expand knowledge and connect to personal experiences or opinions that can be shared through journal entries.” The materials thus include activities to support vocabulary development organized around a strong theme. The Welcome Guide states: “The Vocabulary Card is used to introduce and review the Word of the Week during Greeting Circle each morning;” “Additional theme-related Vocabulary Cards are introduced with multiple strategies in the Read Alouds and Literacy small group activities;” “The words are reviewed during Closing Circle at the end of each day.”

In every theme, vocabulary development is a focus, and instruction follows a progression that is age and sequentially appropriate. Vocabulary is a key focal point in whole group instruction, where materials use vocabulary cards and words selected from provided read-alouds. In Theme 6, the words are introduced in the context of the story *How Do We Get There?* Post-story discussion and the introduction of vocabulary and picture cards provide exposure to the words *transportation*, *double-decker bus*, *horse-drawn carriage*, and *rickshaw*. Then, students make personal connections to the words by explaining the definitions in their own words. Students use the words in complete sentences and thus begin to experiment using them in writing activities. In the example lesson, the teacher is guided to ask, “What kinds of transportation have you used?” “How are they powered?” and “Where do they travel?” The daily Morning Message also includes introduced vocabulary to allow students to see the words in print: “A firetruck travels on land;” “A surfboard glides on water.” The materials follow a sequentially appropriate progression of vocabulary development that builds on students’ experiences, connects to content, and invites them to “try out” the new vocabulary with scaffolded support; it is appropriate to the age and interests of the students.

In every theme, during many lessons, vocabulary development is strategically supported in authentic and content-based instructional opportunities. The materials include examples of child-friendly definitions of new words. For example, in Theme 8, the teacher introduces the word *mammal*. Teachers are instructed: “Tell children that this week they will learn that mammals are a special kind of animal that breathes air, has a backbone (spine), is warm-blooded, and has hair or fur covering its skin. Mammals also feed their babies with milk from the mother. Teachers point out that children may be surprised to find out what people, elephants, and whales all have in common.” After reading *Fun Facts About Mammals*, teachers present 21 picture cards of different animals. Students make the connection that humans are

mammals, and then explore the picture cards through a discussion in which they distinguish mammals from non-mammals. The picture cards and vocabulary words are embedded in other content areas. They are part of the “Language and Literacy” practice center, where the students select a card and then describe the animal to a partner, using physical and behavioral qualities to help them guess the animal. In the “Construction” practice center, students build homes for the animals based on the animals’ needs and information that they have learned about what a *mammal* is. Vocabulary development is strategically supported through authentic and content-based instructional opportunities throughout the lessons and practice centers in each theme.

In the instructional materials, students are able to connect with each theme through a variety of avenues, such as through read-alouds. For each theme, the teacher is able to connect specific read-alouds to the theme’s topic, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of the content. For example, in Theme 9, when discussing changes, the teacher reads aloud the book *Changes* and displays the vocabulary card for *changes*. Learners are encouraged to listen to the story to find examples of changes that occur; students also learn that some words can have multiple meanings. These materials provide support for students in their vocabulary development and acquisition of new vocabulary through deliberate exposure.

**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

Materials provide support for English Learners (ELs) and opportunities for ELs to connect vocabulary that they know in their foundational language to English vocabulary. The materials provide teacher guidance for using the child’s first language as a foundation for learning English. Materials continue to build vocabulary in both English and the child’s home language through the use of pictures, gestures, explicit instruction, modeling, and frequent opportunities for contextual exposure.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The Welcome Guide emphasizes the “Anti-Bias Education” approach in supporting ELs: “Anti-bias education has four main goals. It is important to keep those goals in mind when preparing lessons, teaching, and interacting with children. The key components are ‘Identity, Diversity, Justice and Action.’” Materials list “powerful strategies” that ELs can benefit from, such as “Comprehension Check, Think Aloud, Total Physical Response (TPR), Visual Cues, Anchor Text, Think-Pair-Share, Scaffolding, Dialogic Reading, and Translanguaging.” These strategies can be found throughout the entire resource. “Early production” is a stage of communicating in one- to two-word phrases or answering yes/no questions. Guided by Madgrude, Hayslip, Espinosa, and Matera (2013) and Goldenberg (2008), materials instruct: “Introduce a new concept along with key vocabulary and phrases in the first language prior to introducing the lesson in English;” “When reading a story, point to the illustrations, provide brief definitions, use simple synonyms, use gestures as appropriate, and use key words in a sentence different from the story.” The materials include teacher support in identifying the importance of developing ELs’ vocabulary in their first language as well as in English. The guide suggests using cognates (“words from different languages with similar spelling, pronunciation, and meaning”). This helps ELs make connections to past knowledge. The guide suggests building ELs’ oral language by providing “rich explanations and explicitly teaching new vocabulary.” Teachers are encouraged

to read several stories for each theme, pointing to the illustrations, using gestures and synonyms while giving brief descriptions, and using props and examples when possible. The instructional materials emphasize that “finding concrete ways to communicate the meaning of an activity is critical for all children, especially English Language Learners who are learning new content and a new language simultaneously.” It also suggests that if the teacher does not know the home language of the learner, then classmates may serve as language brokers for each other.

The materials include thematic learning to support ELs in making connections to new words. For example, in Theme 2, teachers provide pictures of various rooms in a house (living room, kitchen, bedroom, dining room). The teacher encourages ELs to refer to the picture to indicate which type of room they are building. The materials suggest clarifying what a student is doing by modeling a sentence, such as “You are building a kitchen.” In every theme and throughout the daily lessons, the materials include a variety of strategies for supporting ELs, including dual-language support systems; these are given in text boxes with an icon to signal a guiding accommodation. When teachers introduce vocabulary words, materials guide teachers to show pictures with new vocabulary words and give emphasis to separate syllables in words such as *grandmother*; “The children then repeat the words back to the teacher and then identify the vocabulary card.” Picture support and visual cues provide a strategy to support children with bridging their first language with their acquisition of English. Comprehension checks use gestures such as thumbs-up and thumbs-down to support the student in understanding English directions or explanations. This connects what students are doing to their understanding of their first language and English. “Talking out loud” is offered as a strategy for the teacher; the teacher describes every step out loud as they are doing a movement. This connects actions to English for those that know what is happening in their first language but are still learning to connect that action to English. Strategies to use the child’s first language as a foundation for learning English are provided throughout the materials.

In Theme 3, during the “Language and Literacy” center, the TPR (Total Physical Response) strategy “gives children the option of acting out the text,” and prompts teachers and students to “compare their dramatization with the photo they identify in the text.” In Theme 6, dialogic reading is highlighted. During a read-aloud, “when asking children to find Samantha on each page,” teachers encourage ELs to use gestures or words to “describe what Mama is doing.” Teachers are further instructed: “Expand children’s responses: ‘Yes, Mama is bathing, but she does not see that Samantha is opening the door to go outside.’” An example of the “Visual Cues” strategy “invites learners to bring photographs from home (or take pictures at school) of them ‘playing nearby a tree.’” The teacher uses language to describe what they see children doing in the photograph.

In Theme 4, visual cues aid ELs’ development of new vocabulary. Students participate in a scavenger hunt to find objects or pictures that represent words they copy from the environment; students are encouraged to illustrate the items they find next to the words they wrote. Additionally, the teacher uses the “Translanguaging” strategy, encouraging children to “give their creatures a name that is representative of or common in their home language.” This

supports developing ELs' home language and second language. "Dual/English Language Learners" suggestions provide various ways for teachers to support ELs. For example, in Theme 5, after a read-aloud, following a provided suggestion, the teacher encourages ELs to become active storytellers. Students explain what is happening in the pictures while the teacher points at what they are describing. If students are responding with one or two words, the teacher models complete sentences.

The materials provide support for teachers to build on children's first language. Throughout the themes and lessons, materials provide a "Cultural Responsiveness Box" for teacher support. Materials provide strategies to intentionally use a student's understanding of his/her first language as the foundation for new English vocabulary. For example, in Theme 7, materials instruct: "Display the Word of the Week in multiple languages, including the languages spoken by families in your program." Teachers can bridge school to home by reaching out to families for translation assistance. This allows families to be active in their child's learning. Teachers can use scaffolding, inviting ELs to fill in a sentence stem in response to prompts: "I know I do my best when .... One thing I like about myself is .... I am unique because ...." These strategies intentionally use the students' understanding of their home language as a foundation for new English vocabulary.

**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 develop oral language skills through authentic text conversations; read-alouds are supported with questions before, during, and after reading, at differentiated levels. Additionally, vocabulary words are introduced prior to the read-aloud, reinforcing content in context.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” supports the development of students’ oral language skills through authentic text conversations by providing research and specific questions for teachers to utilize before, during, and after reading. Following the guidance in the resources, the teacher encourages children to “look at the book cover, describe what they see, and predict what the story is going to be about.” Additionally, the teacher “activates prior knowledge and creates a personal connection that is culturally responsive, relevant, and meaningful.” The teacher uses the provided extensive “Literature Library,” which includes books, story folders, developmental storybooks, and video ebooks. The materials allow teachers to ask open-ended questions that develop recall and require students to use new information and to justify a stand or decision. Materials provide opportunities to develop oral language for a variety of purposes. Teachers are encouraged to place materials in all practice centers. For example, digital books and ebooks are placed in the “Technology” center. In the “Writer’s Corner” practice center, “Children respond to informational text and literature with print and writing materials.” In the “Literacy and Language” practice center, “Children practice language skills as they interact with peers while retelling stories and enjoying books with friends;” also, “Children have opportunities to enjoy hearing a book read aloud as they follow along.” During these centers, children practice cooperation and collaboration as they work with their peers to create ideas, share materials, and take turns, which supports collaborative discussion and developing oral language.



In every theme, the materials support and scaffold daily opportunities for students to listen to stories, ask questions, and engage in discussion around the texts. In Theme 4, the teacher reads *Henry and Harry*. The teacher introduces the title, author, and illustrator, as well as the vocabulary cards that correspond to the story and theme. Following this read-aloud, the teacher prompts the students with a guiding question: “Do you think the two characters in the story are alive?” The next day, the teacher asks questions to support student discussion and uses a T-chart to gather children’s ideas as they are shared orally. The materials and lessons provide multiple daily opportunities for the students to actively listen to stories and engage in discussion; students ask and answer questions to understand the information in the texts. Theme 4 also includes an opportunity to develop oral language through shared writing. The teacher asks children to “share an activity they would like to do with their pet frog.” Children respond using the provided sentence stem: “I would ... with ...” Teachers can add the child’s name after their response to promote ownership. After taking the small group’s dictation, the teacher invites children to “read” the sentences chorally.

In Theme 5, learners share and provide information in response to text. Students read *Simple Machines*, *Giants Made by People*, *Monster Coaster (Monstruosa la Montana Rusa)*, *The Great Enormous Rock (Una Piedra Enorme)*, and *I See Giants*. Teachers incorporate these stories during large and small group times and independent and collaborative reading in practice centers. The instructional material provides regular and varied opportunities for learners to build oral language through authentic discussions related to text read aloud.

In every theme, the materials support and scaffold daily opportunities for students to engage in discussions to share information and ideas about the texts. After every read-aloud, three types of questions are asked to address differentiated needs and interests of the students. The materials include opportunities for learners to practice listening and speaking skills through authentic peer conversation. For example, in Theme 8, teachers read *I Am a Mammal*. After reading, teachers display photo cards and ask partners to share what makes these animals mammals. By sharing the fun facts on the back of the photo cards, students engage in stimulating conversations. Lessons include tips for the teacher to expand upon children’s text-related conversations. The materials provide support and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion. During Theme 2, the teacher reads *Pets Are Family*, and students participate in a turn-and-talk retell in a group; “Children are prompted to think about the needs of pets, discuss in pairs, and then share their ideas with the class.” Thus, students use oral language in authentic peer discussions.

The instructional materials provide many opportunities throughout lessons for guided reading and writing activities. In Theme 9, the teacher and students discuss a read-aloud that was read that week. Students create their own “I Can” book using pre-written prompts. The materials provide suggestions for differentiated instruction and suggest that, for a challenge, students can share their personal book with a partner and use the “TAG” strategy (Tell something you like; Ask a question; Give a suggestion). Also, in a section on “Before, During, and After” in a Theme 9 lesson, students discuss school routines, and each student receives a card to compare to a

partner's card. Pairs compare and determine which routine comes before or after. Thus, the materials provide both teachers and students with support and guidance to allow students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion.

**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.

## Meets 4/4

The materials reviewed provide direct instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills throughout each day. Materials use a research-based developmental continuum, various guided activities, and opportunities to apply these skills in support of the theme and content.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Students participate in a developmental progression to develop and refine their listening skills using a variety of strategies. For example, the teacher guide provides information about how students develop their listening skills as a foundation for phonological awareness. Through activities focused on listening, sentence segmentation, compound words, alliteration, onset-rime, and blending phonemes, students are able to grow and develop their phonological awareness skills. The materials and lessons provide multiple daily opportunities for students to apply phonological awareness skills, and materials follow the research-based developmental continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness.

In every theme, the materials support and scaffold daily opportunities for students to isolate and connect alphabetic knowledge skills; skills are modeled, guided, practiced, and then applied. Each “Morning Message” includes a focus lesson on a phonological awareness skill, which is then interwoven into lessons and practice opportunities throughout the unit. In Theme 2, the focus is on sentence segmentation. Teachers instruct students to notice each word in a sentence the teacher says; students are to place a blank sticky note on a chart for each word spoken. The teacher asks, “How many words did we say?” The class counts the sticky notes together. Another option is for the teacher to place a chain link on their own fingertips or on a child’s fingertips and to ask students to say the entire sentence while pointing and counting

each finger with a link. The materials thus provide direct instruction for each newly acquired phonological awareness skill. Materials also provide ongoing support to review phonological awareness skills. For example, teachers are guided to refer to the “Sentence Segmentation” strategy card to review any additional strategies for sentence segmentation.

In Step 1, the teacher presents and says a sentence, and the students repeat it. The teacher is guided to “connect the sentence content to the theme or student experiences.” The teacher explains the focus of the lesson, for example, “Syllable Segmentation” in Theme 3. Each day of the week, in this theme, the teacher reinforces the focus skill with a new set of words that directly connect to the theme, content, and focused skill and are part of the daily Morning Message sentence. For example, in the sentence “Teachers work in our school community,” the teacher directs attention to the word *community* and models segmenting the word into syllables. The teacher says the words, and the students identify the focus skill demonstrated in the words. In this theme, Day 2 practice words are *delivery* (“de-liv-er-y”) and *heavy* (“hea-vy”). The materials and lessons provide multiple daily opportunities for the students to identify, synthesize, and analyze sounds. The materials also include frequent and adequate practice in phonological awareness. Before children have alphabet knowledge, activities are oral and auditory, focusing on hearing the sounds rather than connecting to print. For example, in Theme 3, Day 1, teachers are instructed: “Say the word ‘Fanny.’ Clap once for each syllable as you say the word, ‘Fan-ny.’ Ask children to say the word and clap with you. Ask: How many syllables did you clap? Repeat with the word ‘welcome.’” The materials connect phonological awareness skills to letter knowledge instruction and allow for student practice of phonological awareness skills both in isolation and connected to alphabetic knowledge skills. The instructional material provides rich, varied, playful opportunities to experience, manipulate, and interact with sounds.

During Theme 4, the “Morning Message” focus is rhyming. Teachers are instructed: “Explain that rhyming words have the same middle and ending sounds. Say: ‘Rock rhymes with sock.’ Both words end with /ock/. Invite children to say the word pair ‘rock/sock’ and give a thumbs-up. Say the word pair ‘sock/shoe’ and invite children to give a thumbs-up or thumbs-down.” Teachers can vary the method of response by incorporating voting paddles, a touchdown signal (both arms raised for *yes* and crossed arms for *no*), thumbs-up/thumbs-down, and signing *yes/no*. Movement-based activities support understanding of phonological awareness skills and provide rich and varied playful opportunities to experience, manipulate, and interact with sounds. In another example, students trace the letter shapes on the letter cards and draw the letter in the air using their pointer and middle fingers, as teachers say the letter formation strokes. Concepts are embedded in purposeful learning experiences across a variety of instructional settings, including, but not limited to, large group, small group, and individual learning areas. The materials include a variety of types of activities that engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds.

In Theme 5, the focus of the Morning Message is alliteration. Materials instruct: “On Day 1, draw out the beginning sound as you say: ‘construct’ and ‘concrete’;” “Both words begin with /c/;” “Say the word pair ‘workers/build’;” “Ask children to identify if the words begin with the same sound using the sign for ‘yes’ or ‘no.’” These activities are designed in a format and

sequence that represents the most current research concerning when children normally develop phonological awareness skills following a developmental timeline. In Theme 5, students engage in a phonological awareness playful alliteration activity as a small group. The teacher is instructed: "Say a tongue twister and invite children to repeat the words with you;" "Ask: 'Which sound do you hear at the beginning of each set of words?'"

In Theme 7, during a phonological awareness lesson, students develop and grow the skill of blending onset and rime. To practice blending, the teacher displays vocabulary cards and models a chant with the students. For example, the teacher says, "My word begins with /b/ and ends with /eetle/," then puts the sounds together to say the word *beetle* and points to the corresponding vocabulary card. Both the teacher and students continue chanting, substituting other insect names; the teacher pauses in order for students to blend and say the word. These opportunities allow for learners to engage in identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing sounds.

**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

The materials reviewed provide direct instruction and opportunities for students to practice their alphabetic knowledge skills using a research-based, strategic sequence.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The scope and sequence for “Alphabet Knowledge” provides guidance for the strategic sequencing and introduction of letters. The teacher focuses on naming letters only in Themes 1–3. In Themes 4–9, the student names the letters, recognizes letter sounds, and produces letter sounds. The order in which letters are taught is laid out in the “Week at a Glance” at the beginning of every theme. Theme 1 focuses on students identifying the letters in their own names; Themes 2–5 transition to letters coordinating back to the unit theme. In Themes 6–9, the focus is alphabet order, matching uppercase and lowercase, and distinguishing between easily confused letters like *Hh*, *Ll*, *Nn*, *Uu*. This sequence in which alphabetic knowledge is introduced includes both the introduction and the review of letters throughout the year. Distributed reviews of alphabetic knowledge occur every 18–26 days throughout the 180-day school year.

Early in the year, the teacher begins by focusing on letters in the child’s name. The teacher uses a tiered approach to practicing letters in the name as outlined in the “Welcome Guide.” Students use this scaffolded approach to name writing and letter recognition daily in order to sign in. In Tier 1, students sign in by recognizing their name, which is paired with a picture to help recognition; they move it on a chart, indicating that they are in school. In Tier 2, the picture is removed; students identify their name with just the letters and move it on the chart indicating that they are present. In Tier 3, paper and writing tools are placed near the chart, and the teacher models writing their name; students sign in with their name card. As they become ready and with scaffolded support, the teacher is instructed: “Say the name and or sound of each letter with the child as you write them for the child. Under the name, write the first letter

for the child and have the child complete writing the name with your guidance.” In Tier 4, paper is provided with each child’s name written five times. Each day, the child writes their name under the modeled name to sign in. The materials and lessons provide multiple daily opportunities for the teacher to introduce, model, and use letters and sounds.

In Theme 1, teachers print each child’s name on a card and add the child’s picture beside the name. Teachers can extend by turning the card into a puzzle, cutting between each letter; students sequence the letters in their name puzzle to complete their puzzle. The materials provide teachers directions to set up a letter-rich environment. For example, the “Welcome Guide” provides many resources to support children’s understanding of alphabet letters, names, shapes, and sounds. Resources include letter cards, letter builder sets, letter wall cards, sounds card, and letter sounds and syllable cards in Spanish. The materials provide ongoing support to review alphabetic knowledge skills throughout the school year and provide teacher guidance on directly introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds.

Also in Theme 1, teachers begin to implement a word wall in their classroom. All students receive their name on a card and begin to sort and organize their names onto the word wall through guiding mini-lessons and teacher modeling. Teachers utilize the word wall in various ways. One option is by providing uppercase letters that contain the beginning letters of the names of all students in a small group. The students are encouraged to match their letter with the corresponding letter on the word wall and describe their letter’s shape (curved, straight). Another option is in “Literacy” small groups. Teachers invite students “to match a plastic letter to the first letter of their name.” Teachers place uppercase letters in a paper bag and encourage students to reach into the bag and grab a letter. Students describe the letter and name it before removing it from the bag to verify their guess. Another option is a puzzle that invites students to sequence the letters in their name. The materials thus support activities that build upon letters in familiar words, such as in the student’s first name. They also provide direct instruction for each newly acquired letter and sound.

Letter sounds are introduced in Theme 4, providing a solid foundation for the letter-name to letter-sound continuum. Concepts are embedded in purposeful learning experiences across a variety of instructional activities. For example, Theme 4 states: “Letter sounds that are sound embedded in the letter’s name will be introduced first.” In Theme 4, during the “Morning Message” throughout the week, students are shown a letter card (*F, f*), hear the word *found*, and learn that the *Ff* says /f/. Students then work their way up to find *Ff* on the letter wall, circle *Ff* in the Morning Message, and finally “identify the target letter names and sounds,” when the teacher invites a volunteer to locate a card on the letter wall and say the picture’s name. During a “Shared Writing” small group lesson, in Theme 8, the students discuss mammals. The teacher says, “‘Mammals’ starts with /m/. What letter makes that sound?” and “Write the title ‘Mammals’ on a chart.”

Materials embed movement-based activities to support the understanding of letter and sound awareness. For example, in Theme 5, the Morning Message focuses on alphabet knowledge of the letters *C, I, R*, and *W*. Teachers display the letter cards one letter at a time. For example, the

teacher shows the *Ww* letter card and says the letter and letter sound, stretching the beginning sound. This is repeated with the other letters. Students find the letter on the letter wall, say the picture's name, and stretch the initial sound. Other students locate the letters in the Morning Message by highlighting or circling them. Through these interactions and activities, teachers guide students to correctly learn letter names and sounds.



**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.

## Meets 4/4

In each of the themes in the daily “Read Aloud” lessons, small group “Guided Reading” lessons, and “Language and Literacy” practice centers, students have opportunities to engage with books and texts and receive explicit instruction in print awareness skills following a developmentally appropriate continuum. Prior to reading books aloud in both shared reading and small group guided reading sessions, the teacher models identifying the title, author, and illustrator. Students point to pictures, repeat words, and attempt print matching as they read books to themselves in small group guided reading time with individual books. The “Welcome Guide” breaks down the systematic approach into a three-segment routine. In the second section of “Morning Message,” the teacher guides the focus to a concept of print, such as ending punctuation. The teacher notices and rereads the sentence while tracking with a pointer and has the students notice the focus skill; in this example, they do so by circling the period. These strategies support students’ understanding of print and connect print awareness to reading, written expression, and everyday functions of print at school.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Theme 1, teachers instruct students that spoken words can be represented by print; students learn about tracking print from left to right and top to bottom, one-to-one correspondence, and print directionality. During the Morning Message, while focusing on modeled writing, students recall the first word in a given sentence, reading it with the teacher. The teacher uses a pointer or a finger in order to track print and help students make the connection that what we write goes along with what we read (print directionality). Through these intentional activities, students are able to grow and develop their print awareness and connect it to books and texts.

The materials include recommendations for setting up a print-rich environment that provides many opportunities to observe, engage with, and experience authentic print within the school day. For example, in Theme 2, during “Closing Time,” teachers provide vocabulary cards (*fabulous, family, mother, father, brother, sister*); a “School Family Agreements” poster; and letter cards (*F, f, M, m*). Teachers display the “Word of the Week” (*fabulous*) and ask for a volunteer to describe something that is fabulous. Students are encouraged to use the newly learned language when they are describing their day, a favorite activity, or how they are feeling. The materials provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print in context to the students’ experience at school. Throughout the instructional materials, there are various opportunities for students to grow and develop an understanding of print in context. Students are able to develop these skills through learning centers and other intentional interactions. For example, in Theme 4, students are able to take part in “Language and Literacy” centers that allow them to look through a collection of books to identify living and nonliving things and also provide props to retell and reenact stories. Throughout all themes, students are exposed to print in a variety of ways, such as through big books, writing activities, and word walls. Through these activities, students are able to deepen their understanding of print.

In Theme 5, the teacher writes the Morning Message sentence, “A hammer hits a nail.” As the teacher writes the sentence for the students, she asks children to recall that each word in the sentence utilizes a “Space Frog” between words. Children are reminded that punctuation is used at the end of the sentence. This activity supports explicit instruction in print awareness and provides opportunities for students to understand the functions of print in reading and writing. In a shared writing lesson in this same unit, students read the book *Giants Made By People*. Students assist the teacher by completing a sentence stem: “I see a . . .” The teacher models pointing and reading each sentence; the teacher then guides the students to read along and identify any words that are the same in each sentence. Two pre-emergent readers are introduced in this theme, providing students with opportunities to practice their print awareness skills.

In Theme 6, students read the shared writing chart together and then are introduced to the emergent reader *I Can Move*. Teachers invite the class to “read” along with the teacher; the class points to the pictures, points to the words, and practices print matching. For students who are ready to recognize words, the teacher points out *I* and *can* and encourages students to write in their journals to complete the sentence stem “I can . . .” Students are given tools to engage with print in the classroom in authentic contexts: They are provided with vocabulary cards, the letter wall, sentence stems, and blank books. Students are encouraged to use the theme and theme-related print to support their writing throughout the materials.

**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.

## Meets 4/4

The materials provide a variety of text types and genres across content that are high-quality and at an appropriate level of complexity; materials provide poems, songs, texts, and other experiences in the classroom.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Theme 2 contains the text *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins, which has a first-grade Text Complexity Level and a Lexile level of 340L. Based on the by-hand qualitative measures of the Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA), the Lexile accurately reflects the difficulty of text. This story is told in the third person and in chronological order. In the story, Victoria and Sam's mom bakes them a dozen cookies; friends keep coming over to share the cookies until there is only one cookie left for each child. Luckily, grandma brings over more cookies for all of them to share at the end of the story. The language in this story is very basic and easy for a young reader to understand. The pattern and repetition of the sentence "Nobody makes cookies like Grandma" provides structure, thus building comprehension. Because of the simple text, no prior knowledge is needed to understand the story. The story can be used to introduce the mathematical concept of dividing things evenly and the skill of sharing.

Theme 5 contains the text *Giants Made by People*. The interest level of this nonfiction text is geared toward students in prekindergarten to second grade. The book explores famous creations and simple machines made by people using tools. Students engage with the text through photographs of everyday objects and familiar and unfamiliar places. Students learn, for

example, about how tools were used by artists to sculpt a mountainside into Mount Rushmore. Teachers display other photographs of famous works of art that were created using many tools such as pencils, sketch pads, brushes, paint palettes, and easels.

Theme 7 contains the text *The Very Busy Spider* by Eric Carle, which has a first-grade Text Complexity Level and a Lexile of 330L. The story is told in the third person and chronological order. The spider lands on a farm fence, and is so busy and determined to finish her web that she does not hear the farm animals asking her to play. She builds her web, catches a bug, and goes to sleep. Repetition in the text makes for a great read-aloud for students to share: The farm animals all ask the spider to play in some way, but, each time, “The spider didn't answer. She was very busy spinning her web.” The illustrations are large, and the spider web is raised to give texture to the book. The language is literal, and the story is easy to understand. There is no need for prior knowledge. The author demonstrates why spiders build webs, what determination looks like, and that we can finish tasks when we stick to them. The book also explores farm animals and the sounds they make.

Examples of fiction texts include but are not limited to:

*Chloe Gets Ready for School* by Pam Schiller (realistic)  
*Sara Sidney's First Day of School* by Pam Schiller (fantasy)  
*Abuela* by Arthur Dorros (realistic)  
*The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant (realistic)  
*Farley Follows His Nose* by Lynn Johnston (realistic)  
*The Enormous Turnip* (developmental storybook) (tall tale)  
*Silly Stew* by Brian Mowry (fantasy)  
*Mighty, Mighty Construction Site* by Sherri Duskey Rinker (fantasy)

Examples of nonfiction texts include but are not limited to:

*Families* (informational)  
*Pets Are Family* (informational)  
*ABCs of Food* (informational)  
*Opposites* (informational)  
*Push and Pull* (informational)  
*Simple Machines* (informational)  
*Giants Made by People* by Pam Schiller (informational)  
*Traveling Across the Tundra* by Pam Schiller (informational)

Examples of other text types include but are not limited to:

*The Three Bears* (nursery rhyme)  
*The Lion and the Mouse* (nursery rhyme)  
*The Princess and the Pea* (nursery rhyme)

The “Welcome Guide” suggests labeling practice centers and materials with words and pictures. This allows for students to have independent access to manipulatives and assists them in putting away the materials during clean-up time. Students also use name cards during practice centers as a way for the teacher to manage center time. The materials include recommendations for supporting a high-quality print environment to emphasize print meaning by connecting environmental print and various purposes and uses of print.

The instructional materials include the use of purposeful environmental print throughout the classroom and clearly prioritize the use of environmental print to connect meaning to print across centers and activities. Theme 1 has the teacher “print each child’s name on a card and add their photo.” This is for an activity in the “ABC” practice center where students explore the letters in their name having curved and straight lines. Teachers are instructed: “Encourage children to use plastic letters to copy their names by placing the letters in the same order as they are on their Name Card.” Students’ name cards are also placed on the letter wall under the first corresponding letter. In Theme 7, during a “Guided Writing” small group lesson, teachers encourage children to illustrate and label their favorite insect. These insect names are from the photo cards and vocabulary cards that are a part of the letter wall, introduced during “Read-Aloud 1” and “Read-Aloud 2.”

**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 provide, through the themes, guidance for the teacher to connect texts to children's experiences at home and at school. The materials include teacher guidance on basic text structures and their impact on children's understanding of text.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The instructional materials provide quick-access teaching cards that guide, inform, and instruct the teacher on read-aloud strategies that can be flexibly implemented. These strategies provide guidance on basic text structures that will develop students' text comprehension. Helpful hints include "When reading a book aloud to children, the teacher offers intentional instruction by using specific questions," such as "What does the title tell us about the story?" Another hint is, "Read the names of the author, illustrator (or photographer) and discuss their roles." Teachers are encouraged to say: "The author writes the words;" "The illustrator draws the pictures;" "The photographer takes the photographs." Thus, materials provide guidance for teachers to use basic text structures to support children with their understanding of text read aloud. The "Language Support Strategies" card for "Intentional Instruction" during think-alouds encourages teachers: "Model how good readers and good writers work by saying aloud what you are thinking during these processes;" "For example, as you write the Morning Message, 'think aloud' by asking: 'How do I start the beginning of a sentence? What do I need before I write the next word?'" Thus, materials provide a specific script of appropriate "think aloud" wonderings that support using text structure to aid comprehension.

In Theme 1, in the "Week at a Glance," texts are being read across the week. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, "Read Aloud 2" is *Hooray For Hoppy!* by Tim Hopgood; on Thursday, students read *My Backyard and My Senses* by Emilia Rivas; on Friday, students look at both texts. The materials provide scaffolding that highlights the importance of pictures and illustrations in both fiction and informational text to support comprehension. In the *Poems and*

*Rhymes* book, teachers are guided in reading a poem and then connecting ideas in the poem to home and school experiences. In Theme 1, during “Read Aloud 1,” teachers ask children to match cards to the illustrations in the book. Students point to the part of their body that matches each picture.

Materials include support for the teacher to utilize basic text structures to impact students’ ability to understand a given text. In Theme 6, the materials include lessons on punctuation, spaces, uppercase and lowercase letters, word length, and writing multiple sentences in the “Morning Message.” The text is written and read by the teacher; then, children are invited to interact with the text. Students read the sentences with the teacher and look for specific text structures. This explicit text structure instruction then applies to the “Guided Reading” and “Writing Literacy” small group activity; students apply the skills by attempting to read the emergent literacy book *I Can Move*. They identify the sentences and then create their own sentences with teacher guidance, using the sentence stem “I can ...” Students discuss spaces, punctuation, familiar and repeated words, and uppercase and lowercase letters as the teacher reads all of their shared responses. Teachers have support to build their understanding of basic structures and their impact on understanding the text in the provided materials. Guidance for teachers to impact students’ understanding of the text through purposeful and intentional interactions and instruction is found throughout all themes. Students gain a better understanding of texts utilized in the classroom. In Theme 6, before reading *Samantha on a Roll*, students observe and analyze the book’s cover to predict what they think will happen in the story and how they think Samantha feels. Throughout the reading, students engage with the story, ask and answer questions, find out if their predictions were right or wrong. Through these learning opportunities, teachers support students and grow their comprehension and experiences with various texts. During the third week of Theme 6, teachers read the story *Gram is Coming to My House*. As teachers begin to read, they bring attention to the bag sitting beside Gram and ask students, “What do you see in the bag? What color is it? Who do you think the airplane is for?” Students learn how illustrations support understanding and how text features connect predictions and inferences.

Materials include guidance for the teacher to connect texts to the children’s experiences at home and at school. During read-alouds, teachers are given question prompts to facilitate making connections between life experiences and the texts. For example, in Theme 9, the content is on upcoming changes as the school year comes to an end. The story *Changes* is read to the students. Prior to the story, the vocabulary word *change* is introduced. Children are told to look for changes in the story, as the character in the book is facing a big change in his life. After the story, students are given the opportunity to make connections to the text by expressing how they are feeling about prekindergarten ending and whether they have experienced any other changes in school and at home. The materials thus include opportunities for children to connect their school and home experiences to the text read aloud by the teacher. Materials also provide guidance to support teacher understanding of using texts to teach and model making predictions and inferences. For example, in Theme 9, teachers are instructed: “Display *The Waiting Game* and explain that this book is about a family who is waiting for something special to happen.” Before enjoying the story, teachers invite children to predict

what they think the family is waiting for. Materials guide teachers to pause on pages 2–3 and again after pages 4–5 to ask, “What do you think the family is waiting for? Why do you think that?” The materials include teacher guidance on basic text structures and their impact on student understanding of text.



**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 provide strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their development of emergent reading skills, which include strategy cards, vocabulary cards with additional strategies, and embedded strategies highlighted throughout the lessons.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The instructional materials include a variety of strategies for supporting ELs. These strategies provide a “point-of-use” approach. When it is appropriate and applicable, a strategy appears in a pink highlighted box for any particular lesson. A “Language Support Strategy” card provides teacher guidance in strategies such as “Think, Pair, Share,” scaffolding, dialogic reading, translanguaging, “Comprehension Check,” “Think Aloud,” “Total Physical Response,” “Visual Cues,” and “Anchor Texts.” Cards with a speech icon provide “opportunities for children to share with the class or a neighbor and join the conversation.” Cards with a body icon suggest an opportunity for physical movement or a total physical response. Strategies use students’ knowledge of literacy in their primary language and ensure that this knowledge transfers to English language and literacy skills. “Photo Cards,” used for EL support, include “a picture and instructions for signing one key vocabulary word in sign language and support for multiple levels of language acquisition.” The back of each photo card includes language development prompts to connect to new knowledge, engage in conversation that deepens understanding, connect with American Sign Language, and support ELs and Dual Language Learners (DLLs). The Photo Cards also accommodate various levels of English proficiency by suggesting prompts for children in the preproduction, early production, and speech emergence stages of language acquisition.

The instructional materials also provide opportunities for vocabulary development support through exposure to cognates. In the “Welcome Guide,” the “Letter Wall Cards” include English and Spanish word card cognates; cognates share a common origin and/or are similar in spelling and meaning. Examples include *ambulance* and *ambulancia* and *family* and *familia*. Materials

support teachers with research-based guidance on how to use cognates to develop comprehension.

In Theme 2, the materials include strategies that use children’s knowledge of literacy in their primary language, supporting first language knowledge as a means to transfer to English language and literacy skills. For example, materials instruct the teacher: “Use the internet to research how to say and write ‘thank you’ in the child’s home language, or invite parents to send a thank you card from the native country. Learners demonstrate how to say ‘thank you’ in their language. Repeat what the child says and then translate ‘thank you’ in English to express gratitude to the child for sharing.” 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. Also in this theme, materials contain authentic and culturally diverse texts to help children make personal connections: *Families*; *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams; *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins; *The Best Birthday Party Ever* by Nuria Pino; and a “Family Connection” book called *Yuna and the Paper Cranes* by Carla Garcia.

In Theme 5, practice center plans provide a variety of strategies teachers can use, including scaffolding and think-alouds. For example, the “Science” center provides simple tools for investigating. Teachers introduce the center by demonstrating how to use the balance scale. Teachers model language as they manipulate the scale to achieve balance while using key vocabulary that will be later used in the read-aloud. They may say, “I will put two frog counters on this side to make the opposite side with the blocks raised up and balanced.” The materials include guidance for explicit vocabulary instruction of important words in each text that will support comprehension of text read aloud. Also in Theme 5, culturally diverse and relevant titles support the theme of “Creative Me.” These books are *Simple Machines*; *Giants Made by People* by Pam Schiller; *The More the Merrier* by Pam Schiller; and *The Thing Lou Couldn’t Do* by Ashley Spires. *Simple Machines* and *The More the Merrier* are in the Family Connection digital library. This allows the students repeated experiences with familiar text.

In Theme 7, the materials include strategies and recommendations for supporting ELs in all areas of emergent reading skills; materials provide suggestions and strategies for teachers to use to develop students’ reading skills through vocabulary instruction. There is evidence of scaffolding across themes: Teachers model doing the task, release the children to perform it with teacher help, and only then expect independence. For example, teachers invite children to write letters on the floor with their fingers. Teachers write the letters on the chart while saying the letter formation directions. Teachers then provide blank paper and pencils or dry-erase markers for children to practice forming letters. In the “Writer’s Corner,” students illustrate how insects move. Teachers remind them to label their drawings with the insect’s name and their name. Teachers take dictation from the students as they describe the way the insects move (hop, jump, run, walk). Another scaffolding strategy is translanguaging. Translanguaging builds on what a child knows in the home language to support learning about and through a new, target language. For example, still in Theme 7, in the “Language Support for English Language Learners” box, students pair up with a bilingual partner (in English and a native language). The bilingual student translates directions to the monolingual student, describing how the partner

should maneuver along a path. Materials thus facilitate the process of transfer, providing support based on what students already know and understand about literacy in their primary language.

**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

The materials include a variety of experiences through which children can engage with writing. Experiences include opportunities to engage in shared writing, independent writing, and imitate adult writing through word banks, sentence stems, and modeled writing examples. The children are encouraged to add details and make connections between reading and writing.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” states that the “Morning Message” offers a daily opportunity to model writing for children. When modeling writing for young children, the teacher uses direct instruction; the teacher asks questions to encourage children’s engagement in the process and uses ‘teacher talk’ (thinking aloud) to narrate writing actions. For example, “I am writing the word *cat*. It begins with the letter *c*. Who has the letter *c* in your name?” The “Shared Writing” sub-section of the Welcome Guide states that during shared writing, teachers model writing for many different purposes: recording information in different formats, such as writing a list of ingredients for a cooking center or a list of characters in a story; sequencing the main events in a big book; creating a predictable chart; and using graphic organizers to record children’s ideas. This type of writing can be described as ‘functional writing,’ which is taking dictation from your life (Ray & Glover, 2008). The teacher thus models writing and connects it to topics of interest to children and personal experiences. Continually, the first step of writing begins with a child’s recognition of her first name and identifying the first letter of her name by the letter name (or sound). Before students arrive, teachers write each child’s first name on card stock or on a sentence strip; they then take each child’s photo, print it, and adhere it to the name card. Students use these name cards to “sign in” when they arrive in the morning. Later in the year,

teachers remove the photo when students no longer need that support. Teachers place a piece of paper and writing instruments near the pocket chart that displays children's names. When students are ready to move to this next level, the teacher models the way students should write their names as they "sign in" each morning. The next level of "signing in" provides students with an opportunity to write their names. Teachers provide a sheet of paper where the child's name is written five times; there is space under each name for the student to write her name. This progression provides daily opportunities to write for authentic purposes. Learning centers also include writing opportunities to respond to informational text and literature with print and writing materials. For example, students design a card or "write" a thank-you letter to a story character.

In Theme 3, the teacher reads the story *Workers in My Community*. In a shared writing activity, students respond to text read aloud, making the connection between reading and writing. Students orally share different forms of transportation that they know or have used. The teacher creates a chart and guides learners to write the names of people referred to as "helpers" who help the children get to school. The teacher models labeling community helpers such as *bus drivers, neighbors, family, and babysitters*. The teachers assist students in writing their names on the chart. The next day, the activity progresses to include an opportunity to imitate adult writing. The teacher asks students about who helps them go home from school. Students write a thank-you note to the helpers. The teacher writes the words *thank you* for the students to copy and include in their own writing. An additional activity in this unit provides children the opportunity to respond to a text with independent writing. Students read about a character named Pete, who likes to dance. After a discussion about Pete's favorite dance moves, students write in their personal journals about a dance move they would add to the story. Students draw, label, and write about the dance move. The teacher takes their dictation if needed. After reading *Pete, the Cat*, students create a timeline with the teacher, using shared writing strategies to put the dance moves in the correct sequential order in response to the story. The materials guide the teacher to use questions such as "What did Pete do first?" and "Which move came next?" to solicit student contributions to the timeline. The teacher writes students' answers along the line to show the dance sequence. Materials include opportunities for students to generate independent writing; materials also include opportunities for group writing on shared experiences. In another section, students write in their personal journals about healthy food choices, using an anchor chart with examples of grains, vegetables, fruits, protein, and dairy for support. The poster includes real pictures and labels. Students draw simple illustrations and label their drawings. The materials guide the teacher to provide dictation as needed and to encourage students to include examples from all of the food groups. Students share their work with their peers.

In Theme 5, the teacher facilitates a conversation about building a house and models writing sentences, using content that the students dictate. The teacher places sentences in the correct sequential order. The teacher then rereads the sentences, and the students create a word bank of jobs that they would do if they worked in the construction field. Finally, students copy the sentence stem "I would ..." and fill in the blank with words from the word bank or write their own words using emerging literacy skills. Teachers recast the sentence for struggling students;

students who need a challenge can write an additional sentence after copying the sentence stem in their personal journals. This guided writing routine supports the development of independent writing and illustrating. It is repeated throughout the materials, including in a lesson where students respond to a shared read-aloud of the book *My Classroom* and then follow a prompt to independently write about what they see in their classroom, in their journals. During a read-aloud of *The Dot*, the class discusses the different sizes and colors of the dot artwork in the book. Students are able to see how illustrations support the text. The teacher encourages students to create a picture made of dots at the “Creativity Station.” The instructional materials include opportunities for illustration/drawing with detail, which transfers to writing. Students use writing to communicate ideas about a text read aloud. Students also write an invitation welcoming families to an art show showcasing student work. The materials include opportunities for students to write in response to reading; materials make explicit the connection between reading and writing. During a “Writer’s Corner” center, students create a class book. Students draw a tool and how it is used. The teacher utilizes “Photo Cards” to support student thinking. The teacher takes students’ dictation or challenges students to write about the tool. Teachers provide blank books for students to create their own “My Tools” book. Teachers encourage students to label each illustration.

## 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.

## Meets 4/4

The materials instruct students along the developmental stages of writing. They provide instructional strategies that support the writing continuum, offer guidance to nudge children along the continuum and provide opportunities to include appropriate student contributions to writing and the writing process.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” offers a framework to describe emergent writing practices, which is composed of three domains. “Conceptual Knowledge” is when children learn that writing has a purpose and is meaningful. “Procedural Knowledge” is when children learn the mechanics of writing. “Generative Knowledge” is when children develop the ability to translate thoughts into writing. The guide also includes the developmental stages of writing to include drawing, scribbling, mock letters, letter strings, transitional writing, invented spelling, phrase writing, and whole sentence writing. The guide suggests that teachers use “teacher talk” during writing lessons in order to think aloud and narrate what they are doing. For example, “I am writing the word *cat*. It begins with the letter *c*. Who has the letter *c* in your name?” There are multiple other strategies teachers can use to scaffold children’s writing, such as verbally reminding children to use writing in their classroom activities and providing appropriate writing instructions. The guide provides teacher guidance that includes strategies for intentional instruction. During the drawing stage, teachers respond to students’ attempts at writing. Teachers engage students in conversation about their “writing” (illustration). During the scribbling stage, teachers model writing and call attention to the features of letters. During the random, controlled, and circular marking stage, teachers display the alphabet and refer to letters while modeling letter formation. Teachers provide plastic letters and the “Letter Builder Set” to support letter features. During mock letters, students create letter strings. Teachers model using the “Space Frog” for separating words. During transitional writing, teachers suggest

students copy environmental print, including the letter wall, classroom labels, and book titles. During invented spelling, students segment and blend phonemes of one-syllable words to guide hearing medial sounds, beginning letters, and ending letters. During phrase writing, students focus on individual words with conventional spelling. Continually, during whole sentence writing, students focus on the use of appropriate uppercase letters and punctuation marks.

In Theme 1, writing instruction begins to follow the “Morning Message” structure. There are three steps to Morning Message. First, teachers say the sentence (phonological awareness) with a focus on listening. Second, teachers write the sentence (concepts of print) with a focus on modeled writing. Third, teachers identify letters (alphabet knowledge) with a focus on letter lines and shapes. The concept of the daily sentences is also used in the “Shared Writing” and in the “Guided Writing” sections. A shared writing small group activity invites students to share their ideas for completing the sentence frame and then write their ideas on the chart. The next day, during a guided writing small group activity, students draw themselves in their journals to connect back to the sentences from the Morning Message. The teacher thus scaffolds writing instruction by involving a combination of modeled writing, shared writing, and interactive writing. Materials follow the developmental continuum of how children learn writing. Still, in Theme 1, materials provide a sentence stem for a shared writing experience: “I can ... with my ...” Students offer ideas for the teacher to record. Once completed, students draw their bodies and write their names in their personal journals. Materials include recommendations for scaffolding. Students who are ready can label the drawings. For students requiring more support, the teacher offers cards to copy or imitate. Also in this theme, students participate in a shared writing experience where they smell a cotton ball with a fragrance. Students then come up with a list of the things that they like to smell; the teacher writes their dictated thoughts. The teacher then displays the responses as a chart for review during transition times. In Theme 1, students begin using a personal writing journal. Students draw a picture of themselves and label it with their name. To assist their drawing, if necessary, students use a photograph to assist their drawing. Students in need of a challenge can elaborate and share their first stories with their peers.

In Theme 4, a written expression lesson focuses on the process of writing, from thinking to developing a shared piece. In this lesson, teachers ask students to recall each word in the sentence as they write it on a chart and utilize the Space Frog between words. Teachers model proper punctuation and capitalization. Teachers read the complete sentence with the class and track the words. Teachers connect the sentence content to the theme or students’ experiences. Materials provide guidance for teachers on how to nudge students along the continuum for writing development. For example, teachers display a two-column chart labeled *Fast* and *Slow* on bulletin-board paper and invite students to illustrate opposites that are fast or slow. Teachers encourage students to label the illustration, or they take their dictation if needed. Teachers also provide a “Visual Cues Box Guide” that takes students on a scavenger hunt to find objects or photographs that represent the words students write from the environment. Students illustrate the items they find next to the corresponding words they wrote.



In Theme 6, Day 4, in the literacy small group portion, during guided reading/writing instruction, students move to more independent writing. Students review the shared writing chart from the previous day. Students read *The Beach* and then draw an illustration to complete the sentence stem “I like ....” The teacher nudges students along the writing continuum, encouraging those who might be ready to copy the words and complete the sentence on the lower half of their journal page. Teachers assist students who are not able to write the words that they use in their responses. Repetition of the guided writing routine further supports students’ development of writing along the continuum. During another guided writing small group activity, teachers review the shared writing chart from Day 3, and students engage in the writing process with some support from the teacher. Students illustrate their favorite way to travel on the first blank page of their journal and write their name and label the transportation on their drawing. With permission, the teacher assists students by taking their dictation. Students share their journal entries; as they share, the teacher models how to suggest edits to their work. Teachers use “TAG” as a guide: Tell something you like. (I like to ride horses, too!) Ask questions. (Where do you ride a horse?) Give a suggestion. (I suggest you add grass to show you are riding in a pasture.). Teachers provide time for students to edit their journal entries during small groups or at practice centers.

### 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.

## Meets 4/4

The materials support fine motor development alongside and through writing by providing a variety of materials for writing expression. The materials provide specific guidance on prerequisite skills to writing and scissor skills. Fine motor skills development is a foundational step to learning to write.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Throughout every theme and as a part of all lessons related to literacy, math, and science instruction, in whole group instruction, practice centers, and small group instruction, the materials provide a variety of opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills. The "Welcome Guide" gives explanations and guidance to include important prerequisites to writing, such as establishing hand dominance, crossing the midline, and developing the tripod pencil grasp. Additionally, the guide offers explicit and detailed direction in developing scissor skills, including crumpling, ripping, snipping, and cutting paper. Another fine motor recommendation is to create a "cutting box" in the classroom so that students can practice crumpling, ripping, snipping, and cutting. The guide also provides teacher guidance to create a "Writer's Corner" with a wide variety of materials, including pencils, markers, crayons, chalk, paper, index cards, journals, folders, letter cards, dry-erase markers and boards, story starters, multisensory models for letter writing, manipulatives such as letter tiles, models of different forms of writing, and props related to the topic or theme. The guide discusses the importance of incorporating vertical surface writing among a variety of surfaces in the classroom or at home, such as chalkboards (they offer resistance when writing), a stand-up easel, butcher paper taped to the wall, the side of a filing cabinet (instant magnet center), and paper taped to the underside of a table. Students move beyond writing and drawing, using modeling clay, shaving cream, stamps, stickers, magnets, Velcro matching games, and cutting (tape top edge to surface) on vertical surfaces.

The materials include activities designed to increase muscle strength and coordination of the small muscles in the hands. In Theme 1, in the Writer's Corner, teachers provide options for learners to explore multisensory writing experiences that utilize the small muscles in the hands. Teachers encourage students to form letters using modeling clay, trace "Letter Cards" placed under a gel bag, and draw letters in a sand tray. Teachers spray non-menthol shaving cream on a tray and encourage learners to use their pointer and middle-man fingers to write their name in the cream. To extend, teachers challenge students who are ready to also write the names of their friends. The materials include activities that are clearly identified as appropriate tasks to lead children to writing. For example, teachers prepare "Special Delivery" packages or envelopes for students to open in the literacy small group at various times throughout the year. Materials provide templates for teachers to access. Receiving a letter offers students an authentic opportunity to read a message and respond by writing a message back to the sender. The materials also provide suggestions for supporting writing opportunities in multiple learning centers with a variety of tools that develop fine motor skills. For example, the "Writing" center has crayons, chalk, and markers for the students to use to draw/write about themselves. At the "Creativity Station," children use paint and a variety of painting tools to paint pictures.

In Theme 4, students engage with multiple opportunities to develop fine motor skills that lead to writing. For example, students build shapes with "AngLegs," explore with "Cloud" dough in the "Sensory Station," draw letters in colored sand trays and paint with a variety of different-width foam brushes at the Creativity Station, and make playdough impressions with a variety of shaped blocks, trace shapes, write letters in sand trays, build letters with letter-builder manipulatives, and draw pictures on charts in the Writing center. During a math small group lesson, students discuss curved and straight lines with regard to shapes. The teacher then models, and students apply their knowledge of curved and straight lines to make shapes. The math practice center displays the "Shapes" poster; students build shapes using chenille stems and modeling clay. Students display a sample shape on a sheet of tag board and write their name next to it. Also in this theme, at a "Creativity Station" center, students "demonstrate control/strength of small muscles" by drawing pictures in sand. Teachers show students how to erase their work to begin again with a new drawing. Teachers also provide paper, glue, brushes, and colored sand in salt shakers. Students brush glue on their paper and then shake colored sand over the glue to create a picture of a colorful sandstorm. These activities are designed to increase muscle strength and coordination of the small muscle in the hands. In the "Fine Motor" center, students connect to the story of *The Princess and the Pea*; students count pebbles through a sock to determine how many "peas" are inside, using their fingers to feel the number of "peas." The materials provide multiple and varied opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills. In a suggested midweek option for the center, students cut apart "creature builder" cards and interchange the three sections of the creature's body. The materials prescribe a variety of tools and surfaces for student writing experiences. For example, at the Creativity Station, students draw pictures in the sand. The materials also suggest students can explore wide and narrow paintbrushes as well as thick and thin tempera paint in order to see the difference between wide and narrow lines. The materials suggest different forms of sensory materials, including modeling clay, cloud dough, paint with paintbrush varieties, and sand trays to trace shapes, letters, and numbers.

In Theme 9, in the Fine Motor center, students use tweezers and tongs to transfer small objects to a bowl. Objects include magnetic marbles, connecting cubes, and straw pieces. Opportunities during the middle of the week include transferring small objects using other tools, such as a pastry brush or a magnetic wand. Another activity in the Fine Motor center includes materials such as tweezers, rock salt, construction paper, and wiggle eyes. Students use tweezers to move “stars” (rock salt) from a night sky (black construction paper) to a day sky (white construction paper). The instructional materials provide differentiation and guidance on how to develop students’ fine motor skills towards writing. In a midweek suggestion, students compare amongst each other to see how many uppercase letters of the alphabet that they can write in one minute; they repeat the task with lowercase letters. Materials suggest teachers should provide the “Alphabet Arc” as a display for students who need a visual cue of letter shapes. During the “Morning Message,” the teacher uses chart paper to write the message. It is implied that the chart paper is displayed on an easel at the students’ eye level. The materials include chain links, a sand timer or a minute timer, markers, paper, and the Alphabet Arc poster in practice centers. The instructional materials prescribe a variety of tools and surfaces for student writing experiences.

**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 follow a logical mathematical continuum of concrete, pictorial, then abstract representations. The materials provide guidance to begin with concrete experiences that later move to pictorial and finally abstract application of mathematical concepts. An emphasis on using hands-on manipulatives is embedded throughout all lessons centered around math concepts.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” states that materials follow “a developmental progression centered on the same big idea for the week identified by the ‘Focus’ at the beginning of each week’s lessons.” In the guide, the complete scope and sequence demonstrate a developmental progression that begins with attributes and subsequently moves on to more rigorous concepts that build on each foundational step of numeracy and mathematical concepts. In the guide’s “Program Components” section, a page on manipulatives lists connecting cubes, pattern blocks, frog counters, attribute buttons, chain links, AngLegs, bean bags, pocket cubes, and a balance scale. These are all concrete manipulatives to support understanding of math concepts through play. The guide emphasizes that teachers should dedicate time each day to teaching mathematics and integrating math meaningfully in other areas of the curriculum. Focus areas include “Number and Operations” (understanding quantity and numerical relationships), “Geometry” (understanding shape, location, and spatial transformations), and “Measurement” (quantifying and comparing space, length, weight, area, and volume). Mathematical content related to “Algebra” and “Data Analysis” is integrated within the three main content strands noted above. The materials identify the strand of Algebra as “Patterning” and Data Analysis as “Graphing and Classification.”

In Theme 1, during the first week, students freely explore the introduced manipulatives. Teachers use question stems to move the students from simple exploration and play to noticing attributes and supporting emerging sorting skills. Once comfortable with the materials, students sort the materials into bins with pictures to support the concrete and pictorial connection. Throughout the year, the focus is on describing and exploring the attributes of various manipulatives and materials that model mathematical concepts and thinking. In Week 3, students explore attribute buttons. The teacher divides chart paper into four columns: *color*, *shape*, *size*, and *number of holes*. Students sort buttons by physical attribute, with scaffolded support, to create a picture representation of the sorting activity. The focus next is on introducing math manipulatives and noticing and sorting by attribute. Students classify different manipulatives by size, shape, color, and function. Materials support this process through discovery and question stems that extend students' understanding of the concepts. In each lesson, students have opportunities to freely explore before teachers introduce content.

In Theme 2, materials suggest using frog counters as concrete representation when discussing measurable attributes. Students are able to identify and compare size, length, height, and width. The teacher uses the story *The Three Bears* and draws attention to the three sizes of the bowls, chairs, and beds (small, medium, and big). The teacher presents a set of cups to the students; students explain which cup represents each bear and why based on the attributes. Students then receive a set of small, medium, and big frog counters; they sort the counters based on size and describe who is represented by each counter. During "Math" centers, students play a game of "Long or Short:" Students roll a number-dot cube and use links to make a chain representing their number. Students then compare their chain link to their partner's to see which one has more, fewer, or the same number of links. A math small group time focuses on counting quantities up to 5; students sing "Bingo," clapping to spell out each letter of their name. Students are thus able to incorporate movement and music into their learning, learning that each clap represents a letter and that the last count represents *how many*. There is evidence of counting in another math small group activity: Teachers state that remembering all of the counting words to ten and reciting them in order takes practice, effort, and concentration. Students play "Hide and Seek" to practice reciting the counting sequence to ten and review spatial relationships. Teachers select one child to be the hider; other children cover their eyes and rote count to 10. Materials use concrete representation to teach all skill areas for the counting skill. Students can first use their fingers or manipulatives and then work their way up to being comfortable with abstract representation. Materials also include activities that build conceptual understanding of measurement skills. Within the provided "Strategies for Intentional Instruction" for measurement, step two is to identify measurable attributes: "Distinguish between the attributes of size (length, height, width) as well as weight (heavy, light) and capacity (full, empty)." Step three is to directly compare objects using formal language: "This one is longer than (shorter than, heavier than, lighter than)." Materials also teach geometry and spatial sense skills in the "Construction" center.

In Theme 5, teachers encourage students to use square pattern blocks as a "tool" to measure the length of a variety of small objects. Students draw a picture of the measured objects and

write a numeral next to each one to show how many orange pattern blocks long it is. Instruction in all mathematical competencies progresses from concrete to pictorial to abstract, with the greatest emphasis on using concrete manipulatives. The materials include lessons that incorporate a variety of concrete manipulatives, including various pictorial representations of mathematical concepts. For example, the teacher provides each student with a hexagon, triangle, square, trapezoid, and rhombus. Students use three shapes to make a shape. Teachers tell students to study the design closely for five seconds and then cover the design so they can no longer see it. Students use their shapes to recreate the design they remember. During Math centers, students create a frame for a house or for another type of building using precut paper strips. Students discuss which shape would be represented by their frame or roof. Teachers question students about how they could make a triangle using the strips of paper, how many strips would be needed to make a triangle, and what shape the roof of a house would be. Throughout each theme, students are able to build conceptual understanding of various math concepts using manipulatives and more. There is evidence of concrete manipulatives to teach mathematical concepts during the "Creativity Station" center. Students create a city skyline of tall and short buildings by gluing rectangles and square paper shapes to drawing paper and adding triangle rooftops. A midweek option is to use construction paper rectangles or crayons to add windows to the buildings.

The instructional materials provide a variety of types of concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations throughout all themes. Measurement is represented concretely in a math small group activity: Teachers show students boxes holding egg crates from the farm. Students compare the dimensions of the boxes. Teachers ask, "Which is biggest/deepest/widest/tallest/longest? Which box do you think will hold the most 'eggs' (connecting cubes)? Why?" Teachers pair off students, give each pair a box, and instruct students to fill their boxes with connecting cubes. After filling the boxes, pairs count the cubes. The class counts to confirm each box holds the same number of cubes (12). The class discusses differences between their estimates and the actual counts. The teacher supports building students' conceptual understanding of measurement by asking questions such as "Why do you think each box holds the same amount even though they are different sizes?" Later in the unit, students engage in an abstract application of this learning by making predictions about the capacity of various sizes of plastic cups. Filling the cups with manipulatives, students predict which cup will be heavier or if the cups will be the same weight. Teachers place each filled cup on either side of a balance scale to test predictions; they ask, "Which is heavier/lighter? How do you know?" Teachers explain that even though the cups are the same size and equally full, the items inside have different weights. During a math small group activity, students sort and count pattern block shapes. In an activity that builds conceptual understanding of adding to/taking away skills, teachers present the digital book *Counting Fingers and Toes* from ABCMouse. Students count the fingers on both hands of two volunteers and confirm that two children together have 20 fingers. Students match each pattern block to a finger on their hand and confirm that if each partner has exactly 10, there should be 20 altogether. In another activity that builds conceptual understanding of adding to/taking away skills and builds from concrete to abstract understanding, students apply the concept of classifying and sorting in a game of "Copy Cory." In the game, students use a number-dot cube and count to fill sides of a pretend

boat with frog counters. Teachers explain that both sides must have the same number of frogs, or the boat will tip to one side. Teachers reflect with the class, asking, “What do you have to do to the (name of color) side to make it equal to (the same as) the (name of color) side?” During a midweek option, students write a number sentence that matches the operation (add to or take away from) to make one side equal to the other. The instructional materials provide many opportunities for students to receive mathematics instruction using a variety of manipulatives. Throughout all of the themes, materials suggest that teachers use concrete manipulatives when teaching mathematics so that students are able to gain a better understanding of math instruction and concepts.



**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

The materials promote instruction that builds on students' informal knowledge about mathematics by prompting teachers to inquire about students' developmental status and mathematical knowledge. The 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.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Welcome Guide" supports teachers in understanding students' informal mathematical knowledge and offers suggestions for inquiring about a child's developmental status and mathematical development. The Welcome Guide supports the use of play as an informal approach to developing math. The guide explains that there are challenges when teaching mathematics learners from low socio-economic backgrounds; these students come into preschool demonstrating fewer competencies with beginning math skills than their peers from higher socioeconomic means (Arnold & Doctoroff, 2003). This gap, the guide explains, is not attributed to IQ but rather to disadvantages, such as lack of opportunities experienced in poverty (Lee & Burkam, 2002). Students' mathematical learning significantly improves and accelerates when early childhood teachers receive development and coaching to support their implementation of a cohesive, thoughtfully sequenced mathematics curriculum that balances explicit instruction through teacher-guided modeling and child-initiated exploration (Mononon, Aunio, Koponen, & Aro, 2014). The guide suggests following the developmental progressions: First, teaching numbers and operations; then, teaching geometry, patterns, measurement, and data analysis; and using progress monitoring to ensure that math instruction builds on what each child knows. Teachers are to encourage children to view and describe their world

mathematically, dedicate time each day to teaching math, and integrate math instruction throughout the school day. The instructional materials offer daily, explicit math instruction supported by teacher modeling, questioning, and child-led exploration and practice in a small-group setting. By using the small group style, teachers can closely and thoroughly monitor children’s understanding on a more individualized, ongoing basis. Materials offer a weekly “Math” center, which enables teachers to assess children practicing skills that were introduced in group lessons. Each Math center offers one or two reflection questions to help teachers probe children’s emergent understanding and thinking related to each skill and concept. Teachers use the “AIM Developmental Assessment” to document progress and understand children’s mathematical development. The guide provides significant detail to support teacher understanding of informal mathematics development across the mathematics concepts. Lessons include strategy cards to support instruction as well as activities to support incorporating math throughout the day, such as during snack time or lining up.

In Theme 2, teachers encourage students to pair objects with AngLegs to make matches that are about the same length. As learners pair the AngLegs to a matching item, teachers ask, “Is the AngLeg a little bit shorter than, longer than, or exactly the same size as the (name of the object)? How do you know?” The materials include resources that support the teacher in intentionally building children’s math knowledge across different skill areas and systematically building off of what children already know. The materials include guidance to support the teacher in building upon students’ mathematical understanding through prompts and questions. The materials prompt teachers to inquire about students’ developmental status and mathematical knowledge. Students sing “Sing a Song of Math Attributes,” focusing on the first verse that compares the words *big* and *small*. Teachers then present a collection of frog counters. A volunteer selects a big and small frog counter and displays a medium-sized frog counter. Teachers ask students if the frog is small or big. Teachers pair it with a small frog counter and ask the question again; teachers then pair it with a big frog counter and ask the question again. In another activity, teachers refer to the family portrait they drew at the “Creativity Station” in Week 1; this is a connecting cube tower that shows the number of people in their family. Teachers invite children to compare their family tower to the family of two and the family of eleven on page 5 in *Families*. Teachers ask, “Which has fewer? More? Are they the same? How do you know?” The materials include cross-curricular opportunities to authentically integrate mathematics throughout the day. Students extend their learning to create a block family using different block shapes or boxes in the “Construction” center. During a math small group activity, students use the “Pet Graph” cards and stick-on notes to vote for the pet they think would make the best classroom pet, taking into consideration facts they learned about each animal in a book. Materials direct teachers to showcase graphic representations of responses by using a graph. Following the read-aloud of *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins, students explore algebraic representation with an activity connected to the literacy domain. The teacher demonstrates how dividing the cookies kept resulting in fewer cookies for each child. Teachers point out that there are twelve cookies on the plate and discuss that *twelve* represents the number of cookies. Using cubes, the students engage in problem-solving.

In Theme 4, in a set of lessons, the teacher introduces math material, and the students freely explore 3D block manipulatives. By allowing the children to notice and explore the materials on their own, the teacher gives them time to discover their attributes, quantities, and physical qualities. Questioning, such as “Which ones can you stack? Which ones can you roll?” guides students to begin to make comparisons beyond simple physical attributes to include function and purpose and to build off their informal understanding of math. In another lesson, the focus is on comparing and contrasting. In addition to the “Brain Smart Start” time each day (taking attendance and counting the children present), students practice counting during “Music and Movement” time, where they sing songs such as “Dancing Robots.” Students use categorizing skills in a literacy activity, making a picture chart of living and nonliving things. In math, students sort shapes and later use their knowledge of shapes to build a robot during STEAM time. The practice centers allow teachers to embed math concepts throughout the classroom environment. For example, the “Science” center includes sorting mats and cards; the “Sensory” center includes variously shaped cookie cutters; the Math center includes shape posters, pipe cleaners, and modeling clay; math small groups include Anglegs to build shapes; STEAM lessons include a robotic frog, provided with the curriculum, to introduce simple coding; and the Creativity Station includes salt trays to draw shapes. In this theme, students use real objects to build upon informal understanding of mathematical concepts. Students review that the size of an object (small, medium, big) can be determined by comparing it to another object. Teachers display a small and medium-sized frog counter, point to the medium-size frog, and ask, “What size is this frog? (big).” Next, teachers replace the small frog with a large frog and point to the medium-sized frog and ask, “What size is this frog now? (small).” Finally, teachers display an assortment of different-sized books that vary in length, width, and thickness and invite students to find a book that appears big; students identify the dimensions of the book. Students thus make a connection to real-world math concepts with real objects: They explore weight and measurement. At the beginning of each math small group section, the “focus” includes a developmental progression; it builds on concepts in a specific order for students to acquire math understanding. For example, students progress from “Sorting and Describing Two-Dimensional Shapes” to “Sorting and Describing Three-Dimensional Shapes” to “Measuring” to “Sorting by Two Attributes.” Students begin with shape-sorting and build to anchor charts to summarize and analyze their thinking. Materials thus engage children in activities that become more complex as their knowledge increases.

Theme 9 is the last theme in the materials; all of the math manipulatives have been introduced, and the basic concepts have been taught. This theme ties the learning together, which gives an opportunity for the teacher to inquire about the students’ developmental status and mathematical knowledge. This is evident in the slight shift in math concept presentation. Still focused on current understanding, materials are presented in an open-ended fashion, supported with questions to facilitate an extension of current thinking around specific math concepts. For example, the focus of this theme is *analyzing the world mathematically*. The first week looks at the daily schedule to determine what happens before, during, and after a benchmark event. Students sort daily routine pictures into *what is happening now*, *what has already happened*, and *what will happen later*. This transfers to *elapsed time* and compares how long something lasts or how long it will be until something happens. These skills are

foundational to learning to tell time and to navigate a calendar, which are a part of the mathematical world. Open-ended questioning tied to personal connections and experiences continues to be the process to inquire about students' developmental status and mathematical knowledge; students combine all that they have learned and apply it in their world through provided learning center activities. Students build upon their experience with sorting and classifying through graphing: They complete a survey and graph the responses to the question, "Do you have a friend who is in kindergarten this year?" Teachers explain that a graph shows everyone's responses. Students receive a stick-on note and write their name on the note; they then draw a happy face at the top of the note in their answer is *yes* and a sad face if their answer is *no*. Students thus continue making real-world connections in the classroom. The materials provide guidance that supports the use of the classroom environment and materials to explore math concepts and skills; they develop mathematics concepts through real-world connections in the classroom environment.

**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.

## Meets 4/4

The materials intentionally develop young children’s ability to problem solve as laid out in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. The materials develop children’s capacity to ask thoughtful questions, recognize problems in their environment, and use mathematical reasoning with familiar materials in the classroom and world outside the classroom.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Throughout every theme and as part of all lessons related to math instruction in whole group instruction, practice centers, and small group instruction, the materials develop children’s capacity to ask thoughtful questions in content areas such as literacy, science, and STEAM. The materials provide question stems for the teacher to use. Teacher questioning is consistently used as an instructional strategy to extend the students’ thinking and determine their current understanding of concepts and content being introduced in all areas. As is modeled, the children are then encouraged to ask questions to develop a deeper understanding of the instruction, usually in a “Think, Pair, Share” format. Materials give frequent guidance to use this strategy with English Learners, and it is also consistently placed in the literacy or science block of instruction.

In Theme 5, number stories are contextualized around potential real-life events such as picking flowers and finding worms. In the “Construction” center, students create a bathtub big enough for an animal that has been taped out on the floor. Working together, students decide the type and number of building materials needed to meet the challenge. During a read-aloud, students use a recipe and have to count and measure to make playdough. In another math challenge, students create a paper-chain necklace to fit a creature they created in an earlier lesson and explain their strategy. As a part of the morning routine, when the children sign in, it is a recognizable problem that a part of the whole group may be absent. Counting the number of present and absent children and then combining for the entire class population makes for a real-life “problem” in the environment. In another example, students use blocks, rocks, mud,

sticks, grass, and other natural elements to count, manipulate, and build and create shapes. Students use formal manipulatives (e.g., AngLegs, pattern blocks, cubes) and creative materials (e.g., play dough, pipe cleaners, toothpicks) to apply mathematical reasoning as they create new, more complex shapes out of simpler shapes. During a STEAM activity, students explore the roles of architect, engineer, and builder as they design and construct a house using a variety of building materials. Some examples of quality questions to develop children's capacity to use mathematical reasoning and discussion are, "What would happen if you added material to the bottom of your walls?" "Why would it be important to add a roof? Windows? Door?" These questions provoke clarification, extension, and development of new conceptual understanding and vocabulary.

In Theme 7, the focus is on joining and separating quantities, comparing quantities, and part-part-whole relationships. After students listen to a number story about worms, the materials tell teachers to "invite the children to work in pairs using connecting cubes, yarn 'worms,' and drawing material to model or illustrate how the number decreased from 5 to 2." The materials provide guidance for student engagement through thoughtful questions in other content; it is only implied in the math instruction. The instructional materials provide opportunities for students to grow and develop their thinking and questioning in a variety of ways. Through learning centers, students have opportunities to explore and engage with different materials in relation to problems or things in their environment. In the "Language and Literacy" center, after hearing the story *Betty Beetle's Birthday Bash*, students retell the story and sort the guests to determine how many different types of insects came to the party. Teachers ask students, "Which of Betty's guests do you find most interesting and why?" In the "Science" center, students use their nose to follow a trail that is full of scented cards. Obstacles in the trail require them to use their senses to know which way to go. Students make the connection that ants use their antennae to smell and that people use their noses to smell. Teachers ask students, "How did you know which path to follow, and did you make any mistakes?" This activity has a clear real-world connection. Through various opportunities and explorations, teachers guide students and deepen their thinking through intentional questioning that leads students to ask questions on their own. The materials provide opportunities for students to recognize problems in their environment through various activities and lessons. Through centers, math small group lessons, and whole group lessons, students are able to recognize these problems in their environment. During the STEAM center rotation, students design a spider and a spider web that can hold ten "insects." Teachers facilitate a discussion about spiders, their body features, their homes, and their food. Students brainstorm design ideas through questions and responses. Teachers ask open-ended questions, like "How did you decide which kind of spider to create? Why did you choose these colors? Why did you make the choices (materials, placement of supports for attachment, and actual design pattern) for web creation that you did?" Materials thus provide direct instruction and intentional activities that encourage exploration and include open-ended questions. The materials develop students' capacity to use mathematical reasoning with familiar materials in the classroom and world outside of the classroom through various opportunities.

In Theme 9, children use mathematical reasoning with familiar materials in the classroom and world outside of the classroom and learn to ask thoughtful questions. The materials include lessons and activities that encourage curiosity and questioning about informal mathematics, guiding teachers in providing feedback to children's questions. Teachers discuss students' familiarity with the word *minute*, asking, "Have you ever been asked to wait a minute? Did the minute last a long or short amount of time? Why do you think so?" Teachers label three columns on chart paper with the headings "Shorter than a minute," "About a minute," and "Longer than a minute." Students write their names, tie their shoelaces, snap their fingers, sing a song, and use the sand timer to see how long each task takes. Teachers write the name of the task in the appropriate column on the chart. During a math small group activity, students sort and describe objects. Teachers demonstrate how to use letters to label the colors in a four-colored pattern. Students label the pattern core ABCD. Teachers ask guiding questions. When students finish, the teacher points out that the pattern has four different letter names, just as it has four different colors. As a group, the class chants the pattern. Students build their pattern by placing connecting cubes of the same color in the spaces below the letters. Students read their pattern using color words and then letter names. Materials thus suggest activities that build on children's natural curiosity about the world around them and plan opportunities to explore mathematics. During a STEAM activity, students design a temporary shelter that will keep rain out. Teachers present the problem, explaining that they will design and create a temporary shelter that will keep a toy figure dry from the "rain." Teachers facilitate brainstorming, with questions like "How can you make the design large enough and tall enough for the toy figure?" Students explore during centers, while the teacher monitors. Teachers ask the group open-ended questions, such as "Why did you choose those materials?" and "How will you keep your toy figure dry during the 'rain' testing?" These are some of the examples and recommendations materials provide for teachers to model think-alouds that ask thoughtful questions about mathematics.

## 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 build students' number sense. They 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.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Every day, as part of the morning routine, the students "sign in," which indicates who is present and who is absent. The class thus has a daily opportunity to practice counting skills. Additionally, number sense skills and routines are part of explicit math instruction during math small groups; they are also embedded in other areas, such as practice centers and daily routines. A spiraled and recursive approach builds conceptual understanding in math. The materials outline a scope and sequence that builds conceptual understanding of math concepts, starting with exploring attributes; then moving on to counting, sorting, and patterning; then geometry, measurement, and data analysis; then joining, separating, and comparing numbers; and finally connecting math concepts to real-world applications and experiences. Each of the five math units builds on the previous unit; there are frequent, spiraled, and varied opportunities for students to participate in activities that build number sense. The "Welcome Guide" provides a chart titled "Where Mathematics Live in a School Day," which summarizes three contexts in which teachers can incorporate mathematics into the instructional day in a balanced, developmentally appropriate, and child-friendly way. In whole group instruction, teachers build interest in each math topic and make connections to the students' everyday lives; they also demonstrate mathematical thinking that engages students in the new learning. In small group instruction, the teacher builds conceptual knowledge through guided inquiry, practice, and intentional questioning; materials provide differentiation for individual children, accommodating a range of skills and ability levels. In learning centers, there are opportunities to



individually practice for content mastery, extend engagement and interest, and apply and connect mathematics to other domains, such as science and literacy. The materials provide guidance for teachers on building conceptual understanding in math. In the “Songs and Stories” resource, for Theme 1, there is a song called “Sing a Song of Math Attributes.” For Theme 2, there is a song called “Six on the Bed.” For Theme 5, there is a song called “The Numeral Dance.” And for Theme 7, there is a song called “Five Little Ladybugs.” Teachers incorporate these songs during certain weeks of each theme. Materials thus incorporate math into the daily routine by using math songs and activities for transitions. Songs also help engage children in activities when they work in learning centers.

In Theme 2, students have opportunities to participate in various activities that build number sense. In the “Math” center, students play a game from Week 1 called “Long or Short”: They roll a 0–5 cube and make a chain that has that many links on it. Students recognize the number of dots on the cube without counting and identify quantities of up to 5 without counting. Students practice one-to-one correspondence: They place one link on each dot to be sure that the chain has the same number of dots. During this center, the teacher models and describes the strategies that they observe English Learners using to make equivalent sets. The materials allow students to build upon previous mathematical concepts through a developmental progression. The materials also provide many opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts; they are able to build their number sense through a variety of activities. In a math small group activity, the teacher places a set of “Counting Cards” from 1 to 10, in random order, face-up on the floor. Students stand, hold hands, and move around the card display, pretending to fly, to get a bird’s eye view of the quantities (students can make the connection to flying with Rosalba in the story *Abuela*). As students move around, teachers challenge them to take a mental picture of the number of objects they see on each card; teachers ask, “Are there any cards that you think are easy to tell how many without counting?” A volunteer “flies down,” finds one of the cards, and tells how many are on that card. This is an example of the opportunities and activities that build number sense in specific skills within the materials. During another math small group activity, students learn the song “Hey, Little Froggie.” Teachers remind students to concentrate on rote counting as they sing and tap once for each number spoken. Students repeat the song with different quantities and learn that the last number they say tells them how many were in that count. This is an example of the frequent practice students have to count objects in playful, meaningful, and authentic ways within the materials’ small group lessons.

In Theme 5, the materials guide the teacher to use the skills taught in the prior theme: identifying the two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and building new shapes from other shapes. This process of combining to create a new product is the introductory and precursory instructional opportunity for the next unit on joining and separating. The math focus next is on classifying shapes, measuring with non-standard units, making shapes, and building sets of 10. However, students have frequent, spiraled, and varied opportunities to practice previously introduced math concepts in independent and recursive settings throughout the learning environment. For example, they use orange pattern blocks to create their own ruler and count the squares using counting one-to-one and counting on. In the “Fine Motor” center,

students cut strips, create a paper chain, and count the links, revisiting the math concept of comparing set size and numbers covered in the previous unit. When students measure their shoes with cubes, pointing to each cube as they make a tally point, they use counting one-to-one and representing numbers with pictures, which they learned in Themes 2 and 4. Throughout every theme and as part of all lessons related to math instruction in whole group instruction, practice centers, and small group instruction, the materials provide frequent, spiraled, and varied opportunities for students to participate in activities that build number sense. During a math small group activity, teachers divide the group into two teams and give each team a “lake,” which is a sheet of blue construction paper. One team receives cotton balls, and the other team receives paperclips. Each team measures the widest part of their lake, using either cotton balls or paperclips; each team member counts and measures to verify the others’ measurements. During the next day’s lesson, students record the results using stick-on notes for comparison. Teachers ask, “Why were the counts different? Why did we use fewer paperclips than cotton balls?” Students compare the size of a paperclip to that of a cotton ball. Teachers ask, “Which is longer? How does the size of the unit affect how many?” Teachers point out that the larger the unit, the fewer are needed to measure; the smaller the unit, the more are needed to measure. Students thus compare the size of sets and apply number knowledge to the sets.

In Theme 7, the teacher begins with a concrete approach to number operations. The teacher tells a story about insects in the grass, and the students act it out. Building on prior learning objectives, students use one-to-one correspondence for each set; they use visual props such as colored papers to identify different sets and then combine and recount them. This scaffolded and conceptual learning continues as the students use a flower mat to create a picture of a number story. Teachers reinforce counting one at a time and counting each set independently before combining and recounting. All of the recursive understanding and concrete experiences precede the introduction of the  $+$  and  $=$  symbols. In another lesson, the math focus is on joining, separating, and comparing quantities. To establish the idea of two sets becoming one, students create visual models of number stories; they use cubes to compare lengths, establishing whether they are equal, greater, or less than each other. Measurement was a focus in Theme 5 and is now used to visualize that the set increases when another set is joined with it. This approach connects prior learning to current instruction and reinforces foundational understanding. Also in this theme, materials revisit other recursive math skills in practice centers, including throwing balls and counting them in the “Gross Motor” center; rolling a number die and putting a clothespin on the number it landed on using a number line; and singing counting songs such as “Two Little Ladybugs” during the “Brain Smart Start Greeting Circle.” During a math small group activity, students use the “Insect Number Story” work mat to retell a number story from Day 2; connecting cube “insects” model the story events. At the beginning of the story, four insects (cubes) sit on the flower. In the middle, two more insects (cubes) crawl up the stem. At the end, six insects (cubes) sit on the flower. Students make a connecting cube tower to model the number of insects on the first card (beginning) and the last card (end). Teachers ask, “How many insects started out on the flower? How many ended up on the flower?” This is evidence of the frequent opportunities students have to model story problems with manipulatives, reinforcing the concept of making a collection larger by adding one more. During another math small group, students spill counters and record the

combinations on 3x5 cards. Groups track repeated combinations by adding clothespins to the existing cards. Teachers ask, "Are there other combinations we have not found?" and may model any combinations that are not represented. Teachers ask, for example, "If all five counters land on red, how many yellow would there be?" Teachers confirm that in such a situation, there would be 5 red and 0 yellow. Teachers record all "Combinations of 5" on chart paper. Students thus subitize small quantities to explicitly reinforce the link between counting and subitizing, supporting the skill of counting. The materials also provide teacher guidance on building conceptual understanding in math in the following instructional settings: whole group, small group, and practice centers focused on mathematical content.

**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 provide opportunities to develop students' academic math vocabulary. Students have multiple opportunities to hear and use vocabulary in various settings across the themes. The materials also provide guidance to support and scaffold the development and use of vocabulary; there is guidance for students who struggle with vocabulary and opportunities for enrichment for those who are mastering the use and understanding of the vocabulary.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Throughout every theme and as part of all lessons related to math instruction in whole group instruction, practice centers, and small group instruction, students have repeated opportunities to hear and practice math vocabulary. The "Songs and Stories" resource for Theme 1, contains a song called "Sing a Song of Math Attributes." For Theme 2, there is a song called "Six on the Bed." For Theme 5, there is a song called "The Numeral Dance." For Theme 7, there is a song called "Five Little Ladybugs." Materials incorporate these songs during certain weeks of each theme; they provide students with repeated playful opportunities to hear and practice math vocabulary.

In Theme 2, teachers use content-related vocabulary through the literature, songs, questioning, and hands-on experiences included in the lessons. For example, in a small group math lesson on attributes, teachers use the traditional story *The Three Bears* to introduce the new vocabulary *small, big, long, short, tall, height, and width*. Materials embed the vocabulary within the suggested post-story discussion questions; for example, the teacher asks, "Who is taller/shorter?" as students explore story props. Students use the vocabulary to compare the characters and their chairs, bowls, and beds. Students also learn "The Attribute Song," which uses the vocabulary words: "This is big. This is small. This is big. This is small. This is big. This is small." The materials thus guide the teacher to introduce, scaffold, and support the students' development and use of academic math vocabulary through literature. The materials include other math-related, age-appropriate text choices, such as *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins.

This book is about a mother who bakes a dozen cookies for her two children. The doorbell rings, and the two children must share (divide) the cookies with friends. Each time the doorbell rings, more friends arrive, and the cookies must be shared (divided) again. Materials incorporate math into the daily routine, using math songs such as “The Numeral Dance.” The teacher gives each student a numeral necklace and invites them to create a signature move. “Counting to 9 has never been more fun!” “Can you shimmy numeral nine?” “You are lookin’ mighty fine.” Throughout every theme and as part of all lessons related to math instruction (in whole groups, practice centers, and small groups), the materials provide guidance on how to support the students’ development and use of math vocabulary. In a whole group STEAM lesson, teachers use math vocabulary to build a house that will fit their selected stuffed animal. Practice centers extend the students’ learning; students explore attributes using toys, manipulatives, and lesson-supported materials. For example, the “Construction” center challenges students to create structures and use math vocabulary to describe and compare their structures; students also create a block family out of block shapes or boxes. In the “Math” center, students take turns rolling a number-dot cube and then make that many “cookies” with playdough. The materials identify key vocabulary to introduce during whole group and small group instruction, in both English and Spanish.

In Theme 6, teachers use content-related vocabulary through the songs, questioning, and hands-on experiences included in the lessons. One math focus in this theme is rote counting to 30. Materials identify key vocabulary in both English and Spanish; vocabulary includes *digit*, *rote count*, *numeral*, *decade*, and *pattern*. The teacher uses the vocabulary with “The Numeral Dance.” The teacher displays a counting chart that shows the number pattern found in the teens-twenties and asks, “What stays the same? What changes? Is there a pattern?” The teacher introduces the “1–30 Counting Board” and explains that when a counter reaches the end of a *decade*, it must be moved to the next row of numerals. In a whole group “Closing Circle,” the teacher asks, “What number comes after twenty? If the pattern repeats, what number do you say after thirty?” Students work with counters and manipulatives to practice rote counting to 30. Students answer question prompts to indicate how to count, whether they recognize a pattern, and what to do when they come to the end of a decade when counting. In the Construction center, students receive cars with numbers and find the parking place with the corresponding number. Reflection questions encourage students to explain how they were able to locate matching parking spots and how they counted the objects. The materials provide repeated opportunities to use math vocabulary in the following instructional settings: whole group, small group, and practice centers focused on mathematical content. Another math focus is on using location words to describe where something can be found. Students use manipulatives in a small group lesson setting. Provided differentiated instructional supports scaffold their vocabulary development. The teacher guides students that struggle with vocabulary to use gestures, such as “pointing up, down, left, right,” to help children visualize the location words taught in the lesson. Students who are ready for a challenge can use location words to give directions to a partner; the partner then follows the directions. This activity supports the use of vocabulary and provides a scaffolded approach for varying levels of understanding and use. The materials include recommendations for purposefully talking about

mathematics using math vocabulary. The materials also provide guidance for identifying math vocabulary in stories read aloud or songs and texts that are math-related.

In Theme 9, teachers use songs and literature, such as “I Measure Myself,” “When I Was One,” and “Tiny Things” to reinforce math concepts and vocabulary. After the read-aloud *The Waiting Game*, students note the difference in size between two small hands. Students look for tiny things throughout the story; they also note and explain a sequence of events after birth, using math vocabulary such as *before*, *after*, *long*, and *short*. Students have opportunities for continuous interaction with and exposure to math vocabulary; they have many opportunities to practice using math vocabulary through various activities and lessons. During small group math instruction, students measure time and compare the duration of events to a common unit, such as “longer than a minute” or “shorter than a minute.” Students discuss the time words *hour*, *day*, *week*, and *month*. Students explore an analog clock and a ruler, describing the features that they see on the tools. Teachers point out the hash marks and numerals 1–12 that go around the clock as opposed to the numerals that go straight across on a ruler. Students use the math vocabulary words *clock*, *long*, and *short* during small group instruction. In another small group math activity, students work on sharing eight cookies, focusing on *equal groups* (a vocabulary term taught during the lesson). After students explore and figure out how to equally share the cookies so that two or four frogs get the same amount, they draw a picture that shows their solution and explain how they did it. In another activity, each student chooses one “Arrangements of 6” card and creates the design by filling the puzzle shape with connecting cubes. Teachers challenge students to use positional and numeral vocabulary to describe the parts of the design (e.g., there are four cubes on the bottom and two on the top). Materials contain guidance on how to scaffold and support students’ development and use of academic math vocabulary in small group instruction, whole group instruction, and learning centers.

**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 build science knowledge through inquiry-based instruction and exploration of the natural world through questioning and discussion, hands-on lessons, and the opportunity to work with scientific tools.

Materials develop children’s observation and questioning of their environment.

In Theme 3, in the “Science” center, students use their sense of smell to match aroma canisters that have the same scent. Students must use their senses and inquiry skills to investigate and identify scents. Midweek, teachers change the aroma in the canisters to allow students to explore and discover other scents and match them. Students connect their inquiry and discoveries to a book read in the classroom; in the book, a dog goes on an adventure following a hotdog scent. The instructional materials develop children’s ability to communicate ideas through a variety of experiences. During a “Sensory” center, students explore making ripples, drops, and streams using simple tools: a tub of water, ripple-making tools (eye droppers, basters, pipettes), and lightweight objects (ping-pong balls, connecting cubes, buttons). The teacher fills a tub with water and uses an eyedropper or baster to drip drops of water into the tub. The teacher points out that the ripples start close to where the droplet hits the water and then move outward in circles. The class connects this to kindness and its ripple effect. This is an authentic and meaningful opportunity for children to explore the environment using scientific tools. The instructional materials provide opportunities for students to explore physical science, life science, and earth and space science through hands-on experiences. In the STEAM portion of a lesson, students use engineering and process skills to solve problems. In this lesson, students design a game using a ball and a cup, either by themselves, with a group, or with a partner. Students brainstorm ideas on how to create a game using the provided materials, discuss the problems associated with the task, explore, and analyze their findings. The teacher guides them with questions, such as “If you are using yarn or string with a ball, how will you

attach the ball?” or “How could you use two cups with one ball?” Once the game is created, students share their discoveries with the class. The instructional materials develop children’s ability to communicate ideas through a variety of experiences throughout all themes.

In Theme 4, during an outdoor activity, the students use “living and nonliving” cards that have pictures and words. Students hunt for and collect items that represent examples of living and nonliving items such as twigs, pebbles, flowers, and insects. Students use scientific tools such as magnifying glasses, tablets, and journals. For example, if the item is too large or living and can not be picked up, students draw a picture in their journal. The materials include opportunities for students to develop observational and questioning skills in their environment. After learning about the characteristics of living and nonliving things, students discuss and classify pictures of living and nonliving things in a chart with their peers. In the “Literacy” center, students look through a collection of books about living and nonliving things, select an image, and tell their partner if it is living or nonliving. Materials guide teachers to challenge students to explain how they know if it is living or nonliving. The materials provide opportunities for students to communicate ideas related to science content. In another activity in Theme 4, students interact with their environment while developing their ability to communicate and ask questions about science. They lie on different surfaces outside (grass, concrete, wood chips, or rocks), and the teacher prompts them to communicate using science vocabulary, asking, “Is it hard or soft?” “Is it cool, warm, soft, or hard?” “Is it smooth or bumpy?” Students have another opportunity to use scientific tools in this theme when they compare properties of objects using magnets and the balance scale. Additionally, in the Sensory center, they use eye droppers, basters, funnels, bowls, bottles, and cups to explore the properties of water.

In Theme 9, in the Science center, students place water beads in a bowl; using an eyedropper, they add water to the bowl and observe how the beads grow and change. Students then place the bowl on the windowsill to observe what happens with the addition of sunlight. Teachers also give students blue and yellow playdough balls that are the same size; students explore them and put them together to create a new color. Teachers ask questions during these explorations to extend students’ thinking. The materials specifically include opportunities for students to engage in experiences that include observing and asking questions; planning and carrying out investigations; obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information; and a number of other meaningful experiences. In the STEAM portion of the lesson, students think creatively and use engineering and process skills to solve problems. For example, students design and create a colorful noise-making toy for a baby, using materials in the classroom in their toy design. As students brainstorm ideas, teachers talk through their ideas with them and pose questions. After students have had the opportunity to explore and create, they share their creations with the group. When sharing, students can also discuss the similarities and differences of the toys that were created. In a Science center, students use an eyedropper to experiment with a “cloud” in a jar: They drop food coloring into a jar of water to make “rain:” shaving cream acts as the “cloud.” The instructional materials include exploration with scientific tools throughout the presented themes. During a read-aloud of *Nature’s Giants*, students discuss ecosystems. Students name living and nonliving things in the book and in their homes. Teachers discuss examples of ecosystems. At the end of the week, students build a terrarium.



They add small plants, pebbles, water, and a lid and place it in direct sunlight to see it grow over time. The instructional materials thus provide opportunities for students to explore physical science, life science, and earth and space science through hands-on experiences.

## 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 build social studies knowledge through study of culture and community. Materials follow a logical sequence, beginning with self and moving to family, and then to community. Materials provide opportunities for students to learn about the similarities and differences among people; learn about routines and events, both past, present, and future; and explore the roles of consumers in their community.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials follow a logical sequence of social studies, beginning with self and moving to family, community, city, state, and country. Theme 1 focuses on “My School and Me,” Theme 2 focuses on “Family and Friends,” and Theme 3 focuses on community workers. The materials provide opportunities for children to explore and identify how people and families are alike and different, using positive, friendly language. Teachers discuss the concept of friends and friendship; they discuss that friends can be family members, including pets, classmates, or neighbors; friends can also be older or younger. Teachers display the vocabulary card for *loyal* and explain that friends are loyal, which means to keep promises, be faithful, and do what you say. Throughout every theme and as part of all lessons related to social studies instruction, in whole group instruction, small group instruction, and practice centers, students have opportunities to explore commonalities and differences in individuals. The “Welcome Guide” explains that the materials are culturally responsive, meeting the needs of diverse classrooms. The guide suggests filling classrooms with literature, images, and materials that “mirror and window” students and their families; students should see themselves and their families

reflected in the classroom, and the environment should also provide windows to people and experiences that are not in the students' own family and classroom.

In Theme 2, during the read-aloud *Families*, the teacher pauses on pages 12–13 and discusses some of the foods being described. The teacher points out that in the United States, families eat rice in many ways: in soups, with gravy, and in puddings. The teacher asks, “What food does your family enjoy eating?” A “Cultural Responsiveness” tip suggests to “invite children’s parents to bring food representative of their family’s home country.” The teacher places students’ photos near the country they come from on the world map. In the “Pretend and Learn” center, students explore the roles of consumers in their community. Students pretend that they are running a pet grooming business and experience how goods and services work. Teachers encourage students to reflect on and describe how they are caring for the animals. During a read-aloud of *Pets Are Family*, students discuss how animals are cared for by a pet doctor (veterinarian) and how people bring their animals to them to be treated and taken care of. Also in this theme, students talk about the jobs their family members do when they go to work and the jobs they do at home (cook, clean, do laundry, garden). The teacher reminds students of the groups that make up a school family. The teacher asks, “What jobs does our School Family do here in the classroom?” The teacher reminds students that family members are people who love each other and take care of each other and that doing class jobs is one way we take care of our school family members; this supports learning about roles and responsibilities at home.

In Theme 3, students explore three types of kindness: “to give, help, and pay attention.” Students discuss the “ripple effect” kindness has on others and the community. In the Pretend and Learn center, students can explore the roles of consumers in the community. With materials such as envelopes, stamp stickers, and other props, students run a post office, a doctor’s office, a hair salon, a pet store, and a grocery store. Engaging in these community jobs allows students to see how goods and services work. In another community-focused opportunity, after listening to a read-aloud about community workers, students draw a community worker they would like to be. Teachers display the “Photo Cards” for visual reference and, if possible, provide pictures of students’ family members at community worker jobs. Teachers facilitate a community worker reflection activity; students discuss their drawings and write thank-you notes to community workers. These opportunities allow students to identify community helpers and their roles in the community. During another Pretend and Learn center, students compare and contrast. The teacher invites students to explore a variety of costumes, including make-believe characters and characters that represent real-life people. The class discusses, “Which costume did you choose to be a make-believe character? How is your character the same as you? How is your character different from you?” Instructional material thus accepts and embraces differences in the classroom and helps students accept the diversity in the classroom. In the “Language and Literacy” center, students sequence the cards in the “Handwashing Card Set.” They refer to the “How to Wash Your Hands” poster to check their work, connecting to past lessons.

In Theme 9, in the Language and Literacy center, in a lesson on life stages, students explore similarities and differences between individuals. The teacher facilitates a discussion about the current life stages of the class and then extends the discussion to consider family members at home. Visual life cycle cards are used to show how things grow and change, allowing students

to compare and contrast with other life cycles. This lesson connects students to the idea of past, present, and future. Also in this theme, students categorize parts of the day by what happens before, during, or after a benchmark event. Students compare the duration of everyday events to a common unit, such as longer or shorter than a minute, and discuss other time words (*hour, day, week, month*). Students connect their daily life to events, time, and routines. In a lesson focused on the community, students explore their role as consumers. Teachers display the word *change* and explain that some words have more than one meaning; change describes money received back when making a purchase or a collection of coins, and it also describes the ways we can impact and change our environment. The materials provide suggestions for dramatic play experiences that replicate community experiences. In an effort to reduce consumerism, teachers facilitate a conversation about passing down items to siblings or friends once they have outgrown the item. Students discuss donating items no longer needed and how reusing instead of throwing away can protect our communities. Teachers encourage students to name, draw, and write about one thing they have given away.

**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 expose children to fine arts through exploration. They include a variety of daily experiences through multiple mediums and emphasize the students' engagement in the process of creating rather than the product that is created.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Throughout every theme and as part of all lessons related to fine arts, in whole group instruction, small group instruction, and practice centers, the materials include opportunities for daily experiences through dance, music, dramatic play, painting, sculpture, drawing, and movement. The "Songs and Stories" guide contains songs, and the *Frog Street Portal* has a digital library of songs and music. Music is connected to the content and embedded in the lessons throughout the day. Music and movement experiences are also used to transition from one activity to another and to offer breaks between lessons. Most songs have movements that accompany the lyrics.

Theme 1 introduces 28 songs that include opportunities to sing, dance, and move. Some of the titles are "The Alphabet Song," "The More We Get Together," "This Ol' Skin," "I Like Me," and "Body Bop." Also in this theme, students use play dough to make their names; use "Muscle Movement Cards" with beanbags; fingerpaint; and play with sand at the "Sensory Table." Students use different artistic mediums, including playdough, paint, scissors, crayons, markers, and chalk, for the sole purpose of exploration and without any expectation of a product. The materials thus include opportunities for students to engage in the process of creating rather than focus solely on the product that is created.

Theme 5 contains 23 songs that include opportunities to sing, dance, and move. Some of the titles are "Herman the Worm," "Jazzy Shapes," "Late Last Night," "Rainbow Dancers," and "This Little Pig." This theme focuses on creativity. Students build houses with shapes, play with playdough, cut with scissors, paint, build with straws, and use stencils. Students engage in a

variety of daily experiences through multiple mediums in whole group instruction, small group instruction, and practice centers focused on fine arts content. In the “Creativity Station” center, students use tempera paint, paintbrushes, easel paper, and crayons to paint a picture of what they think a place called “CandyLand” would look like. The teacher asks, “What things might be made of candy? What types of candy might be there?” After the read-aloud “CandyLand Journey,” the teacher invites students to draw or paint their new ideas. On several occasions, in Week 4, students create dot pictures with pencils and stamp pads. They arrange dots into a design of choice, practicing spatial reasoning. Students also use clay to create a picture and learn vocabulary such as *pinch*, *squeeze*, *poke*, *push*, *pull*, and *roll*; use puppets to create stories; and dance with rainbow streamers to the song “Rainbow Dancers.” These opportunities allow children to explore art as an activity. At another Creativity Station, students paint a picture of their family participating in a favorite sport or activity. Teachers celebrate their ideas and creations. The materials emphasize the students’ engagement in the process of creating rather than the product that is created. Students explore self-expression; for instance, they do so when participating in dance activities. The materials provide suggestions for smooth transitions from one activity to another; this is another opportunity for students to move through dance. For example, teachers can use music as a cue to move to another activity. The teacher may say, “When I start the music, dance over to your next activity and be in place when the music stops.”

In Theme 7, in the “Gross Motor” center, students lie on the floor face down and wiggle like worms. The teacher uses masking tape to create a start and finish line and challenges students to wiggle from one line to the next. The teacher reminds students that since worms have no arms or legs, they also cannot use their arms or legs. The students reflect on the question, “Why was it hard to move?” This opportunity allows for dramatic play. At a “Creativity Station,” students create crazy critter hats. The teacher challenges students to think outside of the box and use their imagination to decorate their headbands. The teacher points out that their critter may have more than two eyes and antennae, that it may have a square head or an oval head, or that it may have a long tongue or no mouth at all. This opportunity allows students to draw as a way to express their personal experiences, thoughts, and ideas.

## 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 include technology applications. Materials provide opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience and 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.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials provide opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience. Throughout every theme and as part of all lessons related to technology instruction, in small group instruction, practice centers, and home/family connections, materials link technology into the classroom experience. The *Frog Street Portal* gives access to digital resources such as books, songs, and parent connections. *ABCmouse* is a web-based app that has digital activities connected to literacy, math, and thematic lessons.

In Theme 2, materials introduce “Frog-E,” the programmable robot that helps children develop basic coding skills. Frog-E supports and enhances student learning, does not distract from it, and includes appropriate teacher guidance. Students explore with Frog-E for one week every theme. Students also access technology in Theme 2 to gather information about pets and for counting from 1 to 5. In another technology experience, the teacher demonstrates and explains how to open and navigate *ABCmouse* programs. Teachers and students also snap digital photos to document the design and construction of “favorite comfy chairs,” including a final shot of a stuffed animal sitting in the student-designed chair. Teachers use the photos to create a digital design timeline for a STEAM bulletin board.

In Theme 6, materials link technology into the classroom experience. During a “Math” center, the mid-week option is to have learners practice tracing numerals using the *ABCmouse* game “Traceable Numbers.” The game displays numerals on a number line; students select the numeral they want to trace. Students also use *ABCmouse* to learn about bar graphs. In the

“Technology” center, students read the “Letter Books” (for A, B, and C) and watch “Letter Videos” (for A, B, and C). These activities support the “Morning Message” activities, where students identify beginning letters and sounds. They also support the math lessons, where the focus is on number recognition. These resources are designed for young children, with a focus on vocabulary development and clear concepts. Throughout every theme and as part of all lessons related to technology instruction, in small group instruction, practice centers, and home/family connections, the materials use technology as a support; it enhances learning as appropriate. Digital stories, such as “How Do We Get There?” are used to guide discussions around a theme and are then provided to the families to connect learning at home and at school. Students thus explore and use various digital tools; students use individual devices for access. *Frog Street Portal* provides access to songs such as “Are We There Yet?” and “The Wheels on the Bus.”

In Theme 8, in the Technology center, students read the Letter Books for H, N, L, and U and watch the Letter Videos for H, N, L, and U. Once more, these activities support the Morning Messages, where students identify beginning letters and sounds. The *ABCmouse* activity is “Counting Fingers and Toes.” In the STEAM lessons, learners utilize Frog-E, the codable robotic frog, and code a path for him to find the fish. Students also use technology in learning centers. This theme is about animals, and it contains four digital books to guide discussion: *I Am A Mammal* (Week 1), *The Lizards in the Window* (Week 2), *Victor the Sea Turtle* (Week 3), and *Petie’s First Flight* (Week 4). Students have access to these books at home; they are able to connect their learning at home and at school when reading with their families. The available books are listed in the Teacher Guides at the beginning of each week. The materials’ use of technology supports and enhances student learning as appropriate, as opposed to distracting from it; technology includes appropriate teacher guidance.



**9.1** Materials include developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools (e.g. formative and summative progress monitoring) and 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.

## Meets 2/2

The materials include developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools (e.g., formative and summative progress monitoring) and guidance for teachers and students to monitor progress. They include a variety of diagnostic tools that are developmentally appropriate. There is guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration of diagnostic tools. Materials include diagnostic tools to measure all content and process skills for prekindergarten.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Welcome Guide” provides information about the various tools that are used as informal and formal assessments. The materials have readily available assessment suggestions and protocols embedded within the teacher guides and lesson plans. Formative and summative assessments are embedded within the teacher guides and throughout all themes as a “point-of-use” approach; they are identified at the bottom of the weekly planning guide as “AIM Assessment Opportunities.” The “AIM Criterion Referenced Assessment” is a formal assessment that is designed to be administered to one student at a time; it is also available on an online platform. This assessment measures 32 indicators of prekindergarten skills found in the 10 domains of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. This assessment is given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. It is administered outside of instruction, so, unlike the “AIM Observational Assessment,” it is not embedded in the themes. The AIM Observational Assessment is an informal online tool that measures 60 “Learning Progressions” that support kindergarten readiness competencies across the following domains: “Social Foundation,” “Language and Literacy,” “Cognition,” and “Gross Motor and Perceptual.” The observational

assessment provides information gathering through checklists, photos, work samples, documented conversations, observation, and audio/video recording.

Materials embed carefully paced opportunities for observational assessment within instruction to ensure ongoing progress monitoring occurs in a natural setting without disrupting children's engagement in the learning process. The "Welcome Guide" supports ongoing and flexible administration, stating, "Regardless of how extensively users choose to use AIM Observational, its 60 Learning Progressions are integrated and referenced throughout the Teacher Guides." The "Getting Started" section of the "Teacher Guide" for each weekly theme provides an outline of the Progressions addressed each week. For example, In Theme 2, in the "Language and Literacy AIM Assessment" opportunity, materials guide teachers to select 4–5 students each day to observe in relation to "Speaking/Purposes and Situations" in the "Pretend and Learn" center. Teachers model how to perform household chores, and students are encouraged to practice being a contributing member of a family. In Theme 5, in the "Physical" domain, teachers are guided to observe how children raise and lower their hand during "Read Aloud #2," *Mighty, Mighty Construction Site*. In Theme 8, in the "Social and Emotional Development" domain, teachers focus on how children plan and organize their projects during the STEAM center, where students work in small groups to build one home for the model bear.

Teachers use the documentation in order to guide classroom instruction. Materials state: "Creating and maintaining individual portfolios for children is a critical and fundamental step in establishing a system for keeping up with ongoing assessment." While the materials do not specifically address students tracking their own progress and growth, portfolios are used to facilitate those conversations, and the materials provide extensive guidance for setting up portfolios for the students. This approach allows assessment and documentation to provide insight into children's developmental growth and change over time. Portfolios can be either digital or within a physical container where documentation is stored, analyzed, and updated on a regular basis. Teachers should commit to gathering evidence in four-, six-, or nine-week intervals. By creating a timeline, teachers establish an advanced framework for looking at children's work in sequence over a period of time. Within the portfolios, teachers gather work samples, anecdotal records, interviews between the child and teachers, and photographs or videos of projects.

**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.

## Meets 2/2

The 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.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials support teachers with guidance and direction to respond to individual students' needs in all domains based on measurement of student progress appropriate to the developmental level. The materials guide the teacher to create individual goals for the children using the data from both formal and informal assessments to target specific instructional domains. Data from assessment can be used to determine a need for intervention and support services and to communicate progress with parents. Recommendations within the lesson include to perform natural observation-based assessments and to respond based on the student's developmental level. For example, in Theme 4, the materials guide the teacher to assess the students' ability to identify, compare, and measure during small group math lessons by recording their learning with video. The students engage in an activity to compare using nonstandard units of measurement. The teacher asks provided guiding questions: "Which is taller? How do you know? Was the measurement fair? Why or why not?" Based on observed student responses, the teacher can record anecdotal notes and select lessons to support the

next “Learning Progression.”

Teachers can yield meaningful information to use when planning instruction and differentiation by using a criterion-referenced test that measures 32 indicators of prekindergarten knowledge and skills within 10 developmental domains: “Language and Communication,” “Emergent Literacy: Reading,” “Emergent Literacy: Writing,” “Mathematics,” “Social and Emotional Development,” “Science,” “Social Studies,” “Health Knowledge,” “Fine Arts,” and “Physical Development.” In addition, the “AIM Birth to 5 Observational Assessment” and progress monitoring tools include 16 checklists that measure 60 Learning Progressions over the course of the school year. These assessments are color-coded by the domain they represent: “Social Foundations” (blue), “Language and Literacy” (yellow), “Cognition” (red), and “Perceptual Physical Motor” (green), providing reports that are easy to interpret for instructional purposes. To design grouped instruction and intervention, teachers can use the differentiated scale, which identifies levels of progress toward mastery: 1) emerging, 2) progressing, and 3) ready. Using these levels to support appropriate student grouping, to design appropriately scaffolded instruction for the identified developmental levels, teachers can use the supplemental resource “Differentiating Instruction: Guiding Children along a Continuum of Learning to Meet Individual Needs.”

The materials also include opportunities for authentic, meaningful assessment within a centers-based environment in which skills are nurtured and easily observable. Teachers “plan and provide effective instruction and articulate clear learning targets for every child” and identify needs for interventions and support. For example, in Theme 4, during the “Writer’s Corner,” following guidance, as the children draw pictures of “fast and slow” objects on a prepared T-chart, the teacher observes and notes the students’ ability to properly grasp the writing instrument with a tripod grasp.

The “AIM Observational Assessment” is available as a component of the program curriculum. However, the full implementation, which includes the online platform that can be used for data disaggregation and reporting, is an optional resource available for purchase by the district. This tool does give administrators the guidance to support teachers in analyzing and responding to data, but only if the LEA decides to purchase the additional option.

### 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.

## Meets 2/2

The materials include frequent, integrated opportunities for routine and systematic progress monitoring that accurately measures and tracks student progress. The frequency of progress monitoring is appropriate for the age and content skill.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The instructional materials provide guidance for teachers on how and when to assess students in order to gain information about their progress. The “AIM Observational Assessment” is ongoing and takes place in a natural setting throughout instruction. As students interact daily, teachers are guided to take notes of learners’ interactions, conversations, and abilities to do certain skills. Materials guide teachers to make observations at regular intervals over time and focus on change, growth, and success from a developmental perspective. Teachers are able to gather information about students, and students do not have to feel or know that they are being informally assessed. Using the AIM Observational Assessment checklists, materials guide teachers to include routine and systematic progress monitoring checks to measure and track student progress. The materials guide the teachers to build systems for tracking progress.

The instructional materials provide guidance for teachers on how to progress monitor for various skills and content areas. They guide teachers to use the developmental progressions in content areas connected to the Prekindergarten Guidelines. Checklists for each domain are available for each nine-week grading period. Materials state: “Each checklist includes a column for writing children’s names and additional columns for placing a checkmark or point value to indicate progress or mastery of a specified skill.” These are available in paper and digital formats for the teacher.

Throughout all themes, icons outline the recommended form of documentation for the progression; they support implementation of observational assessment within instruction as an ongoing process that occurs in a natural setting without disrupting students. For example, in Theme 1, materials guide the teacher to observe students following directions and to record

anecdotal notes on students' demonstration of self-control for the targeted "Social and Emotional Development" domain. For "Language and Literacy," the teacher records conversations about word meanings in small groups, gathers data on the students' knowledge of concepts of print, and collects word samples of a name-writing task. For physical development, materials guide the teacher to video record the children as they demonstrate locomotor skills during a "Gross Motor" center and to observe their perceptual and spatial awareness as they participate in an outdoor activity that involves tossing materials to each other. These observations, work samples, anecdotal notes, photos, and videos can be incorporated into a work portfolio. Building on the portfolio, it is recommended that teachers and students add voice recordings as a way to capture students' language development, skills, and thought patterns. The materials encourage teachers to find a system that works for them by providing numerous suggestions. Another suggestion includes a file box where anecdotal notes are recorded and filed on index cards. Teachers can also use peel-off labels on a clipboard. Teachers carry the clipboard through the day, writing anecdotal notes on the labels. At the end of the day, teachers peel off the labels and stick them to a sheet inside each child's portfolio.

The "AIM Criterion Referenced Assessment" occurs at three distinct checkpoints within the preschool year (beginning, middle, and end) and is administered to each child individually outside of a learning context. Unlike the AIM Observational tool, the AIM Criterion Referenced Assessment is not embedded at point of use in the curriculum because it is administered outside of instruction. While administering each test, the teacher follows a standardized set of protocols and scripts that are read to the student. The student sits in front of a computer screen or interacts with a set of manipulatives while responding to the teacher or performing a specified task to show a level of attainment in relation to the content and skill assessed. Because this assessment is administered one on one and can be delivered in flexible settings and over time, this frequency does not interfere with classroom instruction significantly and is appropriate to the learning style and attention span of prekindergarten students.

**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 include implementation and support strategies for the teacher to use to meet the individual needs of diverse students in the classroom. Lessons provide differentiated materials, settings, strategies, and opportunities while staying consistent with developmentally appropriate practices as laid out in the “Texas PreKindergarten Guidelines.” Teacher guides include implementation and support strategies throughout all of the themes.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In every lesson, throughout all themes, materials include differentiated instructional strategies for those who have not mastered the content. Strategies include modified question and sentence stems to support remediating discussion, use of teacher modeling strategies, picture support, real-life examples, and use of concrete materials such as manipulatives. In Theme 5, materials contain recommendations for small group vocabulary instruction; teachers can decide between various materials, such as blocks, legos, cubes, or other classroom manipulatives, for the student to use to construct a *skyscraper*, which is a vocabulary term. In Theme 6, a shared writing activity suggests that struggling students can use a reduced number of sentences and pair words with pictures to assist in their understanding. Another suggestion for differentiation for struggling students is to restructure a sentence stem to provide scaffolding and support for students to build upon when providing a response.

Materials also include targeted instruction and activities for those who have mastered the content. These strategies include recommendations such as higher-level question stems, opportunities to present ideas or share learning with others, connections to real-life situations, and leading others in extended activities. The materials also include opportunities to challenge students to use higher-level thinking skills. For example, in Theme 1, students who have mastered the content are invited to think about their daily routines and determine ways to alter

or change them. In Theme 3, students are invited “to create a riddle to describe a community worker.” In Theme 6, students write additional sentences about tools used to perform a construction job. The materials provide additional activities to support child choice to extend and explore new learning in small groups and centers. For example, students who are ready are challenged to label their drawings. Lessons also include recommendations for upward scaffolds or extensions to deepen grade-appropriate learning. For example, teachers encourage students to go on a letter hunt in the classroom to find target letters and can expand on this by asking students to name the letter they find.

The materials provide additional enrichment activities for all levels of learners. In each lesson in Theme 1, a “Did You Know?” section provides additional connections to the content and opportunities to extend the instruction. This section offers additional teacher implementation support, clarifies key teaching points, extends the lesson to other content areas, and offers suggestions for students to extend or apply the learning in different contexts. In Theme 1, the “Did You Know?” section of the “Science” center provides guidance to include explicit vocabulary instruction throughout the day; this vocabulary was introduced earlier, during a “Read Aloud” lesson. Students are given multiple opportunities to participate in practice centers; for example, in the “Creativity Station,” students are able to demonstrate their interpretation of content acquired during the week. In Theme 5, students are given the opportunity to explore in the Creativity Station: They use various materials, such as construction paper, markers, paper shapes, and glue, to create their own interpretations of skylines. Materials include recommendations on ways for parents to connect with the themes presented each week. For example, in a Theme 7 “Family Connections” activity, families have access to vocabulary words to review, words of the week, songs to sing, and an extension activity that involves going outside to participate in a hunt to search for backyard insects. The materials provide students with opportunities to explore and apply new learning in a variety of ways. For example, students engineer, design, create, and decorate a musical egg shaker. In Theme 7, teachers suggest students lead a “What’s Missing?” activity using letter cards (*K, L, M, N, O*). Teachers can extend this activity with lowercase letters for students who are ready.



**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 include a variety of instructional approaches to meet the diverse needs of the students while also staying consistent with developmentally appropriate practices as laid out in the “Texas PreKindergarten Guidelines.” Materials provide a variety of instructional approaches throughout all of the themes, including whole group, small group, and individual support strategies based on learner needs, abilities, and interests.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The instructional materials include a variety of instructional approaches to engage students in mastery of the content and use multiple teaching strategies to meet students’ different learning needs. In Theme 2, students are given opportunities to use various learning styles. Students explore hands-on and auditory learning, manipulating various objects in a lesson on comparing big and small objects. When students sing a song about math attributes, the teacher emphasizes the words *big* and *small* to remind students of the two comparisons they will be doing; after this, students search for and compare different-sized objects. In this way, teacher-directed activities connect to child-led learning and implement a variety of instructional approaches. The materials allow for the use of flexible groupings throughout the day. For example, in Theme 2, while children are collaborating on their STEAM projects in small groups, Team 1 creates their project individually. This allows the teacher to provide a developmentally appropriate group for each individual student. The materials provide routines and activities designed specifically for large group instruction, such as “Greeting Circle” time, where the teacher guides the class and discussion.

In Theme 3, the materials include a vocabulary-building activity; students solve riddles to identify new vocabulary words, using picture cards as support. The activity also provides an

opportunity for students to create their own riddle. The materials support multiple types of practices and provide guidance and structures to achieve effective implementation. In Theme 3, the materials include a midweek option to invite or encourage learners to engage in inquiry learning: Students plan a project, use critical thinking, or create a product or experience. At the “Creativity Station,” the teacher encourages students to draw a picture of their favorite example of kindness. The materials support developmentally appropriate instructional strategies by providing opportunities to use manipulatives, play-based approaches to learning, music and movement, story connections, and other developmentally appropriate strategies to master the content.

In Theme 5, students use chain links, frog counters, pattern blocks, and connecting cubes to explore math concepts. The materials provide a variety of instructional strategies for use during practice centers and small and large group instruction. For example, the teacher models dance motions to explore new vocabulary in the “Did You Know?” section. In Theme 5, in the “Math” practice center, students use paper rectangles of different lengths to design a house or building by gluing them down on a larger piece of paper. In Theme 7, in the “Writer’s Corner” practice center, students draw garden insects to create a class mural. Teachers guide a discussion, suggesting students can think of additional things they may see in a garden, such as dirt and plants. The materials include activities that allow students to independently practice and develop skills in learning centers; students have opportunities to explore their interests, make their own choices, and develop independence.

In Theme 9, students are invited to make predictions after a read-aloud. The lesson uses a variety of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies, such as “remembering,” “applying,” and “evaluating” question stems. Each week, the lessons provide flexible grouping support, including guided whole group instruction that uses read-alouds, songs, and conceptual introduction and exploration. Each day, small groups provide collaborative practice for all students, remediation for those who struggle, and extensions for those who have mastered the content. Further opportunities for independent and collaborative practice occur in the “Practice Centers,” which also offer guidance for adult scaffolding and support as needed.

**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).

## Meets 2/2

The materials include supports for English Learners (ELs) to meet grade-level learning expectations. Throughout the themes, materials provide support via the "Welcome Guide," "Language Support Cards," and embedded "Dual Language" accommodations.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials provide scaffolds for ELs within the Language Support Cards. Materials instruct teachers on speaking: "combine gestures and movement, speak more slowly, and vary the tone of your voice." Materials also provide scaffolded sentence stems for students who may not be ready to give extended explanations or need encouragement to move beyond one- to two-word responses. Extending student responses also gives the student the opportunity to hear their shortened answer in an elaborated form or complete sentence.

The Welcome Guide contains materials specific to ELs and Dual Language Learners (DLLs), which include comprehension, home language, cognates, strategies, the developing metalinguistic ability, and making text-to-self connections. The guide also explains the "Strategy Cards" and "Photo Cards." Throughout the themes, strategies and tips are given for "Morning Message," "Music and Movement," "Greeting Circle," "Whole Group," "Small Group," "STEAM," and "Practice Centers." Teachers can access resources online for more information on using students' first language in a way that supports their linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic development. The materials include accommodations for linguistics that address the various levels of English language proficiency. In the Welcome Guide, detailed language support accommodations explain the various levels and the possible accommodations. For example, the guide explains that, in the preproduction stage, "children are developing listening skills and are able to comprehend simple language but not yet produce it." The materials suggest letting the

non-verbal children point, draw, act it out, and use other appropriate physical gestures. In the early production stage, “children will have some language comprehension.” The materials suggest encouraging students to use one- and two-word responses and yes/no answers as appropriate. In the speech emergence stage, “children have increased comprehension of the target language and are able to speak in simple phrases.” Materials support students’ various levels of English language proficiency through various communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded linguistic accommodations that meet students’ needs. Within the guide’s appendix, there is a glossary of translated terms and phrases from literacy, math, and thematic digital activities. Also in the Appendix, the “Literature Library” contains compound word cards; cut-apart cards; and translations for little books, posters, strategy cards, card sets, vocabulary cards, and photo cards for teachers to use.

The materials use students’ first language as the foundation for developing skills in English. The “Vocabulary Pre-K Literacy” section of the guide encourages students to respond in multiple languages, including in their home language, during discussions and interactions. “Evidence supports the fact that children benefit from using cognates as a tool for transferring knowledge from the first language to the second” (Espinosa, L. M. 2014; Durgunoglu, A. Y., 2002; colorincolorado.org). Following this guidance, teachers utilize cognates to develop comprehension. Teachers introduce a new concept along with key vocabulary and phrases in students’ first language prior to introducing the lesson in English; teachers also incorporate words in students’ first language as a way to narrate students’ behaviors and interactions throughout the day. Forming connections between new and existing knowledge enhances students’ comprehension of content, language, and culture.

Materials provide suggestions for appropriate scaffolds such as explicit instruction to support children learning English. In Theme 1, during a math small group activity, students identify shape attributes. A “Language Support Strategy” instructs teachers to connect three angles to make a triangle; next, teachers disconnect and then reconnect one of the corners to model the vocabulary (*open* and *closed*). Students can signal with a thumbs-up or thumbs-down in response to the “open” and “closed” gestures. Another scaffold utilizes consistent and predictable routines in daily classroom management: lining up, moving to another part of the classroom, cleaning up, and receiving instructions for transitions. Teachers model Total-Physical-Response-like commands (TPR) (e.g., “stand up, put your hands on your head”) and repeated chants and language-rich commands; “These practices have been found to significantly help children recognize expectations without relying heavily on linguistic explanations” (DePalma, Renee, 2010).

The materials provide a variety of effective strategies for teachers to support children at different English language proficiency levels. For example, in Theme 1, teachers make a chart with five columns and label each column with a picture or icon for one of the five senses. Teachers invite volunteers to draw a picture of something they could taste, see, feel, hear, and smell in each column, and emphasize target vocabulary. The materials include accommodations for linguistics (communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded) commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency. The materials include accessible resources for teachers to use to

become familiar with effective strategies specific to ELs; these resources encourage strategic use of children's first language as a strategy to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in English and include examples of how to use children's first language as the foundation for developing skills in English.

The materials provide accommodations for various levels of English language proficiency. Lessons give teachers guidance on using visual cues to help ELs with their understanding of English. In Theme 2, for the storybook *The Three Bears*, teachers discuss the attributes of the bowls in the story: small, medium, and big. Teachers can use magnetic bowl props as visual cues to help students actually see the different sizes of the bowls. Throughout all themes, students are also able to take part in small group lessons that are built upon whole group lessons to receive support and scaffolding for their learning.

In Theme 3, during "Read Aloud 2," teachers display the cover of *The Lion and the Mouse* and present the story using magnetic story props. A Language Support Strategy is TPR. Teachers encourage students to use the story props to act out the sequence of events and to use words to describe what they are doing as they dramatize. Teachers place the props in that week's "Language and Literacy" center to encourage children to retell the story. Children can hold up the characters like puppets for retelling. This is an example of instructional strategies that guide the teachers to explicitly model, provide comprehension input, and provide visual cues to aid children's understanding of English. In Theme 3, during the "Writer's Corner" center, teachers again use TPR. Teachers invite children to role-play their chosen community worker; teachers provide props for children to act out what they dramatize: "You must be a doctor:" "You are listening to your patient's heartbeat." During the whole group Music and Movement activity, the "Community Helper Hop" song is introduced. Teachers display and point to photos of the community workers referenced in the song so children can visually identify whom they are thanking. During a "Guided Writing" small group activity, the Language Support Strategy is translanguaging: "Invite children to share how they say 'Thank you' in their home language and use a simple sentence stem to express their gratitude to the selected community worker." Teachers translate the response into English using the same simple sentence stem. These suggestions provide intentional scaffolding, explicit modeling, and language reinforcement throughout the day.

The materials include various linguistic accommodations for children who are learning English, particularly regarding their level of English language proficiency. For example, in Theme 6, the materials guide teachers: "Pair children with a language broker (classmate who speaks the home language). The child who is providing the clue can describe how the animal would move in their home language. As the partner moves, invite the child to use English to describe the action: 'I am jumping on all fours like a frog.'" The materials provide engaging small group lessons that build on whole group learning and use manipulatives and hands-on experiences to support new language and content. For example, one small group lesson uses a language game: Teachers share vocabulary cards one at a time and invite students to name each card and place it in the tabletop pocket chart. After all of the cards are placed in the pocket chart, teachers offer clues and invite students to find the described card. Teachers can say, "I am thinking of...."

Teachers can also differentiate the lesson through support and challenges. To support students, teachers can display two cards while saying one riddle. To challenge students, teachers can encourage students to provide riddles. The materials include suggestions for small group instruction that focus primarily on language development.

**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 provide review and practice of mathematical knowledge and skills throughout the span of the curriculum.

## Meets 2/2

The materials include a year-long plan with practice and review opportunities that support instruction. There is a cohesive, year-long plan to build students' concept development. Materials consider how to vertically align instruction that builds year to year. Additionally, the materials provide review and practice of knowledge and skills in all domains throughout the span of the curriculum.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Welcome Guide" has a "Literacy Scope and Sequence" that includes English, Spanish, and Dual Language focus skills in "Phonological Awareness," "Concepts of Print," "Shared Writing," "Guided Writing," and "Alphabet Knowledge" mapped out throughout the year. The skills build on each other in a developmental and sequential approach with spiraled opportunities for mastery; they are consistent with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. For example, in the area of Alphabet Knowledge, each letter/sound is reinforced 3–4 times throughout the year. Specific language is provided in letter formation to support handwriting in the upper grades. Similarly, the guide has a "Math Scope and Sequence" that explores five units of mathematics: Unit 1: "Describing and Exploring Our World Mathematically;" Unit 2: "Developing Formal Skills for Learning Mathematics;" Unit 3: "Investigating Geometry, Measurement, Number, and Data;" Unit 4: "Joining, Separating, and Comparing (Number Operations);" Unit 5: "Analyzing our World Mathematically." As in the Literacy Scope and Sequence, the skills build on each other in a developmental and sequential approach with spiraled opportunities for mastery. In the "Standards" section, at the back of every theme book, the teacher can easily identify when each guideline is taught within the theme. This section includes all of the guidelines: "Approaches to Learning," "Social and Emotional Development," "Language and Communication," "Emergent Literacy: Reading," "Emergent Literacy," "Writing," "Mathematics," "Science," "Social Studies," "Fine Arts," "Physical Development," and "Technology."

The materials provide review and practice of knowledge and skills in all domains throughout the span of the curriculum with several instructional approaches. For example, in Theme 1, in the daily “Morning Message,” students begin with tracking very short and repetitive sentences and identify specific letters such as *P* and *Y*. In Theme 6, the Morning Message routine continues, and the sentences become more complex; new concepts are introduced as students keep practicing letter identification and directionality. Additionally, students begin sharing the writing and contributing to letter formation within this routine. Another example is found in the progression and review of vocabulary. Throughout all themes and lessons, the materials make intentional and purposeful connections to prior learning by reviewing vocabulary from prior themes in the form of vocabulary cards, the letter wall, and instructional posters related to the themes. Math instruction is similar in its approach, giving multiple opportunities for students to learn and practice the content throughout the themes. Shapes are introduced in Theme 1; students sort with different shaped and multi-colored plastic button manipulatives. While the focus is on physical attributes and sorting, introducing shapes will be built upon in future instruction. In Theme 4, the students go on a hunt for different 2D shapes and are then later introduced to 3D shapes in the theme. The skills naturally build in rigor but spiral for review for those who may need reinforcement of previous learning or more practice to move towards mastery. Throughout all themes and lessons, the materials make intentional and purposeful connections to prior learning by reviewing vocabulary from prior themes in the form of vocabulary cards and instructional posters related to the themes.



## 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.

## Meets 2/2

The materials include implementation support for teachers as well as for administrators. The materials are accompanied by a scope and sequence aligned to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, outlining the essential knowledge and skills that are taught in the program. Materials include supports to help teachers implement the materials as intended and have a school year's worth of prekindergarten instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines. The materials also include resources and guidance to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials as intended.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

A "Scope and Sequence" is included in the appendix of each of the nine themes; it includes each of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines' domains and notes when each skill is taught or reinforced throughout the theme and within each week of instruction. Additionally, within the "Teacher Guide" for each unit, the "Standards" section provides a reference for teachers to know the appropriate targeted guideline in the unit. Throughout all themes, the instructional materials provide differentiated instruction suggestions for students who are struggling, advanced, or have other needs. There is a clear connection to vertical alignment connecting how skills build beyond kindergarten. The "AIM" assessment does include progressions from birth to five years, and the "Differentiating Instruction Teacher Resource" provides strategies to move the student along a continuum of learning specific to infants, toddlers, and the "Pre-K 3" and "Pre-K 4" levels. The materials provide a correlation between the Frog Street Pre-K learning standards and the Kindergarten TEKS.

The “Welcome to Pre-K Guide: Foundations for Implementation” provides an introduction to the authors and contributors of the program. It outlines the components of the Teacher’s Guide, including the schedules for planning the day, “Early Brain Research” to support best practices, and implementation of “Conscious Discipline” to build community; it also defines the prekindergarten areas of “Literacy,” “Mathematics,” “Science” and stresses the importance of practice centers. For each theme, Teacher Guides include a “Getting Started” section, which provides teachers with the “Big Ideas” for the week, vocabulary, transition and brain breaks, lesson planner, family connections, materials, and a “Week at a Glance” layout. Within this resource, teachers receive additional implementation guidance for assessment, meeting the needs of diverse classrooms to include cultural responsiveness, language supports, special needs, and family connections. All of these resources and materials can also be accessed online for ease of use. Further supporting implementation, each unit outlines the materials needed for the week. For example, in Theme 7, the Getting Started section includes a list of materials needed, including the literature, vocabulary cards, photo cards, card sets, strategy cards, posters, and manipulatives. The materials’ descriptions provide specific tasks and preparations for the teacher to do to get ready to teach the lessons. For example, the teacher receives the following guidance to create “Scented Trail Cards” for the “Science” center: “Dip some cotton balls in an extract (such as clear vanilla or peppermint). Leave some cotton balls with no scent. Glue one scented cotton ball on 3 X 5 card. Repeat to make several cards, each with one scented cotton ball on it. Then prepare several 3 X 5 cards with an unscented cotton ball glued to each card so you have a collection of scented and unscented cards.”

Materials support administrators in helping teachers plan for instruction via the optional assessment, the AIM assessment, and ongoing progress monitoring data disaggregation and grouping. The materials also provide support for administrators to monitor implementation by offering an "Administrator Classroom Observation Guide." This tool provides specific instruction and guidance for observing classroom implementation, recording observations, and making recommendations as needed to ensure program implementation fidelity.

The themes include components for full-day instruction for a full school year. The day’s components include the “Brain Smart Start” ritual and routine, “Morning Message,” “Music and Movement,” two read-alouds, literacy small groups, math small groups, a STEAM lesson, “Closing Circle,” seven practice centers that are set up for the week, and outdoor activities that connect to the weekly theme. This consistent routine and amount of materials support realistic and appropriate pacing for a full year of lessons consistent with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and developmentally appropriate practices.

**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 some implementation guidance to meet variability in programmatic design and scheduling considerations. They include guidance for strategic implementation without disrupting the sequence of content that must be taught in a specific order following a developmental progression. The 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 outside of full-day and half-day options.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The instructional materials provide guidance and follow a strategic implementation structure that does not disrupt the sequence of the content. The content must be taught in an order that follows a developmental progression. For example, in Theme 1, for letter recognition, the focus begins with the letters in the child's name and the features of the letters. In Theme 2, three to four letters are introduced per week, with two letters that look similar and one that is distinctly different. In Theme 3, letters continue to be introduced, but the materials guide the teacher to begin to make connections between the letters and sounds. The letter wall is used as a tool to support the connections. Additionally, students begin to discriminate between uppercase and lowercase letters. In Theme 4, students identify sounds of letters and locate them at the beginning and ending of words. In Theme 5, students identify the sound a letter represents and have opportunities to sort pictures into groups based on letter sounds. In Themes 6 and 7, connections are made between writing letters and recalling the name and sound of the letters that are represented by the visual letter. All letters are reviewed in alphabetical order. In Themes 8 and 9, all letters and the sounds that they represent are reviewed. Materials place a focus on letters that are easily visually confused, such as *n* and *u* or *p* and *q*. Students have

opportunities to match uppercase and lowercase letters. Each unit includes a “Week at a Glance.” This weekly plan offers a visual outline of all lessons, activities, music, and centers for the week, from Day 1 to Day 5. The order of the activities reflects a suggested daily schedule. The “Lesson Planner” allows customizable plans that can fit schedules and preferences. “Materials for the Week” provides, at a glance, all the program materials the teacher will need for the week. On the left side of the page, there are lists of resources to be found in the online portal. The column on the right-hand page describes items to prepare and offers a list of common classroom supplies to gather.

The materials offer 36 full weeks of lessons and instructions. For a half-day program, a district can follow the recommendations to shorten the time by five minutes in each of the instructional segments and eliminate the STEAM portions and third read-aloud to still fit in the majority of the content. The materials’ portal gives the teacher the ability to create a customizable daily plan to fit the teacher’s schedule and preferences. Teachers also utilize lesson planning time schedules, which allow them to meet the minutes of a suggested activity by incorporating their own activity. The lessons presented within the daily schedule are designed to build upon each other throughout the day, which may be difficult if a teacher is unable to implement the components of the daily schedule exactly as designed due to programmatic scheduling needs.

**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 include guidance on fostering connections between home and school. They support the development of strong relationships between teachers and families and provide specific activities for use at home to support students' learning and development.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The instructional materials provide many opportunities throughout all themes for relationships to be built between both teachers and families. In each of the themes, "Family Connections" support the importance of building strong relationships between families and school. Weekly Family Connections letters provide an overview of the week's instruction and recommendations for ways to engage in learning at home. They explain the theme for the week and provide information and guidance on supporting the children's learning through conversations describing their school experiences and engaging in creative experiences at home that connect and enhance learning. The letter includes a "Word of the Week," which comes with the definition and suggestions for use. There are also four hands-on activities and a list of other important theme-related vocabulary words. Finally, there is a preview of upcoming themes and content.

Theme 2, "My Family and Friends," invites families to send pictures of themselves to school so the student can make connections to what they are learning and their home life. In the "Block" center, teachers tape the pictures to blocks so the students can play pretend. In Theme 5, students discuss "Tools" in the classroom; in Family Connections, materials encourage families to call attention to the simple machines that they use throughout the day. For example, a rolling pin is an example of a wheel and axle, and cookie cutters are wedges. Students are able to explore tools that they use both inside and outside of the house with their families. In Theme 9, while discussing "Changes," materials encourage students and families to learn the meaning of their names. It is suggested that students ask their family where their names come from; if they do not know, they are encouraged to search for the meaning together on the internet.

In addition to the information shared in these parent letters, in every week of every theme, parents have access to digital read-alouds to enjoy reading together with their student, such as *Victor the Sea Turtle*, *Silly Stew*, and *How Do We Get There?* To further help families understand developmentally appropriate prekindergarten content, materials provide content-specific letters, such as “Reading to Your Child” and “Moving on to Kindergarten.” These letters are accessed through the portal resources.

**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 visual design of student and teacher materials (whether print or digital) is neither distracting nor chaotic. The materials include appropriate use of white space and design that supports and does not distract from student learning. The pictures and graphics are supportive of student learning and engagement without being visually distracting.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials' theme guides have very little white space; they are visually supportive and provide color-coded boxes for specific "point-of-use" teaching points, icons to represent tips for assessment, and actual pictures of materials needed for each week. The instructional materials provide teachers with "Teacher Guides" that are easily accessible. The teacher guides include weekly tabs that allow teachers to easily navigate from week to week throughout each theme. The layout for each week is consistent throughout all themes. Teachers are able to locate different sections of the materials as they are located in the same spot for each teacher guide. For example, each teacher guide begins with a table of contents that allows teachers to see the page on which each week begins. Once teachers begin a week, they are able to see the full layout for the theme. The teacher guides are designed in a way that the teacher can locate important information by looking for the colored boxes on each page. These boxes include "Dual Language Learners" strategies, "Special Needs Adaptations," "Differentiate Instruction," "Did You Know?" and "Cultural Responsiveness." Materials needed are listed at the beginning of each week and include pictures to support teacher reference.

The texts, posters, and other visual resources use a balance of real photos and illustrations; the font size used is readable from a distance but not too large. There are 12 provided posters that include topics such as "How to Wash Your Hands," "Greeting Choices," and "The Four Seasons." There are 24 strategy cards that are printed on both sides and include text and pictures to support the teacher with instructional strategies for a variety of topics, such as "Alliteration,"

Patterning,” and “Syllables.” These use a balance of real photos and illustrations; the font size is readable from a distance but not too large. The picture cards predominantly use photographs that have been zoomed in to the object of reference so as to avoid distraction or cluttered backgrounds. One hundred ninety-one photo cards are provided with the materials to support content instruction. Each card is labeled with both English and Spanish labels. There are other card sets for specific topics such as “Numeral Tracing” and “School Routine.” Additionally, there are letter cards, sound cards, and vocabulary cards that support each theme. The provided vocabulary cards have the vocabulary words typed in a font size big enough for students to see and read; students are able to associate the new vocabulary word with a realistic image. The materials also include literature books with simple text and colorful pictures for students to engage with. The library features a balance of literature (fiction) and informational text (nonfiction) that includes well-loved trade titles, books with engaging photographs, and books with a variety of artistic styles. Big books use appropriate illustrations to gain the students’ attention and keep them engaged.