

November  
2020

# CIRCLE Pre-K Curriculum 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; however, it is not clear whether materials should be used for three- or 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 include some 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 include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections to create a unified experience for students. The materials name which domains are purposefully developed or reinforced in each learning activity.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials are cross-curricular and integrated in an authentic way to support students' unified experience throughout the day. Lessons are organized around a common theme and integrate multiple developmental domains. For example, in the Week 12 theme topic "Harvesting Crops," "Give 'Em Pumpkins To Talk About—Outside" is a "Science" domain lesson that also incorporates mathematics and opportunities for book reading and writing. Students use their senses to investigate three pumpkins; they discuss the pumpkins' similarities and differences. The "Teacher Tip" for this lesson recommends reading aloud either *The Pumpkin Patch* by Elizabeth King or *Pumpkin Harvest* by Calvin Harris to enhance learning before or after the theme topic activities. These books can be used in the Week 12 lesson "Story Elements: Events," in which students listen to the teacher read aloud a book and identify the main events. The Teacher Tip also recommends extending this activity: students can write about and draw the pumpkins with details they discover.

The materials include information for teachers that build content knowledge and connect multiple domains. For example, in the Week 18 theme "Animals All Around," the "Physical Development" section guides teachers to explain that not all animals move the same way; some move on four legs, two legs, or no legs, and some hop, slither, or gallop to get from place to place. Both the "Scope and Sequence" and the "Theme Guide" list all the Prekindergarten Guidelines for each lesson. The aforementioned lesson is linked to the domains of Science and "Physical Development." In another example, for the "ABC Knowledge" lesson used in Week 26, "If Your Name Starts With," the primary domain listed is "Letter Recognition"; it also has a listed secondary domain of "Listening Comprehension." Specific activities can be searched for using

the domains so that if a child needs additional practice in developing measurement skills, the teacher can search for additional activities. The progress monitoring system will also suggest specific lessons to target individual skills based on assessment results.

The lessons are organized around weekly themes throughout the year. The themes, such as “Creepy Crawly Critters” used in Weeks 32 through 35, provide lessons across multiple developmental domains. For example, in Week 33, for a science lesson, children explore the school grounds to locate bugs and make observations. During “Language & Communication” lessons that same week, the children sing “Itsy, Bitsy Spider” and “Here is a Beehive.” In the “Creativity” center that week, children create spider webs with white yarn, paper plates, and construction paper. These activities provide opportunities for children to explore concepts in a variety of ways and build background knowledge.

**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' texts are strategically chosen to support content and skill development in multiple domains.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Multiple genres of texts, including fiction books, nonfiction books, poems, songs, and nursery rhymes, are found throughout the lessons. The "Book Club," found in the theme units, contains a list of books; the list narrows within each theme's guide to provide content-specific recommendations. For example, in the theme "I'm Me, I'm Special," the Book Club provides a list of narrative and informational books that can be used with the theme, such as *Llama, Llama, Mad At Mama* by Anna Dewdney, as well as culturally relevant books such as *Families in Many Cultures* by Heather Adamson.

Texts provide cross-curricular connections. For instance, the "Developing Number Recognition through Read Alouds" activity addresses book reading, print reading, and mathematics content. It provides examples of books to teach number recognition, such as *Carlo Likes Counting* by Jessica Spanyol or *The M&M's® Counting Book* by Barbara Barbieri McGrath.

The materials include texts that strategically support the content and skills being developed across multiple learning domains. In a Week 3 whole group lesson, students hear the story *The Three Little Pigs* and use props to retell it. During the read-aloud, the teacher makes connections to social studies by focusing on the homes the Little Pigs live in: "The pigs lived with their mother and then moved to their own houses; the brothers took care of each other; the brothers built different types of shelters/homes."

In Week 18, the materials include texts from multiple genres, including fiction, nonfiction, poems, songs, and nursery rhymes. For instance, the "Book & Print Reading" lesson uses the book *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen. Students learn about repetitive texts and practice choral reading with their teacher. The teacher reads each page of the book aloud, pausing long enough to allow the students to repeat what they heard. Some of the repetitive

parts are “Can’t go over it. Can't go under it. Oh no! We’ve got to go through it!” Students have the opportunity to hear this multiple times through the reading and can anticipate the repetitive portions. As the students predict portions of the book, they also learn new vocabulary and practice language production. The built-in scaffolds guide the teacher to support struggling students by “sounding out” difficult words. The “Teacher Tips” also recommend using “equity sticks” to ensure all students have the opportunity to participate and share their choral reading.

In Week 19, a “Book & Print Reading” lesson has the teacher read and discuss the book *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Teachers make a science connection by focusing on the characteristics of the goats (e.g., the goats live in a herd and use their horns for protection). As part of the retell, the students act out the story using props. Other books with repetitive text are also listed in the “Teacher Tips” (e.g., *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *The Three Little Fish and the Big Bad Shark*).

**2.3** Materials support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains.

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

## Meets 4/4

The materials include a variety of opportunities for purposeful play that promotes student choice. Additionally, the materials provide guidance to teachers on how to connect all domains to play and on setting up and facilitating activities to meet, reinforce, or practice learning objectives. The materials also 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:

The materials support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains. The materials can be used for both half-day and full-day schedules, as indicated in the “Teacher’s Manual.” The materials allow teachers the flexibility to tailor the scope and sequence based on the length of their school day, with a combination of whole group (“Circle Time”), small group, centers, and independent practice. The materials focus on intentional instruction and use the gradual release model. Activities begin with teacher modeling, providing demonstrations for students, such as think-alouds. Students then have time to practice the specific skill or concept during guided practice.

In Week 1, materials guide teachers in setting up centers to provide and encourage critical interactions that turn play into learning. There is a list of recommended materials to set up the following centers: “ABC,” “Classroom Library/Listening,” “Construction,” “Creativity,” “Mathematics,” “Pretend and Learn,” “Science,” and “Writer’s Corner.” In Week 4 lessons, the materials provide several opportunities to engage children in the lessons through play. For example, the phonics lesson “Bounce a Word” supports the teacher’s ability to actively facilitate



learning and discovery through play; the teacher explains and models how to segment a sentence by bouncing a ball. After the teacher model, children take turns bouncing the ball for every word in the teacher's sentence. After the lesson, the children are encouraged to play the game during center time. In the "Book & Print Reading" lesson "Tell It Again," the children retell *The Three Little Pigs* using picture cards. In a whole group game of "Mother May I?" children ask questions in order to reach the teacher first.

The Teacher's Manual includes recommendations on the organization and routine of activities to promote effective learning. It provides suggestions for creating a classroom management plan that is appropriate for prekindergarten students. The materials suggest setting up routines and procedures; they suggest various ways to implement them in the classroom. For example, they suggest creating a "Helper" chart or a center management system for each learning center. The manual also provides clear teacher guidance for setting up the learning environment to promote positive early childhood outcomes. The materials make suggestions for activities for each center. The "Theme Guides" also guide teachers on how to change learning centers for each theme. For example, in Week 14, for the theme "The Cloudy Sky," materials suggest creating a weather station for the "Pretend and Learn" center. At the top of the page, each lesson clearly indicates the appropriate learning setting for instruction in the whole group, small group, or individual learning areas. A comprehensive materials list provided for each unit or theme also supports teachers in preparing and changing the Pretend and Learn center for each theme. Materials do not provide a list of materials for all learning centers, only suggestions for activities.

The materials promote purposeful play during centers; they provide students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of concepts through play. In the theme "Animals All Around," Week 19 focuses on "Animal Homes and Habitats." Centers include activities across content areas that promote integration and practice of skills through play. For instance, in the ABC center, students can go on an ocean letter hunt and use animal-themed letters to play and practice alphabet skills. In the Classroom Library/Listening center, students can hear a variety of narrative and informational texts about animal habitats and create puppets or felt boards to retell the stories. In the Construction center, students can play and explore different materials for building homes. In the Creativity center, students can create a zoo map or paint an animal habitat. In the Pretend and Learn center, students pretend that they are part of an "Animal Rescue and Veterinarian's Office." In the Science center, students can explore animals and their homes. In the Writing center, students draw and write about animal homes and habitats.

Each week, the curriculum follows a theme, such as "My Safe and Active Body" in Week 22, which includes activities designed for playful exploration in centers. During Week 22, the Pretend and Learn center is designed as a gym; children deepen their knowledge of being healthy while playing in the center. During science time, the class learns about exercise in the "Fit Friends" lesson. The teacher prints exercise cards and number cards. A card is picked from each pile, and the class does that many exercises. For example, if an eight and a "jumping jacks" card is picked, the class does eight jumping jacks together. After students learn the cards, the cards are moved to the Pretend and Learn center so that children can use them in a new setting

and continue exploring the concept of exercise. The children also have the choice to pretend to work the counter at the gym or use other equipment; materials thus allow for student choice in playful learning opportunities.

During Week 28, a phonemic awareness lesson called “Digging for Sounds” facilitates learning and discovery through play while incorporating the weekly theme of “Land All Around”; it also incorporates an understanding of beginning sounds. The teacher buries plastic letters in a box of sand, and the children dig for them. When they find a letter, they say the name and sound of the letter out loud. The teacher is guided to encourage students by telling them they did a great job and praising their efforts in matching beginning sounds as they dig through the sand. After introducing the activity, the teacher moves it to the ABC center for the children to continue learning and playing independently.

The materials include teacher guidance on how to provide and encourage critical interactions that turn play into learning. In Week 30, in the activity “Fishing for Names,” students “catch” a fish with a name on it; they have to tell the class what letter the name starts with. The activity is designed to be utilized in a small group or whole group setting. The poles and fish are then placed in the ABC center for students to play with during center time. The Teacher’s Manual includes research-based information that supports the teacher’s understanding of the importance of play as a foundation for learning across all domain areas. Each learning area in the guide mentions that play should be incorporated in the learning of that component; for example, the “Math” section mentions that math is learned through “playful” experiences. The lessons clearly support the teacher’s ability to actively facilitate learning and discovery through play across learning settings and domains.

## 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.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials include a variety of options that clearly differentiate instruction for level of development. They are intended for both three- and four-year-old children. However, the materials do not clearly specify which materials should be used for three- or four-year-old children, and they do not provide differentiated use recommendations for half-day and full-day prekindergarten programs.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Manual” states the curriculum is appropriate for both three- and four-year-olds. The lessons’ built-in scaffolds support both three- and four-year-old students. However, the materials are identical for both three- and four-year-olds and do not distinguish between what should be used for a three-year-old and what should be used for a four-year-old.

The “Teacher Tips” in the Week 2 “Book & Print Reading” content area remind the teacher to monitor children’s cues during read-alouds and match the developmental needs of the children. The lesson “Introduction to a Picture Walk” has embedded scaffolding suggestions and provides support to nurture young children’s dispositions to learn in order for students to successfully describe what is happening in the story using the pictures. The teacher introduces the book *Bear Wants More* (by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman) by conducting a picture walk. The teacher models and explains how to use the pictures to talk about what is happening in the story. During guided practice, the teacher asks the children guiding questions to prompt engagement and understanding. The lesson guides the teacher with three different types of downward scaffolding. For “less support,” point to the picture again and reask the question. For “more support,” provide the children with a choice of two to choose from. For “most support,” point out the picture and provide the answer to the question. The Teacher Tip recommends reading the book to the children on a different day in order to not have the children sit too long with the activity.

Scaffolding suggestions are embedded within the lessons. For example, in the Week 8 activity “Different Hands,” teachers use the read-aloud *The Color of Us* to discuss how we are all alike and different at the same time. In partners, students discuss what their hands look like. Scaffold tips within the activity suggest teachers ask prepared questions to either challenge or provide support for the students. If the student struggles with discussing with their partner, the teacher can prompt conversation by asking, “Do you and your partner both have five fingers or the same color skin?” If students need a challenge, the teacher can ask, “What else is the same/different about you and your partner?” The lessons and activities support and encourage a responsive interaction style by providing specialized support (scaffolding) to nurture young children’s dispositions to learn.

Downward and upward scaffolding suggestions are embedded within the lessons. Also, each weekly scope and sequence offers “Additional Lessons” for children needing additional practice with a prerequisite skill and “Step It Up Lessons” for children who have mastered the skills in the lesson. An example of scaffolding within the lesson can be found in the math lesson “Swat the Dots,” Week 19. In this lesson, the teacher says a number out loud, and the children “swat” the card with the same number of dots. Upward scaffolds for more advanced and/or older children include asking the child to find another card that has more. A downward scaffold includes asking the child to count the number of dots on the card that was swatted. Additional Teacher Tips include having the children take turns swatting the cards if they are having difficulty regulating their movements. This Teacher Tip nurtures the fun activity and children’s natural desire to learn while accommodating for younger children with less developed regulation of movements.

The Teacher’s Manual states that the instructional materials allow for teachers to easily plan for a full-day schedule, “while the flexible design allows half-day programs to select fewer lessons and activities when planning.” The appendix of the manual includes a sample lesson plan and a lesson plan template, but it does not include time to spend on each lesson nor the number of lessons to select for use in a full-day or half-day schedule. There is no guidance regarding the number of lessons to cover per day or week to meet the various needs of the full- and half-day prekindergarten classroom.

## 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

Within the materials, guidance for teachers is evident and provides explicit instructional strategies for teaching prekindergarten skills. The materials include detailed and explicit guidance for teacher and student actions that support student development and proficiency of content and skills. Detailed guidance is provided for connecting students’ prior content knowledge and experiences to new learning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include detailed guidance that supports the teacher’s delivery of instruction. The “Teacher’s Manual” provides a section on “Supporting Learners in All Settings,” which guides teachers to attend to various factors, such as balancing child-initiated and teacher-led activities and experiences, utilizing children’s prior knowledge to build connections, helping children create a bridge between across content domains and real-world experiences, and embracing children’s background and cultures. This section also explains the use of strategies such as providing engaging, hands-on experiences to maximize learning and making learning meaningful so that it creates a foundation to build on. The manual provides instruction regarding intentional teaching to ensure that all developmental domains are addressed throughout the year; it also encourages the use of upward and downward scaffolding in order to meet the developmental needs of all children.

The Teacher’s Manual also includes information about the development of skills. The writing developmental continuum includes examples of the different stages of writing so that teachers can easily identify each child’s stage. The appendix includes a scaffolding chart that identifies skills needed to move to the next developmental stage. For example, when the child is writing scribbles, the teacher encourages the child to write his/her name or asks the child to describe

the work and transcribes his/her work. A phonological awareness developmental timeline is also included in the manual.

The materials guide teachers through connecting to children's prior knowledge with new concepts and skills in lessons and themes. In Week 7, the theme "All Around My Community" immerses students in connecting new learning about the community with their prior knowledge by exploring where they live and how everyone lives in a community. For a social studies lesson, students receive pictures of nearby, familiar places and use them to create a map of their community; they are able to connect to places like the grocery store, school, and homes. These personal topics are engaging, meaningful, and interesting for students as they learn to create maps. Materials also connect to students' prior knowledge in Weeks 11 and 12. Week 11 focuses on identifying and engaging with new, theme-related vocabulary. In phonological awareness activities, students match new words with similar sounds (*hat/harvest, fall/fox, pinecone/pie*). Students also sing songs and recite rhymes and chants from *The Complete Book of Rhymes, Songs, Poems, Fingerplays and Chants* by Jackie Silberg and Pam Schiller. In Week 12, students build upon this knowledge when they gather leaves of different shapes and sizes. They apply theme-related vocabulary as they engage with pictures or videos of tools a farmer or field worker uses to harvest crops; materials teach the names of the tools and their appropriate uses.

In a science lesson in Week 16, the children learn about constellations. The teacher activates prior knowledge by asking open-ended questions, such as "What else do you see in the night sky?" This question encourages possible extensions beyond stars. The lesson also includes picture cards so students can see examples. After looking at the pictures and discussing the constellations, students create their own constellations using star stickers and paper. "Teacher Tips" also include stories that can be read to the class for additional learning and content development opportunities.

The curriculum includes topics that are interesting and engaging for the children while still developing background knowledge in unfamiliar areas. For example, in the lesson "It's in the Mail," Week 24, students blend onsets and rimes to determine which picture should be placed in the mailbox. The teacher begins the lesson by introducing the words that match each picture to ensure that children have the background knowledge to recognize the items in the picture. After this, the teacher models, telling the children she wants to mail a /b/ /ook/ and blending the sounds to say *book*. The lesson plan guides the teacher to ensure students' background knowledge is connected to the engaging phonemic awareness activity.

The materials provide built-in instructional strategies in all their lessons in the form of "Teacher Tips," "Scaffolds," and explicit instructions to do before, during, and after the lessons; these meet the needs of three- and four-year-old children. For example, in Week 28, the teacher gathers photographs, images, and the provided printable picture cards. Using the provided prompts, the teacher shares the images with students and walks them through how to talk about what they see. The lessons provide a script for the introduction, model and explain, guided practice, and summarizing portions of the lesson. Guided practice includes sentence

stems with Bloom's levels so that teachers can appropriately guide students from basic recall to more complex thinking like comparing and inferring.

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

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

## Meets 4/4

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials are supported by child development research on children’s development within and across all domains. The publisher provides an explanation of how the materials align with child development research within each skill domain area addressed in the “Teacher’s Manual.” For example, the publisher provides guidance regarding how “Alphabet Knowledge” should be introduced, taught, and spiraled based on current research by Huang, Tortorelli, and Invernizzi (2014). Citing research from Zucker, Cabell, Justice, Pentimonti, & Kaderavek (2012), the manual highly recommends the use of teacher-initiated talk, partner talk, shared thinking, acting out words, guiding questions, and opportunities to repeat phrases in order to support the development of language and literacy. The manual also discusses the importance of providing access to print reading experiences. Research cited from Neumann, Hood, Ford, and Neumann (2011) regarding the natural attraction of children to environmental print guided the publisher to include lessons that provide access to print beyond the use of books alone. The materials also contain early childhood teaching strategies and instructional approaches supported by research that guide the teacher in planning and implementing the lessons, such as class group



size recommendations for individual activities. Each activity lists whether it is for the whole group or small groups. The activities do not include flashcards and worksheets as instructional strategies. The manual provides best practices for early childhood; for instance, it ensures teachers understand that play centers allow students to construct their own learning through play.

Research is modeled in the curriculum. For example, this can be seen in Week 1 of the “Book & Print Reading” domain. The materials indicate that the focus of the week is recognizing print in the environment and engaging in pre-reading and reading activities, which include retelling songs and rhymes. In a Week 1 lesson, children see familiar environmental print food labels, such as those for popular cereals and chips, along with name cards. The teacher pre-writes the children’s names along with the words “Mmm, Mmm Good” and “likes” on sentence strips; these are placed in a pocket chart for the class to participate with. The teacher models leading a chant, reading and pointing to the sentence strips and environmental print. During guided practice, the children have an opportunity to choose the environment print card they would like to include in their chant. After the lesson, the materials are available for students to read sentences to one another during center time.

The materials include the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines within each activity and share which domains are addressed. For example, in Week 22, the “In the Bag” activity lists that the prekindergarten primary domain met is “Phonological Awareness—Alliteration.” The Teacher’s Manual provides research for each of the skill domain areas addressed. The section on Book & Print Reading references Zucker, Cabell, Justice, Pentimonti, and Kaderavek (2012), ensuring teachers understand that “teacher-initiated talk before, during, and after reading supports language and literacy development in prekindergarten and beyond.” The Teacher’s Manual references “Developmentally Appropriate Practices,” mentioning that technology is just as important as paper-and-pencil learning when aligned with developmentally appropriate practice (Gartrell, 2014).

The materials include a “Reference” section that is seven pages long. References include the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, citing “Little Texans, Big Futures: Texas infant, toddler, and three-year-old early learning guidelines,” as well as the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, updated in 2015 and put out by the Texas Education Agency. These are Texas-specific sources. Research also cites the Texas Education Agency, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Agriculture, psychology journals, and education journals. Materials include reputable sources that are printed nationally, like the International Literacy Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The research cited includes experts and sources published in recent years. For instance, “Characteristics of effective classroom rules: A review of the literature” by Alter, P. and Haydon, T. was published in 2017 in *Teacher Education and Special Education*. The references listed are largely current, with 77% published after 2010; 41% were published after 2015.

### 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 include full lessons on self-concept skills, self-regulation skills, relationships with others, and social awareness skills. The materials also provide guidance on teacher modeling of these skills as well as appropriate texts to support the development of social competencies and the development of competencies to understand and respond to emotions.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include direct social skills instruction and explicit teaching of skills. Lessons provided in the instructional materials directly teach the “Social and Emotional Development” domain within a flexible and logical sequence. For instance, self-regulation concepts are covered with high frequency at the beginning of the curriculum and are later offered as a downward scaffold.

Week 1 provides six full lessons that explicitly teach social skills. In the lesson “Sharing Space,” the teacher reads the story *The Napping House*. After reading the story, the teacher shares picture cards of places people share, showing relationships with others. The students answer open-ended questions about spaces they might share with others and the feelings they may have about sharing that space, acknowledging their emotions. Thinking out loud, the teacher models the concept of sharing: The teacher draws a picture of a place that may be shared, who it is shared with, and the feelings that may be felt. Students create their own responses to emotions by drawing a picture. The teacher summarizes the lesson by recalling parts of the book and reminding the students, “Sharing spaces can be difficult, but if we think about others’ feelings, we can make it work!” This creates connections to support the development of emotional literacy.

In Week 2, students read a book on diversity to support emotional literacy related to cultures and race. After reading *The Color of Us* by Karen Katz, students discuss the similarities and differences in their hands. The teacher asks students to share what is the same and what is different between their hands and their friends' hands as a way to promote cultural relevance. As an extension, the students draw their partner's hands using crayons or paints, allowing for a depiction of different skin tones as a form of response.

In Week 5, the teacher uses multisensory materials, such as puppets and a cup, to model an appropriate way for students to ask for what they need or want. Students develop their social skills when they are divided into partners and practice asking for what they need or want appropriately.

In Week 10, the teacher discusses the roles of community helpers during an emergency and how they show care, ask questions, listen, say kind words, and try to help fix a problem. The teacher invites children to role-play as either a firefighter, a police officer, or a medic. Prior to students' role-play opportunities, the teacher plays the role of a police officer and invites a child to play the role of a lost child. The teacher models what an officer says: "Hello, my name is Officer Linda. You look upset. Are you ok?" While asking the questions, the teacher looks directly at the "lost child" to model good listening skills. The student responds, "I'm lost and I'm scared! I can't find my mom!" The teacher says, "That must be scary. I can help you. Can you tell me what happened?" The teacher models for students as she helps the lost child find the way home.

Week 10 also includes guidance on using the gradual release method to provide students with opportunities to develop relationships with others. During the "Pretend Construction" lesson, students work in small cooperative groups to role-play different roles in the construction industry. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher models how to be the architect and then gradually releases the play. A "Teacher Tip" suggests moving the game to the "Pretend and Learn" center as students gain independence.

The materials' texts are developmentally appropriate and serve as a foundation to support the development of social skills. For example, in Week 21, the teacher reads aloud the book *Caring* by Isabel Thomas. After reading, the teacher models ways to be caring as depicted in the "Act It Out" picture cards. After the teacher models each card, students participate in answering questions and then act out the action on the Act It Out Card. The materials also suggest *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain; *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst; *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister; *Owen* by Kevin Henkes; and *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn as additional books to reinforce and/or extend the lesson.

In Week 31, students learn how to understand and respond to emotions as the teacher reads the book *Best Best Friends* by Margaret Chodos-Irvine. The teacher explains that the book is about two best friends who are happy when they are playing with each other, but something happens when one gets special attention. The teacher points out the friends' facial expressions in the pictures and discusses with students how the friends' feelings are changing in the text.

**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 provide opportunities to learn, practice, and apply social skills throughout the day. Full lessons on self-concept skills, self-regulation skills, relationships with others, and social awareness skills, as laid out in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, are evident throughout the materials. Practice opportunities are authentically integrated throughout all other content domains.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include repeated opportunities for students to practice social skills throughout the day. The “Teacher’s Manual” stresses the importance of teachers modeling social and emotional competencies. Teachers model many role-playing activities in a large group before moving the activities to learning centers. For example, in Week 1, teachers introduce “Circle Time” behaviors, and there is a note in the scope and sequence to continue to “reinforce and practice the behaviors” beyond the lesson. In Week 4, during the lesson “I Like Me Class Book,” teachers praise and scaffold as needed. Suggested praise is included, encouraging teachers to say, “I am so excited that you like these things...” Support for developing self-concept is also embedded in the Week 4 science lesson “Body Outlines”; the materials include questions to assist students in controlling their body as it is traced. The teacher also acknowledges the children’s efforts and provides support when needed. The materials also provide teachers guidance in building responsive interpersonal relationships with children through the “Teacher Tips” section in the lessons. Examples include reminding teachers to be sensitive to trauma that students may have experienced and helping them make alternate connections to the learning, or prompting teachers to provide children with choices for expressing their emotions and supporting their emerging abilities. The Teacher Tips section also provides book connections along with suggestions for diverse groupings and settings for skill practice.

In Week 7, the teacher uses hula hoops to introduce the concept of personal space. This lesson provides students the opportunity to practice social skills in a new way. A Teacher Tip suggests teaching this lesson outside or in small groups to allow students to have a change of setting. During the lesson, the teacher models how it is easy to move around when no one else is inside the space of the hula hoop and how it is difficult to move when someone else is inside the hula hoop. The teacher mentions that there are times when activities might require closer space and provides an opportunity for the children to brainstorm words that can be used when we want more space. Students are provided with an opportunity to practice with their own hula hoop to better understand the concept.

In the Week 9 science lesson “Build a Bridge,” the teacher divides learners into pairs. The paired learners work cooperatively to build a bridge using a variety of classroom materials such as blocks, craft sticks, straws, snap cubes, and paper towel rolls. Similarly, in the Week 16 math lesson “Simon Says Shapes,” students practice listening and following directions as they participate in a game using math manipulatives. The teacher introduces the activity with the specific instruction that the learners must listen carefully to Simon’s directions and do exactly what he says. The teacher provides a reminder to “Remember to listen for ‘Simon Says’ before moving your shape.” The learners follow the directions by listening and performing the action that “Simon Says.”

Another example of a lesson that includes suggestions and materials to practice and reinforce skills in a variety of ways can be found in the Week 26 lesson “Problem Solving Part 1.” The teacher prepares a chart labeling the following four actions that can be used to solve problems: breathe it out, say it out, think it out, and try it out. Utilizing the chart and a puppet, the teacher introduces and models steps that the learners can follow when they are experiencing a problem at school, home, or in other places. Students take turns holding the puppet and acting out the problem-solving steps as the other students recall the steps and questions. Teacher Tips suggest guiding the students in using the problem-solving steps throughout the day when they become frustrated with themselves.

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include ideal classroom arrangements that support positive social interactions. The "Physical Arrangement Section" in the "Teacher's Manual" provides support and guidance with classroom and center arrangement to create areas in the classroom that promote social skills development and practice. Materials provide a sample map that defines areas for whole group instruction, small group instruction, and learning centers; all areas have well-defined boundaries that support student interactions as they participate in various activities. Whole group instruction occurs in the "Circle Time" area, which should have enough space for all children to access the letter wall, rules and routines charts, and an easel for teacher use. For small groups, teachers work with groups of 2–5 children at a designated space such as a table or in various learning centers. Learning centers are located around the room and are devoted to

specific topics or activities that allow students to develop and reinforce positive social behaviors.

Throughout the instructional materials, social skills are introduced as whole group lessons and then moved to the learning centers for daily practice. For example, in the Week 10 lesson “Pretend Hospital,” “Teacher Tips” provide specific guidance for practicing social skills in learning centers. The teacher discusses how doctors care for others; the teacher then models caring behaviors and encourages children to imitate in order to express similar behaviors during role-play.

The guidance suggests that the teacher should create a print-rich environment by using pictures and labels to identify specific areas of the room; however, the materials do not provide actual printables of visuals or labels to use. The Teacher’s Manual suggests utilizing a center management sign, which guides the teacher in adjusting the number of children in a center depending on the activity; the manual also suggests using labels, environmental print, and authentic writing to support the development of independence and ownership. The manual discusses the structure of centers, stating that children should be moving to various centers and spending ample time in centers; the manual states the importance of practicing, modeling, and discussing centers.

The instructional materials suggest eight different learning centers and identify how each specific area incorporates social skills practice. For example, the “Math” center is identified as promoting reasoning and problem-solving skills, the “Pretend and Learn” center is identified as allowing children role-play opportunities that promote vocabulary and background knowledge, and the “Construction” center provides opportunities for the children to problem solve and work collaboratively through building with the materials.

The materials give specific guidance in developing appropriate arrangements and include information to consider when developing each area of the room as well as the classroom as a whole. For example, when designing the learning centers, teachers must ensure the centers accommodate three to four children, place active and loud centers away from the calm and quiet centers, include enough interesting materials to share in centers, and establish traffic patterns to allow for easy movement between centers and large group. These materials are grounded in research that supports classroom arrangement, social interactions, and development of social skills, which is cited in the body of work teachers can reference as an additional source of information.

Many factors of the physical classroom space impact students’ social development. The learning materials consider the importance of these factors and guide teachers to understand student development through the use of classroom arrangement. Teachers view the classroom as a whole and then break down the classroom arrangement into various learning settings. Teachers strategically design their classrooms to encourage and support the development of social, verbal, and cognitive skills. The “Classroom Observation Checklist” guides teachers in setting up areas with specificities. For example, the “Writing” center should be located away from loud

centers and should have writing utensils, labels, and books; materials should include images with labels to assist children in locating and returning items to the correct location; print should be at children's eye level to help children interact with the materials independently; and large open spaces should be minimized to decrease the likelihood of children running in the classroom.

The learning materials guide teachers throughout the different learning settings and define how children will learn and develop different skills in either large group or small group instruction. For example, the Week 18 lesson "Big and Small Feelings" is recommended for use in either a small group or whole group instructional setting. Similarly, the learning materials specify some activities to be presented in a large group setting (e.g., "Circle Time," which is defined as a space for all students to work as a large group), and some in a small group setting (e.g., the Week 29 lesson "How Many Syllables in a Name?").

Opportunities for positive social interactions occur throughout the day and are incorporated into both large and small group activities. For example, community-building activities such as "Student of the Week," lessons that identify feelings such as "Feeling Happy and Sad" in Week 13, and self-regulation lessons such as "Hands Off: Hot Potato" in Week 30 occur during Circle Time. During learning centers and small group lessons, students work to refine social skills through activities such as role-playing in the "Pretend Veterinarian's Office" in Week 25, developing self-concept in small group lessons by creating the "I Like Me Class Book" in Week 4, and developing relationships in the "Architects and Engineers" lesson in Week 8.

The materials include resources that provide guidance and examples for the structures and processes of classroom management in order to support positive social interactions. Examples are available for creating classroom rules, routines, and procedures. One recommendation is the use of "equity sticks." Equity sticks teach students the expectations for when they are answering questions during learning time. Each student's name is written on a popsicle stick. The teacher models how students are to stay quiet, keep their hands in their laps, and think about their answers as they wait for the teacher to choose a student to answer by selecting an equity stick.

In Week 1, the materials provide the teacher guidance for starting the school year with a structured environment that helps support positive interactions. The teacher turns bookshelves around, covers shelves, and marks off areas to hide centers until it is time to open them. When teachers are preparing to open centers, only a few materials are placed in each area. To assist with teaching clean-up, the teacher clearly labels containers and shelves with pictures.

Students identify and follow simple routines, practice ways to share cooperatively, and connect personal emotions with characters in books and with classmates. The teacher prepares the whole group lesson "Circle Time Behaviors" by using a rug or other designated area. In this lesson, the teacher models behavioral expectations for whole group lessons. Once the lesson is complete, the teacher should consistently reinforce and practice the behaviors each time children participate in read-alouds and other structured Circle Time lessons and activities.



**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 include numerous daily opportunities for students to develop their gross motor skills through movement. Throughout the materials, students have daily opportunities to develop their fine motor skills through tasks that do not require writing.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials include activities to develop physical skills and refine motor development through movement. Throughout the materials, there are daily opportunities for fine motor skill development in various learning centers. For example, in the lesson “Sculpting Animals,” children roll playdough to create and sculpt an animal of their choosing. The materials provide activities both as individual lessons listed in the scope and sequence under the “Physical Development” section or in the theme units under the “Whole Group, Small Group Lessons” section. For example, in the lesson “Don’t Let Go!” students use tongs to move objects one at a time and place them in an egg carton. In the theme “It’s Harvest Time,” the Physical Development section provides teachers with a lesson on picking crops and crop-picking motions to model for students to practice.

The materials integrate the use of developmentally appropriate gross motor skills in other content-area lessons. For example, the Week 3 lesson “Hands Off: Hot Potato” combines social and gross motor skills as students learn to wait their turn to pass the object before the music stops. Additional opportunities for gross motor movement are included in other subject areas; for example, in Week 3, a phonemic awareness lesson called “Sentence Hopscotch” incorporates hopscotch; in Week 7, there is a math “Hokey Pokey Shapes” lesson. The Week 9 “Step It Up” math lesson “Color Pattern Necklace” integrates fine motor skills; students create an AB pattern necklace by threading pasta noodles onto a thread.

The theme guides provide guidance to set up learning centers that correlate with the theme and incorporate opportunities for fine motor skill acquisition. For example, in the Week 18 theme “Animals All Around,” the learning centers include a “Creativity” center and a “Pretend and Learn” center. In the Creativity center, students use various art supplies, such as glue, construction paper, googly eyes, paint, and markers, to construct paper-bowl turtles. In the Pretend and Learn center, students use props to role-play a veterinarian’s office.

The materials include activities that promote child movement to develop gross motor skills. In the Week 20 lesson “Hot Potato: Letter Sounds,” students toss a bean bag on a teacher-prepared letter grid and then say the letter name, letter sound, and a word that starts with the letter. In the Week 22 “Pitch and Catch,” the teacher models throwing the ball to a student; students watch as the teacher instructs the student to hold her arms out so she can catch the ball. The teacher provides the steps of how to communicate with each other before throwing the ball and also models catching the ball. Students participate by chorally repeating the steps.

**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 provide teacher guidance on modeling safe and healthy habits for students and communicate for both teachers and students the connection between physical and mental health. Throughout the materials, a variety of opportunities and activities are available for students to practice and reflect on safe and healthy habits.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include activities that develop safe and healthy habits in students. The “Teacher’s Manual” suggests scheduling time in the daily schedule for both planned outdoor activities as well as unstructured activities to facilitate movement. In the Week 3 lesson “Hands Off: Hot Potato,” students regulate behavior and use kind words and actions to make friends. The teacher models passing a stuffed animal to the next person as the music plays; the aim is to not be holding the stuffed animal when the music stops. After the teacher models the activity, students practice it. If students are out, the teacher reminds them that they can cheer on their friends. The “Teacher Tips” section recommends the teacher look for opportunities to give positive feedback and praise to children as they practice self-regulation. In this activity, students learn about the connection between physical and mental health; they learn to support the success of others and regulate their personal behaviors while participating in a gross motor activity.

The materials encourage children to identify safe and healthy habits in their daily life. For example, in the Week 23 science lesson “Paper Bag Food Test,” children explore which foods have fat in them and which do not, and they discuss healthy eating habits. This lesson includes a list of books to read that reinforce the development of healthy habits.

The Week 24 lesson “Healthy Choices” includes picture cards of foods, activities, and habits such as washing hands and brushing teeth, which the teacher uses to support children in

developing safe and healthy habits. Students sort the cards into two categories: healthy habits and unhealthy habits. Teachers can model healthy habits using the provided sample dialogue and suggestions for additional books to extend the lesson.

The lessons provide guidance on how to model safe and healthy habits, including tips and dialogue for teachers to follow within each section of the lessons. For example, in the lesson “How Far Does A Germ Travel,” the teacher has a script for the entire lesson; it includes guidance for scaffolding the lesson up or down depending on student needs. Similarly, the “Making a Menu” lesson offers teacher guidance to address good eating habits. Materials suggest turning the “Pretend and Learn” center into a gym with a snack bar for independent playtime, and they provide tips for roles and activities at that center. Materials also suggest the “Classroom Library/Listening” center should include the song “This Is the Way We Wash Our Hands.”

## 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 teacher guidance on modeling active listening for understanding and support scaffolding opportunities for students to listen for understanding. Throughout, materials provide opportunities for students to hear sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar in a variety of contexts as well as conversations that follow conversation norms.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The learning materials provide guidance on developing students' listening skills. The "Teacher's Manual" includes suggestions for the teacher to implement the use of nonverbal cues to reduce the number of distractions during lesson time if students need to use the restroom or get a tissue. Although a tangible visual is not provided, the Teacher's Manual provides a list of nonverbal cues that can be included pictorially, on a poster at the children's eye level, as a reminder to use active listening behaviors. Additionally, an outline is present for the teacher to utilize to support and scaffold daily opportunities for students to listen for understanding. The materials suggest playing a game such as "Simon Says" or repeating a clapping pattern. In the game of "Simon Says," students demonstrate receptive listening skills.

At the beginning of the school year, students are introduced to conversation norms that will continue throughout the year. Students learn the norms for the greeting and "Circle Time" portions of the day. These lessons are repeated to develop the norms and expectations. The teacher models expected listening behaviors during the Week 1 "Circle Time Behaviors" lesson. These behaviors include looking at the person who is speaking and keeping your lips closed. The teacher models what this looks like and explains how it is easier to hear when you are not making noises. Similarly, during the Week 1 "Greetings" lesson, the teacher explains and models how to greet someone by smiling, making eye contact, and shaking hands. Week 1 also provides

repeated opportunities, integrated throughout the day, for students to hear language and support their listening development. In the “Book & Print Reading” lesson “Act Out Nursery Rhymes,” the students participate in a read-aloud of “Three Little Kittens” and act out what takes place. The teacher models the activity using picture cards and then chooses three students to use props to act out the rhyme while the remaining students recite it. The nursery rhyme and the props are placed in the “Dramatic Play” center for students to practice independently.

In the Week 6 lesson “Hear It, Say It,” students listen with their eyes closed while the teacher says a phrase; then, students repeat it. This activity, which supports active listening, can also be repeated with small peer groups. Additionally, in the “Question of the Day” activity, the teacher tells the students that she will walk around and listen to their conversations and make suggestions to them, demonstrating listening for comprehension. This lesson allows the students to practice listening and responding to peers.

In Week 7, the teacher transforms the “Pretend and Learn” center into a post office and describes possible roles for students to play while in the center. The students use props in the center to engage in role-play, developing conversation skills. The Teacher’s Manual gives examples of conversation norms and nonverbal cues that the teacher can establish at the beginning of the school year and use to support listening skill development during centers. For example, to remind a student to look at the speaker, the teacher can point to her own eye and then point to the person talking.

During the Week 8 lesson “Are the Words the Same or Different,” the teacher models active listening when identifying if sounds are the same or different. The teacher models and explains nonverbal conversational rules for listening for sounds that are the same or different. Once students are ready, the teacher models and explains how the students will use thumbs-up or thumbs-down to determine if the sounds are the same or different. The teacher monitors for understanding and scaffolds as needed. The lesson also includes an instructional video and teacher tips for additional support. The materials include examples of think-alouds to support lesson understanding and active listening for comprehension. Lessons in Week 8 provide texts that include a variety of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and correct grammar, which provides the students support in oral language comprehension through predictable patterns. A grammatically correct, sequenced script helps guide the teacher with changing nursery rhymes for students to listen to. For example, during the modeling and explanation section of the “Predictable Patterns” lesson, following scripted prompts, the teacher says, “I am going to begin by reading the nursery rhyme of Jack and Jill.” The teacher reads the rhyme and then says, “Now I am going to read it again, but pay close attention to how I am going to change the nursery rhyme.” The script instructs the teacher to change the name of Jack and Jill to the names of children in the classroom. Students listen to the rhyme and discuss what they heard that was different, showing an understanding of listening for predictable patterns.

Week 9 provides teachers with guidance on how to incorporate strategies that support listening comprehension and language during transition times throughout the day. For example, the

teacher instructs students to become a theme character or object as they move to the next activity center. In another example, the teacher engages in storytelling during wait times and leads students in acting out and saying nursery rhymes.

In the Week 13 lesson “Participate With Puppets,” students use puppets to participate in greeting conversations. The teacher models conversations in a variety of classroom settings using different puppets, such as finger puppets, stick puppets, and sock puppets. The teacher role-plays using two puppets in a greeting conversation. After the teacher models the activity, the students role-play with the puppets by participating in greeting conversations with another student’s puppet. Week 13 also provides lessons that encourage children to listen for understanding. During the small group math lesson “Color and Size,” students sort linking cubes and bears. The teacher tells the students what they will do and then asks which colors are available. As the students begin to sort by color, the teacher asks where to put the next manipulative. After they have been sorted by color, she asks if there is another way to sort the manipulatives. A video example is also provided to assist teachers in the lesson, modeling multiple questions to ask the students.

In the Week 34 lesson “Life Cycle of a Butterfly,” the teacher reads aloud a book about the life cycle of a butterfly. To support active listening, the teacher stops on identified pages and asks the students literal and inferential questions. The students take turns recalling and answering questions. The lesson also provides suggestions for upward and downward scaffolded questions to support students’ listening and comprehension abilities. After the read-aloud, the teacher asks the students to recall the stages of the life cycle and then extends the activity by instructing them on how to make a life cycle model. The students participate in the whole group setting to begin the activity and finish the activity in the learning center. While the students work on their model, the teacher asks individual students what part of the life cycle they are working on.

While the materials provide text to support the development of listening skills, digital or e-stories for independent engagement were not found in this curriculum.

## 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 producing sounds and use appropriate sentence structure and grammar in a variety of contexts; materials also contain teacher guidance on providing corrective feedback to students regarding each of these speaking skills. Materials assist teachers in setting up and facilitating activities that allow students to practice production of a variety of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar as they work collaboratively to engage in discussion using conversation norms.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The learning materials provide guidance on developing students' speaking skills and developing the classroom environment to promote the practice of authentic oral language production. The online "Classroom Environment Checklist" supports the teacher in setting up the classroom to prompt the practice of oral language through authentic experiences. This includes how to set up independent learning centers where students practice with lessons that have been previously taught in whole group. For example, the "Play and Pretend" center is set up to incorporate conversational interactions amongst students; the center is always set up based on the current theme, such as a veterinarian's office. Guidance is also provided to support identifying teachable moments that facilitate student-to-teacher and peer-to-peer conversations throughout the school day. The scope and sequence provides teachers guidance on the best setting for their lessons, including transitions, whole group instruction, small group instruction, and centers. The instructional settings help teachers facilitate speaking and conversation throughout the day. For instance, the learning centers are designed to purposefully facilitate



peer-to-peer conversation, whereas small group instruction will include more student-to-teacher conversation.

In the Week 5 lesson “Act It Out,” the learning materials utilize both small and large group settings to facilitate oral language activities. The teacher engages students verbally in center play through role-playing and modeling desired language skills. The materials direct the teacher to choose a story that is familiar and repetitive. The materials provide an excerpt from the book *The Little Red Hen* as a sample; they then guide the teacher to model a reenactment of the story with puppets. After the teacher models, students take turns acting out the story in groups of four. The teacher provides prompts for the students as needed for students to verbally answer questions.

In Week 6, students use and practice speaking skills during the math lesson “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe.” Additionally, this lesson uses music as a multisensory tool for increasing speech skills and speech production. The teacher models the song “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe,” and then models tapping the count on her leg. The students sing the song with the teacher, tapping out the last count on the song and chorally counting out loud. The Week 6 lesson “Tricky Sounds” provides prompts for the teacher to explain specific letter sounds by modeling sound production of the beginning sounds. The students watch the teacher’s mouth to support the practice of proper sound formation and speech production. Scaffolding techniques are provided for students who are unable to identify the beginning sound of a word: Materials provide extra emphasis on the sounds and word formation with the mouth.

During the “Classroom Scavenger Hunt” in Week 10, the teacher explains what a scavenger hunt is and then selects an item to use. The teacher asks the children to identify the item and uses tips provided in the instructional materials to provide corrective feedback to support students who may not be able to appropriately identify the items. Materials provide scaffolds to assist the children. For example, if a student needs a downward scaffold, the teacher can provide a clue or show a picture of the item to assist the student in locating it. Upward scaffolds ask students to provide additional descriptions to help others locate the item. The scaffolds assist children with differing verbal speaking abilities.

The materials include instructional recommendations for the set-up of theme-related centers to support student conversations. In Week 14, in the theme “The Sky Above,” all learning centers have a science focus. The “ABC” center includes the “Raindrop Match” activity; the classroom library contains books about the weather; the “Construction” center has students create weather scenes; in the “Creativity” center, students create windsocks; the “Play and Pretend” center is transformed into a weather station; and in the “Writing” center, students write about a time they got rained on. These opportunities to engage in play around a related context or theme supports the practice of speaking skills and incorporating newly learned vocabulary in conversations.

During the Week 15 lesson “Making Predictions With Narrative Texts,” the students answer open-ended questions and use expressive language and critical thinking during their response

development. In the lesson, the teacher asks students to make predictions about the story before reading the text. After reading the text, the teacher asks if any of their predictions were correct. Students provide answers based on their original response and explain why they think their predictions were correct or incorrect. Students have multiple opportunities to think critically and use expressive language to answer the teacher's open-ended questions.

In the Week 17 lesson "Environmental Print Interactive Chart," the teacher uses environmental print and a repetitive sentence stem to encourage children to participate in an oral language activity. The children repeat the sentence stem, adding in their name and a favorite item they select from the environmental print choices, which provides students practice with speaking and repetition. For example, a student named Johnny would say, "Mmm good, mmm good, Johnny likes Cheerios, mmm good."

In the Week 29 lesson "Asking and Answering Questions," the teacher models and explains how to ask questions before, during, and after reading a book to guide comprehension of the story. The teacher guides the students through asking and answering questions during the read-aloud. The teacher pauses throughout the reading to instruct the students to turn and talk to their partners to share their answers and questions. The teacher writes the students' answers and questions on chart paper to track the conversation. This lesson also provides an opportunity for students to practice producing sounds and use appropriate sentence structure and grammar.

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Manual” provides guidance for teachers to create a print-rich environment that focuses on vocabulary development throughout the classroom and the lesson/theme design. For example, the letter wall includes key vocabulary for daily use as part of the classroom routines. Vocabulary is also highlighted in content areas and learning centers; students apply new vocabulary and continue to use it through play. During center time, students use vocabulary in authentic ways as they learn and play together. The materials provide a variety of strategies for supporting teachers in modeling vocabulary. For example, teachers can pair language with gestures and use visual aids to support vocabulary development for all students. The materials also include a list of additional words correlating to the theme for each week under the “Theme Extender” tab. The Teacher’s Manual encourages teachers to post the new vocabulary words with pictures for student reference on the classroom “Word Wall.” Academic and content-specific vocabulary is also spiraled throughout the materials.

In the Week 3 lesson “Acting Out Words,” students interact with and use new vocabulary words in context in meaningful ways by acting them out. The materials provide guidance and a script for the teacher to introduce new vocabulary words from the story *Bear Snores On*, referencing where the words are used in the story. The teacher provides a child-friendly definition of each word and then asks the students to act out the word. The students act out the word and then chorally repeat the vocabulary word. “Teacher Tips” provide guidance for the teacher to use this strategy to introduce vocabulary words with other books.

The included vocabulary words contain a balance of high-frequency words and new and rare words. The words are introduced using a thematic and playful approach. For example, during the “My Home and Family” theme in Week 3, a lesson called “How Does Your Family Celebrate?” introduces the word *customs* using pictures; students describe examples of customs to their classmates. That same week, songs and rhymes support the practice of high-frequency home and family words in songs such as “Ten in the Bed.” In learning centers, the children practice new vocabulary words during play, such as when role-playing different family members, making phone calls, or taking care of pets.

In the Week 8 lesson “Talking About Music,” vocabulary words are the focus of instruction. The students use appropriate vocabulary to learn about music. The materials provide guidance and a script for the teacher to introduce the identified vocabulary words, provide a child-friendly definition, and act out each vocabulary word. For example, the script instructs the teacher to introduce the vocabulary word *tap*. The teacher provides a child-friendly definition: “To tap something is to hit softly with something else.” The teacher then provides an example: “I am going to tap my drumstick on the drum.”

The materials provide a variety of strategies to support teachers in modeling an array of vocabulary words. In Week 14, using the activity “Pictures Need a Thousand Words,” the students use descriptive words to tell about photographs. The teacher is provided with prompts to encourage students’ critical thinking. The students review this lesson again in Week 28.

New vocabulary words are introduced in a fun and sequential way throughout the instructional materials. For example, in the lesson “Chickie Chickie Roo Roo,” in Week 23, the teacher begins singing a rhyming song with accompanying actions. After a few times of modeling, the children are encouraged to chorally sing along. Over time, the teacher adds extra verses with new words and new actions. Additional provided tips include suggestions to adjust the speed depending on the students’ abilities.

Week 23 provides an example of how the materials follow a progression of vocabulary development. The “Book & Print Reading” content area provides two lessons that guide the teacher through strategies for teaching vocabulary development during a read-aloud and after a read-aloud. In the lesson “Teaching Vocabulary During a Read Aloud,” the materials provide target vocabulary words along with child-friendly definitions. The materials provide criteria to consider in preparation for the lesson, such as unknown words, target words for the story, and words students can use. In the additional lesson “Teaching Vocabulary After a Read Aloud,” the materials recommend the teacher make vocabulary picture cards to go with the vocabulary provided. The teacher reviews the vocabulary words with the students, and the students practice using the vocabulary words.

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

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

## Meets 4/4

The materials include a variety of strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs), including strategies for how to use the child’s first language as a foundation for learning English. The development of students’ vocabulary in both English and the home language is also supported by the materials.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Specific strategies to support language acquisition for ELs can be found in the “Teacher’s Manual.” The Teacher’s Manual guides teachers to use effective strategies such as creating safe environments, providing academic supports, building vocabulary, and leveraging the home language in the classroom. The lessons include built-in scaffolds to provide the “just right” amount of language support for students to access the content. Materials also provide teacher guidance and support in understanding the importance of using the students’ first language in conjunction with English. The learning materials provide an entire course dedicated to the importance of first language development in their e-learning series called “eCircle English Language Learners,” which dives into the research and use of the first language as a means of acquiring the second language. The Teacher’s Manual also suggests that the teacher post signs in the students’ home language, read books that represent their culture, or invite parents to participate in the classroom.

In Week 1, students develop oral language skills by participating in a “Greetings” song. The materials provide a “Teacher Tip” to support ELs: The tip encourages ELs to greet their classmates in different ways, such as with gestures (i.e., fist bump, high five, wave) and simple words.

Pre-teaching is another strategy used to support ELs in acquiring a new language. Prior to introducing the “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear” lesson in Week 4, the teacher pre-teaches the English

instructions for body movements and provides modeling and practice time before teaching the group the song and movements.

In the Week 10 lesson “Scavenger Hunt,” the materials support building on a child’s first language. After being shown a picture card of a classroom object, students name the item in the picture and search for the object. Picture representation is a strategy that supports children who are developing an English vocabulary. If the child does not know the name of the item, the teacher names it for them. The learning materials provide a downloadable PDF of picture cards that feature familiar classroom objects labeled in English and Spanish for the teacher and students to use with this lesson.

The materials also include two lessons in the family engagement portion of the weekly scope and sequence; these are extensions that incorporate the home language in the week’s thematic learning. For example, in Week 14, the theme “The Sky Above Me” includes a family engagement lesson in Spanish, “Sombras y Luz,” which focuses on playing with light to create shadows. Students learn about sunlight and the creation of shadows in class, and they practice in their home language with their parents at home.

The materials also provide opportunities to build upon the students’ first language by including visual supports, props, and movement in order to make the second language accessible to students. For example, in Weeks 22–24, the themes include the use of real fruits and vegetables as students learn new food vocabulary words and the use of gestures and acting out to connect to new vocabulary related to exercising. Similarly, when learning about landforms during Week 28, following a provided Teacher Tip, the teacher uses motions to teach the English words for different landforms; for example, arms are held in a peak shape to indicate mountains. Students can practice this to help them remember the word.

Although the Teacher’s Manual extensively discusses the importance of supporting ELs in the classroom, the materials do not show explicit instruction specifically targeting EL students. The teacher can use the tips or scaffolding techniques with the students who need support, but specific dialogue is not written for EL support within the activities. In addition, the entire curriculum is available in Spanish.

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

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

## Meets 4/4

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide opportunities for students to develop oral language skills through authentic text conversations. Students actively listen to a variety of texts, both fiction and nonfiction. The focus of the read-alouds varies between retelling, making predictions, sequencing, story elements, character comparison, and asking and answering questions. The lessons all include well-planned questions that encourage students to engage in discussions to better understand information from the texts. Teachers have built-in supports for read-alouds through scripted lessons, teacher suggestions, and scaffolds to support struggling students and to extend learning.

During the activity “Introduction to Guiding Questions” in Week 5, the teacher reads the story *Little Quack* by Lauren Thompson. In this lesson, the students listen actively to the text and then engage in conversation and open-ended discussions with their peers and the teacher, using well-planned question prompts. The well-planned questions lead to a guiding question, showing students the importance of listening to all parts of the story for understanding. The guiding question that the teacher asks is, “What do we learn about Little Quack?” The materials explain that text comprehension increases when students have something to do after they read. The teacher engages the students in conversation about what the character is doing; the lesson

provides tips for the teacher to allow the students to share with one another before answering questions, promoting oral language development. The students are encouraged to think about what they learned about the character at the beginning, middle, and end of the story. The activity provides scaffolding ideas for the teacher to ask more open-ended questions, such as “Why do you think Little Quack was finally brave enough to jump in the water?”

The materials also include opportunities for children to work collaboratively as they engage in discussions. In the lesson “Making Connections to Background Knowledge” from Week 8, students make connections between the text read aloud and their own background knowledge. The teacher models how to make connections. She reads a part of the text and then stops and intentionally shares her own personal connection specific to the story. The teacher asks provided questions during and after reading. The students share their answers with their partners. This activity supports the development of oral language through authentic conversations related to the text with their peers. The students have multiple opportunities to engage in conversation with their partners throughout the duration of the read-aloud. The lesson also includes a scaffold section that provides tips on how to support and expand students’ conversations. Tips include using hand signals or anchor charts to represent listening strategies. The materials recommend the use of this lesson across content areas and throughout the school year. The materials also recommend using anchor charts with visual supports to facilitate student discussions during center time.

Throughout the instructional materials, children engage in discussions that provide opportunities for them to share information and build their oral language related to texts read aloud. During the lesson “Story Elements: Events” in Week 12, the teacher uses a graphic organizer and intentional steps to incorporate oral language related to the story *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. Before reading the story, the teacher sets up a graphic organizer with a box for *beginning*, another box for *middle*, and the third box for *end*; a “Teacher Tip” suggests that the graphic organizer might be best utilized after the first reading of the story. During the first reading, the teacher introduces the story and discusses the vocabulary word *event* so that students are prepared to identify important events during the story. While reading, the teacher pauses throughout the story to provide children an opportunity to discuss the story and answer questions. After reading, the teacher first revisits the vocabulary word introduced at the beginning of the story and then asks students if they recall any important events from the story. After the first reading, students have an opportunity to share their ideas about the text; after additional readings, students are provided with an opportunity to write their ideas in a graphic organizer. This provides students with oral and written ways to share information about the text.

In Week 14, the activity “Multiple Reading of the Same Text” provides a script for the teacher when reading the story *Bunny Cakes* by Rosemary Wells. The teacher reads the story multiple times over several days and asks planned questions about different story elements. Students share information and ideas about the text with the class, providing opportunities for building oral language through authentic discussions related to texts read aloud. The teacher uses



scaffolding techniques to help students, returning to pages with the answers to questions or asking more difficult questions, such as how they think a character feels.

Students practice listening and speaking through lessons such as “Be a Storyteller” in Week 15. In this lesson, the teacher introduces a previously-read text and says that students will get to take turns telling the story. The teacher reads a page to the class and then asks for a student to retell the page to the class. The teacher can ask prompting questions, such as “What did you learn on this page?” or “What happened next?” The process repeats every two pages read so that other students can have a turn to participate in discussing what was read. Additional tips for the teacher include asking questions such as “Who is that?” or “What is happening here?” to expand on the retelling of the story. The book is then moved to the “Listening” center so that children can continue conversations about the story.

In the Week 25 lesson “Using Wordless Picture Books,” children practice listening and speaking skills by engaging in conversations as they create a story for a wordless picture book. The teacher introduces the book *A Ball For Daisy* by Chris Raschka, explaining that it does not have any words. The teacher models, thinking aloud about how to create a story to go with the picture. The teacher guides the students through the beginning pictures and includes the students by asking what they should name one of the characters. The lesson also includes Teacher Tips to expand the students’ conversation; teachers can ask inference or predictive questions, such as “What do you think is going to happen?” Students engage with the story by answering the questions and providing story suggestions. Another Teacher Tip suggests encouraging students to turn and talk with a partner to practice listening and authentic peer conversation.

In Week 29, in the lesson “Asking and Answering Questions,” students ask questions during a read-aloud; the teacher tracks the questions on chart paper. The lesson is scripted, providing open-ended questions and a good think-aloud sequence for teacher support during the reading. Students are to ask questions based on the book cover and throughout the read-aloud. The teacher stops as the students find answers to their questions throughout the reading. After the reading, the teacher and students review their questions and answers. The materials include read-alouds throughout the day and across content areas, with book recommendations found in the unit theme planner.

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide direct (explicit) instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills. The teacher uses information found in the “Teacher’s Manual” to set up a sound-rich environment. Phonological awareness skills are embedded across content areas, such as “Alphabet Knowledge,” “Language & Communication,” and “Writing,” to provide several opportunities to practice these skills throughout the day and week. Downloadable picture cards are available for many lessons to support phonological awareness tasks.

The Week 3 lesson “Listening For Words” focuses on sounds in isolation rather than connected to print. In this lesson, students segment spoken sentences into words, using their fingers for representation. The teacher models and explains identifying each word heard in a sentence, using her fingers to represent each time a word is heard. The materials provide instructions and examples of simple, single-syllable words to be used during guided practice. The students participate by repeating the sentence after the teacher and using their fingers to represent how many words are in the sentence. Students continue to practice this activity during center time. The materials also connect phonological awareness skills to letter knowledge instruction in that same week during the Alphabet Knowledge lesson “Letter Introduction Routine.” This lesson provides an introduction, review, and continued practice of the alphabet letters and their sounds. Students practice the name, sound, and formation of a target letter. As part of the

lesson, the teacher introduces and teaches the sound of the target letter, showing the connection of phonological awareness skills to alphabetic knowledge skills.

The materials provide a research-based developmental continuum for phonological awareness in the Teacher's Manual. The materials are sequenced as follows: sentence segmentation, compound words, syllables, alliteration, rhyme, onset-rime, and phonemes. Phonological awareness instruction goes from large units to smaller units across time to accommodate and build all students' skill levels. In the beginning, students focus on identifying units of language and blending sounds together; this is followed by the production of language and then segmentation and deletion of units.

Materials include frequent and adequate practice in phonological awareness, which begins with oral activities and progresses into activities with the use of print. Read-alouds begin with activities such as the "Picture Walk" in Week 5. In this activity, the teacher shows the pictures in the story and uses prompting questions to help students make predictions, build on vocabulary, and make connections to earlier experiences. During the Picture Walk, students only need to use oral and auditory skills to understand the meanings of words; as the year progresses, students engage in activities that require more complex phonological awareness skills.

Throughout the year, the instructional materials provide regular and direct instruction for phonological awareness skills and often embed movement to support the children's understanding of phonological awareness skills. For example, in Week 5, during a small group lesson called "Bounce a Word," children bounce a ball for each word in a sentence. First, the teacher models how to participate, saying the first sentence and bouncing the ball with each word. After this, the teacher asks a student to bounce the ball one time for each word in the sentence.

The lessons continue to provide phonological awareness skills development opportunities in learning centers, such as in "Syllable Shopping" in the "ABC" center during Week 10. In this lesson, students go "shopping" for grocery items and clap the number of syllables in each item. When they "get home," they put the grocery items away into three baskets: a one-syllable-word basket, a two-syllable-word basket, and a three-syllable-word basket. This activity is a playful opportunity to manipulate sounds and provides an additional instructional setting for learning.

The materials include daily practice in phonological awareness throughout the school year. Students have a "Phonological Awareness" time as well as opportunities to practice during center times, "Morning Message," writing, and read-alouds. The theme guides provide opportunities for students to practice phonological awareness skills with the use of theme-related words and through activities in the ABC center, such as "Rhyming Picture Match." The materials connect phonological skills to letter knowledge through lessons like Morning Message, where students can assist in writing words by identifying the initial sounds of a given word that the teacher is about to write. In the Week 12 Morning Message, the materials prompt teachers to use different questions to engage students based on their individual learning levels. One of the questions asks students to identify the initial sound of the word *library*; the teacher

asks students to listen for the initial sound, “/l/ /l/ library.” Students, as a group, answer /l/; the teacher then writes the letter on the board and continues to write the word *library*.

The materials provide direct instruction of each phonological skill through a variety of activities that incorporate meaningful play across a variety of instructional settings. During the Week 13 lesson, “What’s the Word,” students learn about onset and rime to form one-syllable words with movement. The teacher tells students that they will play a game where the teacher breaks a word apart, and the students have to put it back together. The teacher extends one hand out and says /s/, then extends the other hand and says /un/; the teacher asks the students to put the sounds together as she claps and says *sun*. Next, students use their hands and repeat the sounds the teacher is making to make new words. This activity can be done in a whole group or a small group setting. The materials provide the teacher with a script to teach students how to blend the onset and rime. There are also scaffolds to support learners that need more support or an extension to the lesson. The materials support student learning through the use of manipulatives, visual cards, and movement. The lessons grow in complexity as the year progresses, guided by the developmental continuum for phonological awareness found in the Teacher’s Manual.

In Week 30, students engage in an alliteration activity called “Tongue-Twisters Practice.” Students must understand how to match beginning sounds, and they create their own silly tongue-twisters using each other’s names. This activity allows students to connect phonological awareness skills to introductory letter knowledge, ensuring students understand matching letter 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 follow a research-based, strategic sequence for the introduction of alphabetic knowledge and provide teacher guidance on directly introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide direct (explicit) instruction and opportunities for student practice in alphabetic knowledge skills. Throughout the school year, the material provides regular, systematic modeling of alphabetic knowledge learning using a routine. The “Letter Introduction Routine” is used to introduce each letter; in scripted lessons, which contain instructional support for teachers, students practice the letter name, letter sound, and formation of targeted letters. The letter name is taught first, and then the letter sound is then introduced; finally, the teacher and students write the letter in the air with their fingers. The materials provide a variety of opportunities to manipulate and interact with letters in whole group settings, small group settings, learning centers, and throughout the learning environment. This procedure for introducing letters is supported by a rationale for the educator regarding the sequence for the introduction of alphabet knowledge in the curriculum. The materials provide a chart that introduces two to three letters a week and spirals the letters back around. Each letter has three weeks of explicit instruction. The “Teacher’s Manual” references the teaching of alphabet knowledge through opportunities such as name activities and name games, the “ABC” center, the “Writing” center, print referencing during shared readings and read-alouds, during transitions, and through the use of the “Letter Wall.” Instructions on how to create a letter-rich environment can be found in the “Classroom Environment Observation Checklist” within the online tutorials. This tool provides teachers with guidance for creating a print-rich environment in which books and writing tools are available in all centers to support the practice of alphabet knowledge.

In Week 3, materials introduce the letters *M*, *S*, and *K* via the “Letter Introduction Routine.” Following the introduction, students are given the opportunity to model and use letter names in a playful way during the “Alphabet Hokey Pokey” activity. The teacher gives students target letters and sings, “You put the letter A in, you put the letter A out.” This same week, “Transitions for Letter Knowledge” provides four different transition activities. One activity is “Letter Match,” and it can be used when sending children to learning centers. It requires two sets of letter cards; one set is distributed to the children. The teacher holds up one of the cards from the second set and tells the student holding that letter to go and pick his/her center. This continues until all the children have selected a center. There are also many opportunities to play with letters at the ABC center; these activities rotate each week.

In the first three weeks of the materials, letters are not introduced, but students’ names are used to create familiarity, supporting a research-based, strategic introduction to letter knowledge. In Week 6, the teacher introduces the “Disappearing Name Game.” In this activity, students have a card with their name on it; as the teacher calls out letters, students must cross them off. Also in Week 6, students play “Alphabet Bingo,” covering up letters on their board as they are called; the first one to get four in a row wins. The teacher places this game in centers for the students to play with each other. Through games such as Alphabet Bingo, students are afforded rich and playful opportunities to experience, manipulate, and interact with letters. The Teacher’s Guide also provides guidance for setting up informal alphabetic-knowledge learning opportunities in the ABC center or using the Letter Wall.

**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

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide direct (explicit) instruction in print knowledge and concepts and opportunities for student practice. The materials provide direct instruction in print awareness skills; activities and lessons follow a developmentally appropriate continuum. In the first few weeks of the scope and sequence, the materials focus on environmental print, print awareness, and teaching students how to care for and use books. The lessons increase in complexity from shared read-alouds to using illustrations to make predictions. Instruction is supported by guidance in the "Teacher's Manual" for setting up a print-rich environment. Following this guidance, teachers fill the classroom with a variety of print materials, such as books, writing materials, a letter wall, labels, environmental print, and authentic print; these are displayed at eye level to promote independent exploration and engagement.

The instructional materials include daily opportunities for children to observe, engage with, and experience authentic print within the school day. For example, in the daily "Morning Message" (introduced in Week 1 and used throughout the year), the teacher writes sentences; students

watch and eventually participate in the process of writing. For example, students watch as the teacher writes, “Today is Friday. We will learn about recycling.” The teacher discusses print concepts as she writes the letters and characters. The print concept skills that are highlighted as part of the Morning Message include directionality of writing, letter formation, spaces between words, and more. As students develop their writing skills, they are asked to assist in writing parts of the Morning Message. Additionally, the “ABC” center, “Writing” center, and classroom library/“Listening” center all provide opportunities for students to interact with print in various formats.

The materials provide daily direct instruction in print awareness and connect it to books and texts. In Week 1, in the lesson “Little Red Box,” students sing a song (that features different names) and discuss the directionality of print. The teacher writes out the song on sentence strips and displays them on the whiteboard. The teacher instructs students on how to read the words: the teacher says that when we read words, we move from left to right, and then she models this by pointing at the words from left to right. The teacher and students read the words together. As they come to the end of a sentence strip, the teacher asks students to take a pause; during the pause, the teacher explains that you must go back to the beginning and start reading the next line. The students and teacher continue reading the song together. Once they have read all the sentence strips, they do it again.

The “Teacher’s Guide” provides a rationale for the teacher, explaining that children often recognize environmental print before they recognize print in books. Teachers use environmental print throughout their classroom. In the “Word Detective” activity, which cycles through the year, appearing in Weeks 14 and 26, students answer and ask questions to find a word using its distinguishing features. As the year progresses, the teacher and students can enhance the questions based on new concepts; for example, a word that has curved letters versus a word that starts with a particular sound.

Students engage with print in a variety of ways. In Weeks 15 and 19, in the “Letter, Word, Picture Swat” activity, students must recognize the difference between a letter, a word, and a picture by swatting with a fly swatter. “Sight Word Swat” makes the same activity more difficult, using sight words rather than letters. This is a series of activities that becomes more complex as students’ knowledge increases. In Week 22, students are supported in understanding the everyday function of print via environmental print. In “Making a Menu,” students find pictures to place on a class restaurant menu and provide words for the teacher to write. The menu is placed in the “Pretend and Learn” center, allowing students to engage with authentic print in the classroom.



**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' text selection is at the appropriate level of complexity for students' developmental level; the selection includes a variety of text types, such as fiction, nonfiction, poems, songs, and nursery rhymes. Texts cover a range of student interests and include content that is engaging to prekindergarten students. Students have opportunities to interact with the stories, including repeated parts. The materials also include the use of purposeful environmental print throughout the classroom.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include text selections at the appropriate level of complexity for children's developmental level as the lessons progress through the school year. Students engage in shared, interactive, guided, and independent reading. In the Week 5 lesson "Introduction to Guiding Questions," students build listening comprehension skills using the book *Little Quack* by Lauren Thompson. The teacher begins by explaining what a guiding question is and instructs students to listen carefully so that they can answer the guiding question after the story. After reading 5–6 pages, the teacher stops and thinks aloud about what she has learned about Little Quack so far. The teacher reads a few more pages and then asks the children what they have learned. At the end of the story, the teacher asks students to answer the provided guiding question, "What did we learn about Little Quack?" Materials explain how to break the question down into three questions to ask about the beginning, middle, and end separately. A "Teacher Tip" recommends children turn and talk with a partner to share answers.

In Week 18, students participate in a “Repetitive Text Read Aloud” activity, using the text *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen. The teacher reads the story in the days prior so that the class is familiar with it. For the activity, the teacher reads the story again, this time using “equity sticks” to have students read parts of the book to the whole class; these parts are pre-marked with sticky notes. The activity is engaging because the students are familiar with the story and are participating as a whole group. The teacher then moves the book to the library for the students to read with a friend. Because this story is repetitive, the students are able to make predictions and inferences about what will come next.

In the Week 3 lesson “Read Aloud Retell,” the teacher reads aloud *The Three Little Pigs* by Patricia Siebert, focusing on the family and home aspect of the story. Students answer leading questions and retell the story using props. The “Theme Guide” provides a social studies activity that supports the theme “How Does Your Family Celebrate?” The teacher shows a picture of a family celebrating during the holidays. The teacher explains what the word *custom* means and provides examples. Students draw a picture of a family custom or tradition and then share and discuss their picture with the class. The Teacher Tip in this lesson provides a list of books about family traditions, such as *Too Many Tamales/¡Qué montón de tamales!* by Gary Soto.

Examples of fiction texts include but are not limited to:

*The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn

*Families, Families, Families!* by Suzanne Lang

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Eric Carle

*Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes* by Eric Litwin

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

*The Three Little Pigs* by Patricia Seibert

*The Very Quiet Cricket* by Eric Carle

*Bear Snores On* by Karma Wilson

*The Mitten* by Jan Brett

*The Gingerbread Man* by Karen Schmidt

*There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* by Pam Adams

*The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Paul Galdone

*The Great Big Enormous Turnip* by Ana Award

Examples of nonfiction texts include but are not limited to:

*Families in Many Cultures* by Heather Adamson

*Families Through Time* by Jeanne Dustman

*Animals in The Fall* by Martha E. Rustad

*An Apple’s Life* by Nancy Dickmann

*Autumn* by Ulises Wensell

*All About Maps* by Sharon Coan

*Building a House* by Terri Fields

*Helpers In My Community* by Bobbie Kalman

Examples of text variety, such as poems, songs, and nursery rhymes, include but are not limited to:

*The Complete Book of Rhymes, Songs, Poems, Fingerplays, and Chants* by Jackie Silberg and Pam Schiller

“Hippity Hop to the Grocery Shop”

“The Bus”

“The Donut Song”

The materials use environmental print to support student development of print awareness and provide multiple opportunities for students to interact with a print-rich environment. The “Teacher’s Guide” provides teachers with suggestions on how to create a print-rich environment to surround students with print in order to support their literacy development. Teachers use labels, a “Letter Wall,” authentic print, and print-rich, well-crafted learning centers to promote meaningful interactions with print throughout the school day. Students engage with environmental print before recognizing print in books, and teachers change the print often to maintain student interest. In Week 26, in the “I Spy Environmental Print” lesson, each student must find a specific letter printed on their card. In Week 30, the materials suggest the teacher change the environmental text on the wall and display boards to ensure the students are exposed to a variety of print materials. The Teacher’s Guide mentions that teachers should use the Letter Wall every day to introduce new thematic words and vocabulary; materials also suggest the teacher place words they remove from the wall in a file in the “Writing” center for student use.

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

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

## Meets 4/4

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials use a variety of approaches to develop students' comprehension of text read aloud. The "Teacher's Guide" reinforces the importance of interactive read-alouds in the classroom. The guide suggests that the teacher read stories and ask questions to spark rich teacher-child discussions. In Week 3, teachers use the text *No, David!* by David Shannon to create classroom rules and discuss behaviors at home. The teacher asks quality questions to prompt class conversation, such as "How does it feel to be told 'No!' when you want to do something?" Students are able to make personal connections with the text when they discuss rules in their home. In the same activity, the teacher creates a chart with good and poor choices; students place picture cards in the appropriate place on the chart. This is another classroom experience that helps students make connections.

Materials guide teachers in using texts to teach and model making predictions and inferences; activities include suggested questions to ask during read-alouds. In Week 6, teachers use the book *Owen* by Keven Henkes to identify the character's feelings and create sentences about how Owen felt. The lesson suggests creating a class book of the sentences called "How Owen Felt" and placing it in the library for students to read later.

Materials provide scripted lessons to guide teachers and support children in making text-to-home and text-to-school connections. Week 8 contains a lesson called "Making Connections to Background Knowledge." Materials guide teachers to read the story to familiarize themselves and then make notes in the story where text-to-home and text-to-school

connections can be made during the read-aloud. During the lesson, the teacher follows a provided think-aloud script to explain how to make connections. Then, the teacher asks, “Has this ever happened to you? Talk to your partner and share what has happened and when.” Materials provide scaffolds for more or less support based on students’ needs, such as “Have you ever done that?” and “How does the connection help you understand the text?” The lesson also includes “Teacher Tips” that contain additional book titles with which to repeat the lesson as well as suggestions (e.g., using hand signals as cues for thinking and processing; creating an anchor chart to help students remember the strategies).

In Week 19, in the “Bar Graph” activity, the class creates a chart and a graph after reading the informational text *Every Pet Is Special* by Martin Mayer. The teacher has the option to read the narrative text *What Pet Should I Get?* by Dr. Seuss for this activity. Students are able to identify and use a graphic organizer to support comprehension of the text read aloud; they vote on which pet they would like to have at home and place data into a chart. The teacher shows the class how to convert the information from the chart to a bar graph.

In Week 22, in the lesson “Making Inferences: An Introduction,” the teacher reads the chapter “Alone” from the story *Days with Frog and Toad* by Arnold Lobel. To begin the lesson, the teacher introduces the idea of inference and makes an inference about how Toad is feeling using the clues in the story. After reading a page, the teacher asks students if they know how Toad is feeling now; the class discusses the clues that led to the inference. Prediction is also taught directly in Weeks 16, 27, and 33, in “Using Illustrations to Make Predictions.” In this lesson, the teacher reads the story *I Went Walking* by Sue Williams. The teacher begins by introducing the concept of predictions and telling the children about the story. In the story, a boy goes walking and sees animals hidden among other items. As the teacher begins reading the story, the teacher encourages students to look for clues in the picture to help them make predictions about what animal is partially hidden. The lesson provides sample think-aloud statements and questions, such as “I see a clue in the basket. I see a long black tail and whiskers... Let’s continue reading to find out if my prediction was correct.” Similarly, think-aloud examples provide guidance to support comprehension throughout all the basic structure lessons, including when comparing characters and discussing problems and solutions.

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

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

## Meets 4/4

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include appropriate strategies for supporting ELs in their development of emergent reading skills. The materials address ELs in the “Teacher’s Manual,” providing teachers with effective practices to support literacy development. Strategies recommended for instructional support include building background knowledge, using visual supports whenever possible, and identifying cognates during lessons. These language scaffolds are often included in lessons as part of the “Scaffold” section providing “just right” support.

The guide also suggests that teachers pre-teach vocabulary for ELs before lessons, using their home language when necessary and that teachers give visual representations of new vocabulary words using pictures or real objects. The professional development video about “Read Alouds” mentions that teachers should use Spanish read-alouds to build confidence and skills for ELs to transfer knowledge to English language and literacy skills.

The instructional materials include a variety of strategies to support ELs. For example, in Week 4, in an additional lesson called “Act It Out,” students can engage in various forms of nonverbal communication with those who do not speak their native language. In this lesson, students are encouraged to act out a story to develop oral language skills. Materials suggest hand-signal strategies in the “Teacher Tips” of the “Making Connections to Background Knowledge” lessons (Weeks 8, 9, and 25) and the “Making Inferences: Introduction” lesson (Week 22). These lessons suggest teachers create a hand signal when talking about making connections. The teacher uses a different hand signal when talking about inferences to help ELs and those who need nonverbal

supports. Materials also suggest using real objects to support English language development. For example, in the lesson “One Not Like the Other,” Week 27, the teacher puts four objects in a bag and asks students to find the item that is not like the others in the bag. Throughout, materials often use pictures as supports for students, and these often include labels in both English and Spanish. For example, in the phonological awareness lesson “Segmenting Syllables: Theme Words,” Week 8, students clap out syllables from words given on picture cards, such as *sand*. The pictures look real and can be used to support ELs.

The materials support first language knowledge as a means to transfer to English language and literacy skills. Picture cards include English and Spanish words, such as in the lesson “Feeling Happy and Sad,” Week 13. The book lists include a variety of books available in both Spanish and English as well as some bilingual books, such as the bilingual book *Good Morning/Buenos Dias* by Meritxell Marti, used in Week 14. Materials also make connections to Spanish words in lessons, such as “Painting Pies,” Week 13, when the teacher explains that a pie might resemble an empanada.

In Week 2, the Teacher Tips for “Book & Print Reading” explain “Children learning English benefit from engaging in read alouds in the home language. When possible, acquire home language titles that match or complement those you will read in English. These books can be shared in a small group to build confidence prior to shared readings of the English titles. Alternatively, send these books home for families to enjoy together just before sharing the English titles in class.”

In Week 10 “Language & Communication” lessons, teachers are reminded to welcome responses in children’s home languages and use home languages to scaffold English language development.

The materials include recommendations for using cognates to support English learners. For example, in Week 11 Book & Print Reading lessons, the materials recommend that teachers pair new vocabulary with cognates or words from the home language with the same meanings. Science lessons “Get Moving!” theme includes the following guidance: “Support children learning English to apply knowledge of names of air transportation in the home language to names in English by including some that are cognates. Spanish cognates related to the theme topic may include air/aire, airplane/aeroplano, and helicopter/helicóptero. Engage children in movements and sounds that represent those of the cognate pairs.”

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The learning materials include a variety of experiences through which students can engage with writing. “Morning Message” lessons provide daily opportunities for children to receive direct instruction in writing skills. These lessons are part of the weekly writing curriculum. Materials give a range of writing concepts teachers can cover during these lessons, such as print directionality, the flow of writing, letter names, letter formation, letter-sound correspondence, spaces between words, punctuation, and return sweep. At the beginning of the year, messages are short, and they become more complex as the year progresses. For the Week 1 Morning Message, students observe the writing process and read the Morning Message. Initially, the teacher will think aloud and write the message; with the gradual release of responsibility, students take over writing the Morning Message, and the teacher guides the students as they create and write their own authentic messages.

The materials provide suggestions for independent writing opportunities during center time. In Week 4, “Writing in Centers” describes how the teacher will set up the “Writing” center with



multiple writing instruments and supplies to promote student interest and encourage authentic writing. It also describes how the teacher can encourage writing in other centers, such as by placing a grocery list in the “Pretend and Learn” center or sentence strips and markers in the “Construction” center to make signs. Writing opportunities are developmentally and age-appropriate for prekindergarten students; students write for authentic purposes, based on the theme of the classroom.

The materials include opportunities for group writing; students create a class book to share during “Circle Time” or in the library. In Week 6, in “Making Class Books,” students develop a class book based on their shared experience with the story *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff, which the teacher read earlier. Students create their own version using a dinosaur instead of a mouse. The teacher provides examples, such as a picture of a school or a dinosaur, but also allows the students to develop individual ideas. Students also participate in individual creative writing to create a unique book for the classroom. Additionally, in Week 31, children are given an opportunity to respond to text through an interactive writing activity. In “Letter to a Character: Bear Snores On,” students write a letter to a character in a story. Students assist and think aloud as the teacher writes the letter on chart paper; after it is finished, the class reads the letter. The letter is then moved to the classroom library for the children to read during center time.

In Week 7, the activity “Authentic Name Writing” provides opportunities for students to write their names in different areas around the classroom. For example, the teacher can set up a sign-in sheet for students to sign in daily. Additionally, the activity suggests that teachers post a job application for students to fill out when it is time for them to switch jobs.

In Week 11, in the lesson “Shared Daily News,” students learn how to share and write about events in their own lives, using spacing and punctuation. The teacher tells students that they will share something they did when they were away from school and write it down. The teacher asks questions such as, “Did you go anywhere?” “Did you see anyone new?” “Did you go somewhere fun?” Students think and share with the group. The teacher models how to write using spaces between words, counting the words in the sentence, and making sure to use punctuation marks. Students are active participants during this shared writing experience; they then share by reading their news for the day, reinforcing the connection between reading and writing.

An example of the materials providing opportunities for children to imitate adult writing in authentic ways can be found in the Week 14 lesson “Creating a List.” In this lesson, the teacher introduces, models, and explains making a shopping list. The teacher shows the children how to begin the list on the left-hand side, under the “Shopping List” title. During guided practice, the teacher uses guiding questions to prompt students to state the items they would need to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Once the list is made, the materials recommend placing it, together with examples of other lists, in the Pretend and Learn center so that students can practice making their own lists.

The materials provide opportunities for students to draw to convey meaning or a message. For example, in the lesson “My Very Own Words,” Week 15, teachers and students create a word card together to be used during center times. The teacher writes the word on the card, and the students then draw the visual connection on the card. The teacher helps students with upward and downward scaffolds. If a student is struggling to draw a visual representation of their word, the teacher provides a photograph or image of the word and helps the student draw. For an upward scaffold, the student can help write the word before drawing the visual representation. The teacher continues to conference with students as needed throughout the lesson and during center times.

Age-appropriate independent writing opportunities include weekly writing activities in the learning centers that connect to the themes. For example, in the “I’m Healthy! I’m Safe!” theme, Week 22, the Construction center includes writing materials for students to draw or sketch the playgrounds or parks they have built. In the “Creativity” center that same week, students create, decorate, and write names on hearts. In the Writing center, students can refer to picture-word cards of healthy snacks to write about their favorite healthy snacks.

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials instruct students along the developmental stages of writing. The materials guide teachers to identify the developmental writing stages of the students. They provide guidance for teachers that includes best practices for moving students along the continuum for writing development. The “Teacher’s Manual” includes a thorough section on writing development. The “Scaffolding Children’s Writing” chart helps determine where a student is and what is best to do to get them to the next stage of writing. For example, if a student draws a picture with a few letters in it, their goal is to separate the letters and pictures and to write their name on the paper. The teacher can ask the student to describe what the picture is about for the teacher to transcribe or encourage the student to write their name on the paper. The Teacher’s Manual reviews the developmental stages of writing; it identifies and supports conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and generative knowledge as stages of writing development.

Weekly lessons also follow the sequence of developmental stages of writing. At the beginning of the year, Week 2, in the lesson “Skywriting—Curves and Circles,” children practice drawing circles and curves in the air using pretend pencils. By Week 12, children practice writing letters in gel or shaving cream placed in gallon Ziploc bags as part of the lesson “Tactile Letter Experiences.” In Week 28, the lessons progress to writing birthday cards and writing stories about pictures. In the lesson “Birthday Notes,” children look at birthday cards and brainstorm

ideas for messages they can write on them. In the “Writing” center, they select paper or cards to write the birthday messages.

In the Week 1 “Morning Message,” the teacher models concepts of the writing process while sharing the daily Morning Message of events written on the chart. This is an activity that is used throughout the year. At the beginning of the year, the teacher controls the pen and message; as the year progresses, the teacher encourages children to share their own ideas. The materials also guide the teacher to encourage students to answer more print concept questions as they gain more knowledge and share the pen. As the children progress, the teacher encourages them to write specific letters, punctuation marks, and words.

The materials include lessons that scaffold writing for students and move from modeled writing to shared writing and then to interactive writing, moving children through the developmental stages of writing. A daily writing lesson in Weeks 3 and 4 is “Modeled Daily News.” Students observe as the teacher models how to write the news of the day. The teacher introduces various concepts of print and works as both the composer and the scribe of the message. The teacher models “think aloud” for students as they prepare to move to shared writing. In Weeks 5–12, the lesson progresses to “Shared Daily News.” Students share and write about events in their own lives and experience using spacing and punctuation when writing. The teacher gives students the opportunity to think about their own daily news. Then she selects a few students to share their news, and they write the daily news together. The teacher brings attention to concepts of print, focusing on letter formations. The lesson moves to “Interactive Daily News” for the remainder of the school year (Weeks 13–35), during which students assist the teacher in writing a sentence using appropriate writing conventions and letter-sound correspondence. Students start off with adding periods or writing single letters and eventually progress to writing full words and whole sentences. The teacher supports students during interactive writing as needed and brings attention to various writing conventions.

The materials include appropriate modeling of the writing process. In Week 11, the activity “Creating a Web” allows students to help create a graphic organizer about bears. In centers, the teacher encourages students to create organizers about things they learn. The materials include writing opportunities in which the teacher models the process of writing from thinking of an idea to developing a published or shared piece. In Week 17, students help the teacher draft a letter to a friend. The teacher shares her excitement about receiving a letter and wants to write a letter back. The students learn about drafting a letter in the correct format.

Materials include appropriate modeling of the writing process. For instance, in Week 34, students make a class book. The lesson includes writing opportunities in which the teacher models the process of writing from thinking of an idea to developing a published or shared piece. The topic of the book is bringing a dinosaur to school. The teacher asks, “What are some things that could happen?” and the students brainstorm. The teacher talks aloud and explains, step by step, how to write the title of the book on the cover and how to draw a picture for the cover. The teacher engages the children by asking questions while creating the title page, such as “What do you think I should draw?” While students are in centers, the teacher calls on

individual students to draw and write their page. When the book is complete, it is placed in the “Library” for the children to read with a partner.

## 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 provide a variety of opportunities for students to develop their fine motor skills; they prescribe a variety of tools and surfaces for student writing experiences. The materials also provide differentiation and guidance on how to develop students' fine motor skills toward writing.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The learning materials support fine motor development alongside and through writing. "Writing in Centers" lists activities that provide differentiation for developing children's fine motor skills toward writing. During the weekly "Morning Message," the teacher models different pre-writing strokes while writing the letters on the board. The materials provide guidance for best practices for developing fine motor skills toward writing. The "Teacher's Manual," under "Targeted Letter Instruction," directs the teacher to narrate the strokes of a letter and have students draw the letter and strokes in the air. The materials stress the importance of pre-writing strokes as part of developing fine motor skills toward writing.

The materials recommend a variety of tools for children to use when participating in writing experiences. "Writing in Centers" suggests placing a variety of materials in the centers: "things to write on" (e.g., magnetic drawing board, envelopes, stationery, sticky notes), "things to write with" (e.g., pencils, gel pens, crayons, markers), and "accessories" (e.g., ruler, junk mail, theme word cards, children's name cards). This supports an environment of pre-writing for students to develop fine motor skills.

The materials provide multiple opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills in formal and informal settings. "Teacher Tips" for developing fine motor skills for writing are found in the "Physical Development" section of the weekly scope and sequence. In Week 1, the Teacher Tip brings attention to fine motor skill development needed for writing, encouraging teachers to

include playful activities such as buttoning and unbuttoning clothing, writing or painting with cotton swabs, and working with playdough. Teacher Tips in Week 2 include playful tasks such as stringing beads on pipe cleaners, playing tweezer games, tearing paper, and manipulating clothespins. After Week 2, the materials tie fine motor skills to informal work being done in the learning centers. Per the Teacher's Manual, these tasks include stringing beads, polishing materials, working with sandpaper, and blunt needle sewing.

There are varied opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills. In Week 18, during a "Language & Communication" lesson called "Sculpting Animals," students use their fine motor skills to sculpt play dough animals. The teacher models pinching, rolling, cutting, and patting the playdough. In Week 25, as part of the "Egg Carton Counting" math lesson, students use tongs to count. In the "Creativity" center, Week 30, students use eye droppers to add colored water to coffee filters. These are a few examples of fine motor muscle development opportunities throughout the year.

Materials provide differentiation for developing children's fine motor skills toward writing. For example, in Week 28, in the "Land All Around" theme, the "Alphabet Knowledge Theme Extender" recommends the teacher model using a finger to write letters in a box filled with sand. Students refer to index cards containing review letters for them to draw. Depending on their skill level, students may be encouraged to practice writing their names in the sand. More activity examples are included in the "Writing Theme Extender," which provides topics that can be modeled and shared during writing lessons. In the Creativity center, students can use their fine motor skills to make a pet rock and binoculars. In the "Pretend and Learn" center, students can draw animals in an observation book while role-playing as a camper.

**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

Within the materials, instruction in all mathematical competencies progresses from concrete, to pictorial, to abstract, with the greatest emphasis placed on using concrete manipulatives. The materials include a variety of types of concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations. They contain 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.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The learning materials follow a logical mathematical continuum of concrete, pictorial, then abstract representations. They include formal and informal opportunities for skill development throughout the school year. The curriculum continuously spirals the target skill development of “Adding To and Taking Away,” “Counting,” “Classification and Patterns,” “Geometry and Spatial Sense,” and “Measurement.” Adding To and Taking Away lessons include “Adding Using Counters,” Week 18: Students add objects to a set, using counting chips and five-frames. The curriculum then progresses to activities like “I Spy More, Less, and Same,” Week 22: Students determine if quantities are more than, less than, or the same as, using manipulatives. Counting lessons include “Counting Throughout the Day,” Week 3: Students count up to 30 items (e.g., people in line, items in the classroom) throughout the day. The curriculum then progresses to activities like “Roll and Count,” Week 17: Students roll a die, identify the number, and perform an action that number of times. Classification and Patterns lessons include “Shape Graphing,” Week 6: Students identify shapes and sort them on a graph. The curriculum then progresses to activities like “Color Pattern Necklace,” Week 17: Students create their own patterns using colored objects. Geometry and Spatial Sense lessons include “The Shape Doesn’t Change,”



Week 5: Students determine that a shape remains the same even if the spatial orientation changes. The curriculum progresses to activities like “Shape Building,” Week 24: Students put two or more basic shapes together to build a new formation. Measurement lessons include “Same Size,” Week 7: Students match shapes to the same-size shape on a work mat. The curriculum then progresses to activities like “Length Using Non-Standard Units,” Week 27: Students measure the length of objects using non-standard units.

The activities begin with concrete representations at the beginning of the year and progress to more abstract concepts as the year progresses. Students begin counting concrete objects in the first week; a Week 1 “Teacher Tip” in the scope and sequence reminds teachers to incorporate the use of manipulatives, fingers, and bodies in all math activities as well as using concrete representations when using counting songs. This note helps emphasize the importance of using concrete representations of mathematical concepts. By Week 18, students are still singing counting songs, but without concrete representations. At the same time, materials are introducing addition, and they use representations to develop this new, more abstract skill. For example, in the lesson “Addition Stories,” students receive a forest picture and animal counters. The teacher places two foxes on one log and one fox on another; the teacher describes the foxes with a story and asks students how many foxes are in the forest picture. The teacher then tells a new story, using different numbers of various animals. Towards the end of the year, materials introduce the concepts of *equal*, *more*, and *less*. In Week 33, the lesson “Comparing Sets with Equal, More or Less” begins by introducing the vocabulary words *more*, *less*, and *equal* using concrete bear counters to model sample sets. One student spins a spinner to determine how many bears go into a set. A second student spins the spinner and places that many bears into a new set. Then, students discuss which child has more and which child has less. The emphasis remains on concrete representations, even as the skills become more abstract.

Classification and Patterns lessons also progress from concrete, to pictorial, to abstract representation. For example, in Week 12, “Pattern Play,” students use concrete representation when they position themselves to create an AB pattern. That same week, in “Color Pattern Necklace,” a Teacher Tip suggests putting pattern picture cards in centers for students to replicate. Later in the year, in the Week 24 lesson “Extending Patterns,” students describe and extend a pattern.

Throughout, materials use concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations. For example, in Week 11, students learn about various types of concrete representation in the “Length Using Non-Standard Measurement” lesson. Students measure various objects in the classroom, such as a pencil and a glue stick, using various non-standard units of measurement, such as paper clips and a ribbon. That same week, in the “Which Is Longer?” lesson, students listen to a read-aloud of *The Best Bug Parade* by Stuart Murphy. The teacher introduces the vocabulary words *long*, *longer*, and *longest*. After the story, the teacher models how to use snap cubes to create caterpillars of various lengths and thinks aloud about how to determine which caterpillars are long, longer, and the longest. After this, students participate by creating their own caterpillars with snap cubes of various sizes. Later, in the Week 35 lesson “Tall or Short?” students look at pictures of objects, animals, and people to compare their heights.

**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 prompt teachers to inquire about students' developmental status and mathematical knowledge. They include cross-curricular opportunities to authentically integrate mathematics throughout the day and 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 materials promote instruction that builds on students' informal knowledge about mathematics. The "Teacher's Manual" provides information for the teacher about the importance of utilizing classroom centers to develop math concepts. "Theme Extenders" suggest that teachers use lessons introduced in the scope and sequence as additions to the classroom "Math" center for independent or small group learning. The materials provide guidance that supports the use of the classroom environment and materials to explore math concepts and skills. Additionally, the materials include online training that supports teacher understanding of how children develop mathematical understanding.

In Week 2, in the "Would You Rather?" lesson, children play a decision-making game, voting in a poll to choose between two activities in which to participate. The teacher models and explains how to create a graph to measure students' answers. The teacher guides students through questions in order to analyze the data and encourage forming conclusions. The teacher tells students that they will now vote on an activity and complete a graph each morning during "Circle Time." The classroom environment thus encourages the use of math concepts in daily interactions and routines.

In Week 4, the “Mathematics” section focuses on counting and provides teachers with multiple lessons for the week; the provided “Teacher Tips” guide teachers: “Look for opportunities to count throughout the day. Transitions are an ideal time.” The Theme Extender this week also incorporates math and social studies: Teachers count family members or count and graph who has siblings and who does not. These are examples of the multiple opportunities materials provide for math to be used throughout the school day in various instructional settings and across content.

In Week 5, the Teacher’s Manual includes guidance on using informal mathematical experiences to support the development of skills. The Mathematics section provides a Teacher Tip for using the classroom environment to support the development of mathematical concepts throughout the school day: “Continue to count 1–5 by capitalizing on daily routines such as passing out snacks, counting steps while walking, and reciting number chants.” The lessons also incorporate the use of various manipulatives to support students’ exploration and skill development, including pattern blocks, counting bears, a variety of counting objects, and ribbon. During center time, students use various materials for math skill development; for example, in Week 5, the Math center has students count body parts, graph eye or hair color, and sort pictures of body parts. In the “ABC” center, students sort letters to determine which are in their names and which are not in their names.

Weeks 11–13 include a thematic unit titled “It’s Harvest Time.” The unit materials provide guidance that supports the use of the classroom environment and materials to explore math concepts and develop them through real-world connections. The materials also guide the teacher in setting up the centers based on the theme. For example, in the Week 11 Theme Extender, the materials provide theme-related opportunities to practice math skills through exploration: Students use non-standard measuring tools to measure pictures of trees, gather leaves outside or in the center to compare shapes and sizes or use a themed work mat and dice to play a counting game. As students learn concepts, this is reflected in the centers. For example, the materials suggest providing blocks with pictures of outdoor fall scenes for the children to reproduce in the “Construction” center, which can be used to reinforce or extend geometry concepts.

In Week 16, the lesson “Naming Numbers Throughout the Day” suggests placing a telephone in the “Home” center, creating a phone book, and including books with numbers in the classroom library; this kind of classroom environment encourages the use of math concepts. The Teacher’s Manual also suggests using the “Block” center to maximize students’ development of problem-solving and spatial reasoning skills.

In Week 19, during the lesson “Swat the Dots,” students use a flyswatter to swat dot cards that match a number called out by the teacher. The activity begins with only two cards as answer choices. If a student cannot identify the correct card, materials suggest offering only one choice and assisting in counting the dots. If a student can complete the task even with additional card choices, the teacher asks the student to identify a card that is more or less than the number selected. Teacher Tips provide additional guidance on flyswatter safety. The materials thus guide

the teacher to systematically build upon what the students already know. The progress monitoring system suggests activities for all levels. The scope and sequence and lessons become more complex as children's knowledge increases; they build upon students' mathematical understanding and skills through prompts and questions.

In Week 22, the Theme Extender has the class compare groups of sports balls to see which group has more, has less, or is equal to another group. The materials suggest moving this activity to the Math center for students to play with independently. Students can thus review and practice mathematical skills throughout the day. In addition, Week 22 suggests that the teacher use ordinal numbers to describe steps in an exercise. This activity allows children to make connections between math skills and other content areas. Further, this same week, the "Pretend and Learn" center is turned into a gym where students make and sell smoothies and gym memberships. Students must utilize math concepts when selling items to classmates. This center allows students to develop math concepts through real-world connections in the classroom environment; in each theme, the Pretend and Learn center is inspired by a new, real-world situation.

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials intentionally develop young children’s ability to problem solve. The “Teacher’s Manual” provides examples of how to integrate math in centers. For example, in the “Pretend and Learn” center, students can classify and sort fruits and vegetables at a farmer’s market or determine the amount of money owed for purchasing supplies at the pet store. Building-block play in the “Construction” center requires problem-solving and spatial reasoning as children plan the design of a building, determine how to fit shapes together, create stable structures, and more. The Teacher’s Manual also guides the teacher to join in the play by asking questions, scaffolding tasks, and encouraging the use of math vocabulary; the manual states that mathematical concept learning is enhanced when the teacher participates in student play in classroom centers.

The materials include activities that encourage curiosity and questioning about informal mathematics; they suggest placing introduced lessons in classroom centers for individual exploration. Week 10 includes the activity “Comparing Towers,” where students count blocks to build towers and then compare their towers to see who has the tallest, shortest, etc. The “Theme Guide” suggests adding this activity to the “Math” center so students can participate in it on their own. The Teacher’s Manual states that Math centers are designed for hands-on exploration to promote reasoning and problem-solving.

In Week 11, Math center recommendations include gathering leaves outside and comparing their shapes and sizes, using nonstandard measuring tools (e.g., snap cubes, paperclips) to

measure pictures of fall trees that are different heights, and rolling a numeral die and counting out the corresponding number of acorns onto a tree or squirrel work mat. These activities are directly tied to the week's learning and theme.

In Week 14, students engage in the "Build It" activity, which encourages curiosity and questioning about informal mathematics. The teacher models and explains building structures. The teacher encourages a student to build a structure. Once the structure is built, the teacher models asking the builder questions about the building. Provided sample questions include "What are you building?" "What shape blocks are you using to build your...?" "How many are you using?" After this, students participate in the building-and-questioning routine with a partner while the teacher observes and provides feedback as needed. Materials provide guidance for upward and downward scaffolds: If a child asks an immature question, the teacher can model how to express the idea in a more mature form. For an upward scaffold, to extend learning, the teacher can ask for an explanation and encourage the child to describe their structure or pose questions involving quantities, shapes, position words, and height and width. Teachers thus receive guidance on feedback to support developing children's questioning skills.

In Week 31, the "Fair Sharing" activity supports and encourages students to recognize mathematical problems in the environment. Students practice separating a group of items into two equal sets so that they can share them with a friend. The teacher models, guides the children through the activity, and checks for understanding: "Does each friend have the same number of cubes?" "Can you tell by looking, or do you need to count?" The teacher closes the lesson with the idea that sharing with friends makes everything fair. The materials suggest placing the activity in the Math center so that children can engage with it independently.

## 7.4 Materials build students' number sense.

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

## Meets 4/4

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials build students' number sense. The "Teacher's Manual" provides guidance to incorporate informal mathematical experiences throughout the day, such as sorting toys in buckets or counting vegetables during clean-up. "Teacher's Tips" also provide suggestions: In Week 1, the "Naming Numbers Throughout the Day" lesson provides a variety of opportunities for students to practice number recognition throughout the day, such as pointing out and naming numbers on doors and signs as students walk down the hall.

Materials include guidance to build children's conceptual understanding in whole group, small group, and learning center opportunities. Skills progress throughout the year, beginning with counting to 5 and ending with counting to 20. In Week 2, students practice songs and chants in the lesson "Number Songs and Chants." "If You're Happy and You Know It" incorporates numbers with movement: The teacher says, "If you're happy and you know it, clap one time," progressing up to 5. This and other songs can be sung during whole group and small group instruction as well as during transitions. As the year progresses, in Week 15, an activity called "Counting Sets" requires children to count the number of stars on a card (e.g., 10) and then select a matching number of manipulatives (e.g., linking cubes); students must count as they place each manipulative on a star. By the end of the year, skills include developing one-to-one

correspondence and identifying numerals up to 10; if the student is ready to continue beyond 20, extension lessons include counting to 100.

The materials include frequent opportunities for students to participate in activities that build number sense. Number sense activities are spiraled: They build upon one another and reappear in the following weeks for a review or to allow the teacher to use provided scaffolding to increase learning. For example, in Week 10, students compare sets and sizes in “Comparing Towers”; this topic reappears in Week 20. Also in Week 20, students participate in “Number Recognition,” where they count bears to match the number on a card. In Week 31, students subitize in the activity “Roll and Count.” In Week 34, students find one more than a number in the activity “Solve a Math Story”: They place bears on a picture to add and take away according to a story read by the teacher.

The materials provide guidance for teachers to build conceptual understanding in math. In Week 20, “Number Recognition,” students identify the number on a card and then count out that number of bears. The activity provides scaffolding techniques for teachers to assist students who might struggle with either identifying the number or counting. The activity also suggests moving the cards and bear counters into the “Math” center for students to play independently, thus supporting mathematical learning throughout the day.



**7.5** Materials develop students' academic math vocabulary.

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

## Meets 4/4

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials develop students' academic math vocabulary. Each week, "Theme Extenders" suggest moving introduced lessons into the "Math" center for independent student practice. Students have repeated, ongoing opportunities to practice using math vocabulary. In addition to the play centers, activities provide opportunities for students to count and say numbers. For example, during "How Many Do You Have?" in Week 5, students count out bear counters, say the number of counters out loud, and move the counters to a ten-frame mat. The provided activities can be utilized in large or small groups or placed into learning centers.

Teachers scaffold children's development of academic math vocabulary through the provided scaffolding, "Teacher Tips," and progress monitoring system. Lessons include downward and upward scaffolding suggestions. For example, in Week 6, in the lesson "Shape Graphing," the teacher distributes a bag of shapes that includes circles, squares, and triangles. The teacher pulls a shape out of her own bag and identifies the shape by its attribute. Then, she places the shape in the correct column on a graph, explaining why it belongs to that column. For example, if the teacher pulls out a square, the teacher counts the sides and says that it is square because it has four sides. Looking at the graph, the teacher might point out that it does not belong in the *triangle* column because a triangle only has three sides; the teacher would then place it in the *square* column, noting that the shapes match. The lesson includes a sample script to support teachers in child-friendly prompting, questioning, and modeling: "The next shape on my graph has 1, 2, 3, 4 sides, and they are all the same. It's a square. That looks like my shape!" After this, students begin guided practice. If a student is unable to identify a shape, the downward scaffold is to count the sides together. If a student sorts successfully, the upward scaffold is to add extra

shapes to the graph and bag, which adds new shape vocabulary to the lesson. Teacher Tips include a suggestion to spend extra time in the modeling portion of the lesson to assist children in developing the academic vocabulary needed to complete the task. If students struggle to understand and use new math vocabulary, the materials suggest splitting into small groups for accompanying activities, so children can receive additional practice with academic math vocabulary.

The materials include repeated opportunities for children to engage in purposeful listening and talking using math vocabulary. In the lesson “Teaching About Shapes,” Week 7, students identify common shapes during a read-aloud of *The Shape of Things* by Dayle Ann Dodd. The lesson has an instructional “Key Teaching Behavior” video that models for teachers how to use math vocabulary during the read-aloud. The lesson recommends that teachers point to and name the shapes as they appear in the book, to bring focus to vocabulary. It also asks for children to repeat the shape names and identify the shape attributes to further develop math vocabulary. The lesson includes a list of additional books that can be used for this topic, including *Shapes, Shapes, Shapes* by Tana Hoban; *Wild About Shapes* by Jérémie Fischer; *Shape by Shape* by Suse McDonald; and *Pancakes, Crackers, and Pizza: A Book about Shapes* by Marjorie Eberts.

In Week 8, in the activity “Where Am I?” the teacher reads the story *Where’s Spot* by Eric Hill. In the activity, the teacher provides the students with positional words to act out; for example, for the words *on* and *off*, a student can sit on a chair, and another student can stand by the chair. After this activity, the teacher places the book in the Math center for the students to use to discuss positional words together. The “Teacher’s Manual” suggests that teachers engage students in play centers to develop and scaffold math vocabulary.

The materials support teachers with strategies for layering academic math vocabulary into informal conversations about math in a positive, supportive way that honors children’s language and ideas. For example, in the Week 10 lesson “Comparing Towers,” the teacher models and explains the math vocabulary *taller* and *shorter*. Students participate in guided practice, building towers and utilizing the math vocabulary words *taller* and *shorter* with a partner. The materials instruct the teacher to go to each group to provide assistance and check for understanding. After the groups finish, the learners participate in sharing their towers and discussing their height. The materials suggest additional directions for the teacher to provide so that students can further explore the concept of height, such as “Create three towers from shortest to tallest.” The materials also provide additional questions to help children analyze what they have created, such as “How do you know this tower is shorter?” The lesson provides a downward scaffold to simplify the math vocabulary: The teacher can ask, “What/who is tall? What/who is short?” Teacher Tips recommend emphasizing *shorter/ taller* in the lesson and referring to children’s height to make connections; to support vocabulary, they also recommend using visual representations of the words *short* and *tall*, such as picture cards, room furniture, or other accessible objects.

The materials include recommendations for purposefully talking about mathematics using math vocabulary. In Week 23, the activity “Using Ordinal Terms Throughout the Day” guides the

teacher to use ordinal words in whole group instruction, small group instruction, centers, transitions, and outdoors. The materials provide examples for each area. For example, in whole group, ordinal numbers can be used with the calendar while saying the daily schedule. In a transition, the teacher can say the order of the students in line: *first, next, last*, and so on. The materials include texts that are math-related, and they identify math vocabulary in read-alouds. In Week 5, the activity “Teaching Positional Words Through Read Alouds” suggests reading *I Went Walking* by Sue Williams. The book provides the opportunity for teachers to ask students questions about the location of the animals or other objects in the story.

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

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

## Meets 4/4

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials build science knowledge through inquiry-based instruction and exploration of the natural world. Science lessons encourage engagement with the scientific method as per the “Teacher’s Manual.” The lessons provide opportunities for observation, asking questions, exploring, making and testing predictions, and communicating ideas. Students have hands-on opportunities to explore natural science in both formal science lessons and informally, during play in centers.

Materials develop children’s ability to question aspects of their environment and engage them in their environment in a play-based way. For example, in Week 7, students help make a watershed in a real-life opportunity to observe and discuss the need for saving water. The teacher introduces the lesson by sharing the importance of saving water. The materials provide open-ended questions to activate prior knowledge; the teacher records student answers to refer back to at the end of the lesson. The materials guide the teacher and the children on how to make a watershed. Once it is complete, the teacher explains how the watershed works. The teacher prompts the children by asking inquiry questions, such as “What do you think will happen if you pour water over the landscape model?” The children take turns scooping out the water and provide examples of water uses and ways to conserve water. This lesson is designed to be repeated, providing students further opportunity to explore this learning experience.

In Week 7, students explore age-appropriate scientific tools, such as a balance and measuring spoons, in the two-day activity “Rock, Soil, and Sand Investigation.” The materials list includes several cups each of pebbles, dirt, and sand; a balance; tablespoon; chart paper; markers; clear cups; tape or sticky tack; hand lens; teaspoon; and paper plates or towels. On day one, the teacher introduces the balance and how to use the scales to weigh the samples. The children participate by comparing the weights of the items. On day two, the children use the hand lens to analyze the samples, describe them, and compare them.

In Week 8, in a science lesson called “Architects and Engineers,” the students go through the process of planning, building, and problem-solving a creation. The teacher introduces the role of the architect and shows the children pictures of different structures. After introducing the concept of a blueprint, the teacher tells the children that they will create their own blueprint. On another day, after drawing the building, the children become contractors and build from the blueprint. The teacher takes a picture of the building to compare to the drawing and asks the children to discuss the similarities between the drawing and the actual structure. The process of comparing the similarities as well as explaining the differences helps the children develop the ability to communicate ideas about the world around them. Then, the children become engineers and solve the problems of the building. The teacher asks who can build the tallest and/or strongest tower. This lesson is spread over multiple days, during which children engage in different ways of communicating ideas, which encourages thoughtful questioning and helps develop their understanding of scientific concepts.

In the Week 15 lesson “Head in the Clouds,” children explore earth and space science; the lesson includes differentiated opportunities for students to communicate their learning. Students observe clouds and then create an art piece depicting what they observed. The materials list and describe the three cloud types to use as a guide: cirrus, cumulus, and stratus. The teacher takes the students outside to observe the clouds and explains how clouds are made and how rain develops from clouds. The children participate by listening, observing, and drawing what they see in their journal; they refer back to it to complete their art project. The materials encourage the teacher to observe and support the children as needed by being attentive and listening to the descriptions of the figures the children are trying to describe. The materials provide a list of open-ended questions to use to check for understanding. The children complete the lesson by recreating the clouds they saw using the supplies made available to them.

The materials develop children’s ability to communicate ideas about the world around them in a variety of ways. The activity “Rocks All Around Us” in Week 28 discusses the qualities of rocks; the teacher asks students what they know that is made from rock. The teacher records the students’ answers on a chart. The teacher and students take a nature walk to point out various objects made from rock. The teacher records student observations on a notepad and then adds them to the chart when they return inside. This activity encourages discussion and writing of student observations.

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials build social studies knowledge through the study of culture and community. Instruction follows a logical sequence of social studies skills and concepts, beginning with self and moving to family, community, city, state, and country. For example, at the beginning of the school year, during Week 1, in the lesson “Our Flags,” the teacher introduces and discusses the country and state flags. The teacher asks open-ended questions to gauge what the children currently know about the flags to help guide the discussion. The lesson closes with children sharing information they learned with a partner. During this same week, the children learn to recite both the state and country pledges; they also learn how to participate in a moment of silence. The students participate in the pledges and moment of silence every morning.

The “Daily Schedule Chart” is introduced in Week 1. It provides an opportunity for children to learn about events in the past, present, and future. They reflect on the events that have already happened during the day, and they prepare for other events that will be happening later in the day, using the visual schedule and sliding down a clothespin as the day progresses. This serves as a daily routine and a foundation to support further learning later in the year.

In the “I’m Me! I’m Special!” theme, Week 3 focuses on “My Home and My Family.” One of the lessons, “How Does Your Family Celebrate,” allows the children to explore the ways families can be alike and different. The lesson begins with the teacher modeling a favorite holiday/celebration she likes to celebrate. After sharing another holiday that a family might celebrate, the children draw pictures of their favorite celebrations at home. The class shares and finds similarities and differences in the celebrations. Following a “Teacher Tip,” the children are invited to bring in pictures from home to guide observations and discussions. Focusing on commonalities and differences, the teacher emphasizes that each child’s family is special and important. The included book suggestions support different cultures and traditions, providing a positive, friendly opportunity for the children to explore different holidays such as Los Posadas and Hanukkah.

The materials include exploration of people and places in the classroom, the school, and the community to expand beyond learning about families. In the Week 8 lesson “Career Day,” the children learn about communities and discover what types of workers are in a community. The teacher uses picture cards to introduce and explain the vocabulary words *community*, *places*, and *workers*. The teacher provides examples and models various community workers, such as a school teacher, a doctor/nurse, a firefighter, a baker, a mail carrier, and a police officer. The children participate in the discussion by choosing which worker they would want to be and sharing why. As part of the discussion, students act out the roles of the worker they have chosen. Additional social studies lessons that correlate with the thematic unit are provided throughout the year.

The Week 13 lesson “Using Ordinal Terms Throughout the Day” supports an understanding of before and after and first and last as a foundation for learning about past, present, and future in a way that is developmentally appropriate. This lesson provides guidance and examples for the teacher to introduce ordinal terms such as *first*, *second*, *next*, *last*, *beginning*, *middle*, and *end*. The lesson identifies activities that can incorporate ordinal language during whole group instruction, such as “Calendar Time” (days/months), “Daily Schedule,” and after reading a book. It also provides recommendations to use ordinal language during small group activities, such as when working with number lines, when children line up for transition, and when teaching phonological awareness. Order ideas include using ordinal language during centers, transitions, and outdoors. Students expand upon this learning in the Week 35 lesson “Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.” The teacher models by talking about what she ate last night for dinner (in the past) and then sharing something she is looking forward to doing tomorrow. After discussing things that happened yesterday, are happening today, and will happen tomorrow, the children draw pictures of things that are happening in each of the three different times.

Also in Week 13, in the social studies lesson “Bringing the Harvest Home,” the materials introduce the idea of consumers and provide opportunities for children to explore the roles of consumers in the community. The lesson guides the teacher to create a classroom store and model buying and selling crops to the children. The teacher discusses the roles of customers and clerks/farmers and how the purchase of the crops provides income for the farmer’s family. The children role-play the consumer and worker in the “Pretend and Learn” center.

### 8.3 Materials expose children to fine arts through exploration.

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

## Meets 4/4

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials expose children to fine arts through exploration. There are opportunities to participate in multiple mediums and learn art concepts and skills throughout the year. For example, in Week 1, in a "Book & Print Reading" lesson, the children sing a song using the names of their classmates; the song helps them learn and remember their classmates' names and learn the directionality of print. The materials provide teachers instructions to prepare: The teacher premakes sentence strips with the lyrics of the song "I Wish I Had A Little Red Box" by Dr. Jean Feldman along with picture/word cards of the students' names. The teacher introduces the song and chooses two students' names to add to the song. The children participate by singing along with the teacher. The "Teacher Tips" recommend placing this activity in the "Library" center for continued practice.

The materials emphasize engagement in the artistic process instead of focusing on the product. For example, in Week 1, in the lesson "Straw Structures," the children create structures by adding straws into a colander. The focus is not on the product of the structure but on building motor skills and oral language skills, as students discuss the color of the straws and count the number of straws used. Additionally, in Week 3, children are offered choices of craft materials, such as construction paper, craft sticks, and yarn, to make homes. Teachers encourage children to verbalize as they add details such as windows, doors, roofs, or grass. This allows the children to be creative in their interpretation of the appearance of the homes. Another activity option for the "Creativity" center in Week 3 includes creating playdough families. Teachers encourage children to roll and squeeze the dough when creating body parts to strengthen hand muscles, as opposed to creating realistic looking people.



The Week 10 lesson “Pretend First Responders” provides an example of how dramatic play is incorporated to extend themes. Following a Teacher Tip, the teacher provides props to support pretend play of community helpers. The teacher introduces and models the various roles of first responders such as firefighters, police, and emergency medics as a child plays the one in need. Afterward, the children play the role of the first responder as the teacher plays the one in need.

Teachers have the opportunity to use music in daily routines; these can be found under “Theme Extenders” in the weekly units. For instance, in Week 11, “It’s Harvest Time,” students create a leaf puppet based on the book that was read aloud. Students can also use paints to create a “fall scene” and create props for the “Pretend and Learn” center by painting cutouts of apples, corn, and nuts. In the Pretend and Learn center for Week 11, students pretend to be in a pumpkin patch and can rake leaves, dress for the weather, and collect apples and nuts. The Theme Extender has students sing the following songs from *The Complete Book of Rhymes, Songs, Poems, Fingerplays and Chants* by Jackie Silberg and Pam Schiller: “Autumn Leaves,” “The Wind (swoosh, swirl)” and “Little Squirrel.”

In Week 12, materials combine creativity and dramatic play to use the creative process purposefully. Students create their own pumpkins and apples in the “Creativity” center using open-ended tear art focused on fine motor development. Then, they can role-play being a farmer to plan, care, and grow their own crops in the Pretend and Learn center. Materials made in the Creativity center can be used as play props for dramatic play.

The materials include daily experiences for children to explore art concepts and skills through various mediums, including dance, music, dramatic play, painting, sculpture, drawing, and other movements integrated across the instructional materials. In Week 16, the materials suggest that students act out the moon revolving around the Earth; students stand in the middle, and one child revolves around as the moon. The students sing “The Moon Is Moving” to the tune of “Are You Sleeping.”

In Week 29, during the theme “The Earth Around Me,” in the Creativity center, students paint a night sky and create a tissue paper flower. In the Pretend and Learn center, students use props to pretend to go camping; they can pretend to roast marshmallows on a pretend campfire. Songs are included throughout the year and can be found in the classroom library, such as the song “Tiny Seed” that was introduced in whole group this same week.

## 8.4 Materials include technology applications.

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

## Meets 4/4

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials incorporate technology that supports and enhances students' learning. The "Teacher's Manual" provides a chart that addresses concerns on how to keep technology from distracting from student learning, based on research. For example, if there is a concern that the use of technology is causing decreased physical activity, the materials recommend keeping children active throughout the day and following the guidelines from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The materials provide an alternative way to use technology while remaining physical, such as using a handheld device when outside to enhance learning and observing.

The materials provide opportunities for students to explore and use various digital tools. In the lesson "Introduction to Computers: Using a Mouse," Week 2, students learn to navigate a computer program; they use a mouse to move the cursor and then click, drag, and drop items. The teacher models how to click and guides students to practice using the mouse. In the lesson "Guess the Voice," Week 3, students listen to a recorded message and identify the speaker. The teacher uses recording devices like a cell phone or a computer to record the students' messages. The students have the opportunity to speak in complete sentences and record their message to share with the class.

In Week 6, the students engage in an age-appropriate opportunity that allows them to meaningfully connect to classroom experience: "Architects and Engineers." The teacher shows images of building structures on a computer for the students to see as examples. The activity

suggests leaving a laptop or tablet in the “Block” center for students to reference images of structures to inspire their own creations. The activity also suggests bookmarking images or leaving word cards with photos for students to use when searching keywords independently.

In Week 29, the children incorporate technology, a tablet, as they go on a nature walk. The children use technology actively by taking pictures of the things they find. They further engage in this experience by reflecting on and discussing the plants that they would not otherwise be able to bring back to the classroom. After reflecting on the pictures, the teacher extends the learning by referring to a child-friendly plant website to continue exploring additional information about the plant, such as the plant name, the lifecycle of the plant, and information about plant care. Students engage in a similar activity in Week 33, “Bug Homes,” when they observe, discuss, and collect data on a variety of bugs they find on the school grounds. Students use cameras or tablets to take pictures of the bugs they find. The teacher then displays the pictures on the overhead or tablet so students can use them as they create a bug sorting chart.

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools (e.g., formative and summative progress monitoring) and guidance for teachers and students to monitor progress. The materials include a progress-monitoring tool that is developmentally appropriate for three- and four-year-old children. The progress-monitoring system, referred to as the “CPM,” can be used to assess a variety of areas, including social and emotional behaviors, phonological awareness skills, math skills, approaches to learning, and physical development. The CPM allows for both formal and informal assessments to be used in order to assess children’s progress in all content areas addressed through the curriculum.

The assessment tools include resources and recommendations for engaging families and providing input through “Family Observation Forms.” These forms are available in both English and Spanish. The observation forms provide the parent with an opportunity to share information about their child regarding background, strengths, and weaknesses related to the skills that are the focus of instruction. In addition, the materials include a printable, family-friendly dual language resource, which describes what the assessments measure and why assessments in the specific learning areas are important.

The “General Administration Guidelines” resource includes teacher guidance to support administering the assessment. This tool identifies best practices for administering the assessment and includes access to training videos to assist teachers in accurately administering the assessments. For example, there is a video of a teacher modeling the vocabulary portion of the phonological awareness assessment. “How To” guides can also be found in the same section, which include instructions in a print version. The online dashboard also includes a “practice” area for teachers to practice administering the assessment and to be able to view a variety of sample reports. Teachers can also download and print the administration handbook, which provides teachers with tips and troubleshooting for successful administration and data collection. Teachers can select one section at a time to administer to all students or select an individual student to assess all domains. There is guidance for collecting “informal assessment” data; informal assessments are to be collected over time through observations, anecdotal notes, work samples, pictures, and possible teacher-created assessments.

In addition to formal and informal assessments administered by teachers, children are encouraged to reflect on their work and go through the process of improving and adjusting in various developmentally appropriate ways throughout the year. For example, in the “Architects and Engineers” lesson used in Week 8, the students go through three phases of the lesson to create, reflect on, and revise their plans. The children begin by pretending to be architects who design blueprints for a building. Next, they become contractors who build the building according to the blueprint they created. This allows them the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate the first phase of the lesson. In the lessons’ third phase, children become engineers; they evaluate their work and reflect on the buildings they created.

**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. The diagnostic tools yield meaningful information for teachers to use when planning instruction and differentiation. The materials also provide a variety of resources and teacher guidance on how to leverage different activities to respond to student data and provide guidance for administrators to support teachers in analyzing and responding to data.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials include guidance for teachers and administrators to analyze and respond to data from diagnostic tools. The materials include a video resource to support teachers in adjusting instruction to meet the needs of children, titled "Pre-Kindergarten Response to Intervention." This video supports the teacher in understanding the assessment cycle and how to use tiered instruction to provide a more in-depth understanding. In addition, the lessons include recommendations for upward and downward scaffolds.

The "Circle Progress Monitoring" (CPM) system includes a "User Guide" that provides a general overview to better understand the system as well as "How-To Guides" for teachers to learn how to understand the results of the assessment. The materials also include an online, self-paced training course for teachers to learn how to administer and understand the CPM assessment tool. There is also a printable version of the training that can be used as a reference guide as teachers use the tool. The assessment results are easy to read, and the color-coding system

allows teachers to determine skill level at a glance. Each report includes a guide to explain the color-coding system of the assessment. If a student is on track, the report will be green; a red icon indicates a need for additional support; a blue icon indicates that the student is either outside the age range for a particular skill or there is no threshold for that particular skill. The reports that are available for teachers also include color coding for ease of use. The assessment tool also includes a parent report that is easy to read; it provides links to online lessons and activities that parents can use at home to help develop their child regardless of skill level. A grouping tool supports creating small groups based on assessment results and suggests lessons for targeted instruction. This saves the teacher time during planning.

The weekly lessons in the “Scope and Sequence” include “Additional Lessons” for each domain area; teachers can use these to build upon lessons for students who need additional help. “Teacher Tips” provide scaffolding techniques for students who need extra support for individual activities. For example, if a child needs additional assistance matching the environmental print label to the page in the alphabet book, the teacher can utilize the lesson “Sentence Strip Name Book” to provide additional letter naming practice using letters in classmates’ names.

The materials provide administrators with the option to complete the same online training for the CPM assessment tool as the teachers. They also have access to the CPM “Administration Videos” to understand the data collection process and support teachers during assessments. The materials provide reports at the campus, class, and grade level; administrators can review data and provide teachers with support in areas of need.

### 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 routine and systematic progress monitoring opportunities that accurately measure and track student progress. The frequency of progress monitoring is appropriate for the age and content skill.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include routine and systematic progress monitoring opportunities in all domains. The materials recommend using both formal and informal assessments. The “User Guide” suggests formally assessing the domains at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the year. The formal assessment can track individual children’s progress in all domains in a scientifically reliable way that informs instruction. The informal assessments can be utilized in various classroom settings throughout the school year; they are conducted through observations, anecdotal notes, pictures, and work samples. Progress monitoring is appropriate for the age and the content skill. Formal assessments are conducted through observation forms and simple questions. The video example shows a teacher testing a child on “Book and Print Awareness”; the teacher asks brief questions, such as “Show me the proper way to hold this book”; “Point to the title of this book.”

The results of each assessment are scored according to the age of the child. For example, if a child is only three, the rhyming assessment will be considered “out of range” and is not an expected skill for that age. The progress monitoring system also allows the teacher to turn off some of the assessments if they are not appropriate for the age of the child or if the teacher does not want to assess a particular skill area. The “Scope and Sequence” includes additional activities for each week for students who need extra support.



**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 recommended target instruction and activities for students who struggle to master content and for students who have mastered content. The materials also provide additional enrichment activities for all levels of learners.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include guidance, scaffolds, supports, and extensions that maximize student learning potential. The materials are divided into instructional weeks. Each instructional week offers three categories of recommended targeted instruction to provide guidance, scaffolds, supports, and extension to differentiate instruction for students. These components of the curriculum are “Target Lesson,” “Step It Up,” and “Additional Activities.” The “Start-Up Guide” provides teachers guidance on how to use these embedded components to modify and scaffold the lessons in order to target students that struggle to master the content. “Theme Guides” organize the learning materials around a common theme and enhance the scope and sequence by providing enrichment activities and theme extenders. One example of this is in the theme “The Earth Around Me”: The materials instruct the teacher to use theme-related vocabulary with the activities from the scope and sequence to practice phonological awareness skills.

The Week 18 lesson “Letter Introduction Routine” provides six different scaffolding examples: two downward scaffolds can be used if the student says the word incorrectly, two downward scaffolds can be used if the student cannot form the letter, and two upward scaffolds challenge the student who masters the task. “Teacher Tips” provide further accommodations for those who require visual or motor assistance: “When skywriting, provide hand-over-hand support. Some children may use the whole hand or arm as their ‘magic pencil.’” There are also accommodations for children who are learning English: “Give children extra support in small groups or one-on-one, particularly when learning sounds that may not be part of a child’s first

language. If a sound is shared in both English and a child's first language, try asking the child to share words in either language that begin with the target sound."

The "Teacher's Manual" describes upward scaffolding as support that the teacher uses during lessons based on the students' needs and responses: "Upward scaffolds are employed when children correctly respond to a question or easily engage in a task. They can be used to increase the cognitive demand of a task, deepen understanding, or extend language by meeting children where they are and building on the information that they already know." In the Week 3 "Alphabet Knowledge" lesson "Grab Bag," the teacher encourages students to pull out a letter from a bag, identify it, and match it to the "Letter Wall." If a student easily identifies and correctly matches letters, the teacher invites the student to provide the letter sound and/or a word that begins with that letter. A Step It Up extension lesson addresses the needs of students who have mastered the target lesson: Students create an alphabet book by matching the first letter of a word to the correct letter in an alphabet book.

The learning materials directly connect enrichment activities to the curriculum's target lessons and themes. In a Week 24 math lesson, the "Shape Spin" activity scaffolds students' learning by having them create a picture from shapes they collect. In a Week 31 target lesson on rhyming, students identify and name rhyming words; students who have mastered this target skill can Step It Up and complete rhyming sentences. Within this lesson, as students demonstrate mastery, teachers can ask them to partner up and create their own rhyming stems as an upward scaffold.

The materials include enrichment activities that support all levels of learners and provide opportunities for students to explore and apply new learning in a variety of ways. In the Week 6 lesson "How Does Your Family Celebrate?" students bring in photographs and real objects; they then discuss how everyone's customs and holidays are alike and different. In the "Sky Above Me" theme, students use materials to create different weather scenes in the "Construction" learning center; students use these scenes to explore the sun, rainbows, daytime activities, nighttime activities, the moon, and stars. Additionally, in a Week 16 enrichment activity, after a lesson targeting the formation of uppercase and lowercase letters using gel bags, students create a large letter on the floor with masking tape and then walk it, hop it, crawl it, or drive a small car on it.

The materials include opportunities for students to apply new learning during small group instruction, allowing them to elaborate on their work. In Week 18, in math, students have the opportunity to subitize up to the number five using a large die. Students roll the die and state the number of dots. The teacher provides support for all learners by scaffolding the activity as needed. The materials also allow students to apply new learning with more depth. For example, students apply their knowledge of the four seasons by creating a visual representation of how a tree looks throughout the seasons.

Materials include enrichment activities that provide students at all levels opportunities to explore and apply new learning in a variety of ways. This is evident through the theme activities

connecting subject area lessons, suggested learning center activities, and extension activities. The Week 18 theme is “Animal Bodies and Movements.” During Week 18, students use clay to create animals in a “Language & Communication” lesson. Animal learning continues in the “Pretend and Learn” center, which is transformed into a veterinarian’s office. In Week 18’s science lesson, students compare animal characteristics using visual pictures. In Week 19, the Construction center provides materials for students to create animal habitats and includes a map of a zoo (made in another center or brought in from a local zoo). In Week 21, the science lesson “Reptile Pile: Cold Blooded Animals” contains an at-home assignment: Students must draw two animals outside their home—one with fur or feathers and a reptile. In preparation for this lesson, a family member should assist with writing the description of the animal, where it was found, and what it was doing.

**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 include a variety of instructional approaches to engage students in mastery of the content. The lessons throughout the scope and sequence support developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and flexible grouping. The materials also support multiple types of practices and provide guidance and structure to achieve effective implementation.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide a variety of instructional methods that appeal to a variety of learning interests and needs. The “Pretend and Learn” center transforms, via props, to match the various themes of the instructional focus. Math instruction utilizes various manipulatives, such as counters, shapes, and numbers, for whole group instruction, small group instruction, and centers. Teachers also receive guidance on how to scaffold down in the lessons to include one-on-one support when needed.

In Weeks 1 and 2, students practice counting during transitions and developmentally appropriate music activities, such as “The Ants Go Marching” and “One Potato, Two Potato.” In Week 3, students continue to practice counting using a whispering voice, in counting races, when lining up, and when gathering items.

In Week 2, students engage in a project-based learning activity that encourages collaboration between partners. Students work together by sharing the blocks to build a tower. Additional opportunities for students to practice project-based learning are incorporated in several of the “Construction” centers. Students work collaboratively to create different projects that go with the week’s theme. For instance, in the “I’m Healthy” Construction center, students work

together to create playgrounds. In the “Earth Around Me” Construction center, students work collaboratively to create landforms using various materials.

Teachers introduce and model routines during whole group instruction; they are designed to build a sense of community. Large group lessons to assist students in understanding appropriate behaviors begin in the first week; they include a variety of opportunities for exploration. In Week 3, the teacher models how to care for books; students then have an opportunity to practice. Teachers also introduce the “Book Hospital,” which helps students understand what to do when a book is not handled well. The teacher continues the lesson daily for students to develop their book-handling skills.

In Week 6, after teacher modeling, students review and act out previously introduced vocabulary words. The teacher provides scaffolding support depending on the students’ needs, such as reminding the students of the word’s meaning, providing a picture representation or verbal prompt, or modeling by saying the word and acting it out, encouraging the student to respond or imitate the action.

In Week 13, the “Question of the Day” supports building relationships among peers and teachers. The teacher presents the activity to students: “Every morning during circle time, we will do an activity called Question of the Day. We will learn more about each other with a question every day.” The teacher selects a child to act as the survey taker and ask the question. The survey taker uses tally marks to record each child’s response. The teacher directs the survey taker to say, “Now, please stand up if you do not have a dog.” The teacher supports the survey taker in recording students’ responses with tally marks. Then, the teacher assists the survey taker in adding up each column of tally marks to present the results to the class. After completing the activity, the teacher guides the children to have a conversation about the question of the day.

In Week 19, the “Letter Introduction Routine” contains accommodations for children who need visual or motor assistance. When skywriting, the teacher provides hand-over-hand support to the student. Materials provide the insight that some children may use the whole hand or arm as their “magic pencil.” Accommodations for English Learners recommend providing children small group or one-on-one support, particularly when learning sounds that may not be part of a child’s first language. If a sound is shared in both English and a child’s first language, the teacher asks the child to share words that begin with the target sound in either language.

In the Week 22 lesson, “I Spy More, Less, Same,” the gradual release model provides learners with opportunities to practice new skills in a variety of ways. The teacher models manipulating a certain amount of cubes in a cup to compare them to another set of cubes. She determines if the set has more, less, or the same amount of cubes. Students practice the activity with the teacher several times. Once the activity is done, students practice it individually in the “Math” center.

In Week 26, there are multiple target lessons, and each one is intended for use in a different setting. "Give Me a Rhyme" is designed to be used in small group; "Name Change Rhyme" is designed to be used during transitions; and "Nursery Rhyme Time" is designed to be used in either large or small groups. The materials also provide a balance of direct and indirect instruction using hands-on materials; they gradually allow students to develop independent working skills. In the "Can You Move It Through the Air" lesson, the teacher asks students to predict what will happen and where else they might have seen it happen. The class tests their hypothesis by blowing through straws to see if they can move various objects using just air. After the whole group lesson, students explore the topic of moving things with air in the "Science" center.

**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 provide general scaffolds for English Learners (ELs) and accommodations or linguistics (communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded) commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency. Materials encourage targeted, 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).

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include general supports for ELs to work towards grade-level learning expectations. Though the materials cover generic strategies that can be used with ELs, they do not provide guidance or recommendations for using specific strategies to target the different levels of English language proficiency. The materials provide teacher training on how to support students' language development and include the use of the first language as a strategy to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in English.

In Week 3, "Teacher Tips" for the "Letter Introduction Routine" lesson suggest giving ELs extra support in small groups or one-on-one when learning sounds that may not be part of their first language. The materials recommend that if a sound is shared in both English and the child's first language, the teacher should ask the child to share words in either language that begin with the target sound. The materials provide a script to introduce letters and letter sounds for the teacher to follow. The teacher begins the lesson with a letter chant and then points to both the uppercase and lowercase letter and says the letter name. The teacher then cups her ear to provide a visual cue for "listen" and produces the letter sound. Students respond by repeating after the teacher. The teacher uses the letter sound in a word that is represented by a picture, and the students repeat the sound and word. For students who struggle with the lesson, there

is a downward scaffold of a verbal prompt: "Listen carefully as I say the sound for the letter." If the student continues to struggle to make the sound, there is another downward scaffold: The teacher describes the position of the lips, teeth, and tongue when correctly saying the word. The materials provide scaffolds and teacher guidance on how to use the students' primary language to develop English. Specific guidance is offered in the context of themes. In the "Science" activities for "Animals All Around" topic 1, teachers are advised to scaffold children learning English as they apply knowledge of animal names in the home language to animal names in English using cognates. Examples of Spanish animal cognates are included as suggestions. As part of this same set of activities, teachers build vocabulary of animals' body parts by showing pictures and naming those parts (e.g., "This is a beak. Repeat after me: beak. Birds have beaks."). Additionally, in the Week 6 "Scope & Sequence," the "Alphabet Knowledge" lessons offer support for children learning English by pairing new vocabulary with cognates or words from the home language with the same meanings. Later, "Language & Communication" lessons in week 10 advise teachers to "Welcome responses in children's home languages and use home languages to scaffold English language development." Similarly, in week 17, guidance is given for supporting children learning English by making connections to the home language with Language & Communication lessons.

A small group activity that provides scaffolds along with resources and support materials that make scaffolding intentional can be found in the Week 5 lesson "Where Is the Bear?" In this lesson, students move a bear to a specified position relative to another object. The materials suggest including corresponding positional cards as a visual representation of the following vocabulary words: *inside*, *on*, *under*, *behind*, *beside*, and *in front*. The teacher explains and models the positional words by using the positional picture cards to position the bear relative to the box. During guided practice, the teacher calls out the position from the positional cards without showing the picture on the card. If a student needs support, the teacher provides a downward scaffold by showing the picture on the positional card. If the student needs more support, the teacher gives the student a choice between two places that may represent the position word.

The "Teacher's Manual" provides research-based information on scaffolding, which assists the teacher in providing support to EL students. Many activities provide scaffolding techniques and Teacher Tips that can be utilized for EL students as well as all students at varying learning levels. In Week 6, the lesson "Tricky Sound" provides multiple levels of scaffolding for teachers to choose from. The activity requires students to recognize the beginning sounds of words while playing a game. Scaffolding techniques include giving students who need the most support the choice between only two letters to help them distinguish the sound. This strategy creates a lesson that is inclusive for all learners; it encourages further learning for advanced students while providing additional support for learners who need it. The provided scaffolding techniques help the teacher create a natural and intentional flow in the lesson. The Tricky Sounds activity is utilized in a small group setting and focuses primarily on language development.



Various linguistic accommodations are included to support ELs. For example, lessons frequently include pictures, as in the “Same Sound” lesson used in Week 9. In this lesson, the teacher shows a picture and says the word represented in the picture, emphasizing the first sound of the word. When showing a picture of a man, the teacher says, “/m/ man.” The goal is to help the children identify the first sound. Materials provide a downward scaffold for students who are unable to identify the first sound: The teacher asks the student to say the word slowly, together with the teacher, and provides the beginning sound. The materials do not encourage the strategic use of students’ first language as a means to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in English.

In Week 18, teachers utilize the activity “Repetitive Text Read Aloud: We’re Going on a Bear Hunt.” The teacher can use this activity with other repetitive texts as well, depending on the theme. The teacher uses scaffolding techniques if students are unable to read the words, saying, “Let’s sound it out.” Such scaffolding techniques allow for support at varying levels. In addition, interactive read-aloud is a playful and engaging activity.

Many activities provide scaffolding techniques to be utilized for all students, including EL students. For example, in Week 26, in the “I Spy Environmental Print” activity, students must find letters on an environmental print card. For a struggling student, the teacher can say, “The letter P has a straight line with a curved line at the top. Can you make the letter P on the table for me?”

Materials include a variety of effective strategies to support children at different English language proficiency levels. Strategies follow a gradual release model, which starts with teacher modeling, then moves to guided practice, and finally becomes independent practice in learning centers. Many lessons are also repeated throughout the year. For example, the lesson “I Spy Environmental Print” is used in Week 26; if additional practice is needed, it appears as an additional lesson in Week 29. In this lesson, the teacher models how to “spy” letters in the environmental print. After modeling, the teacher encourages children to identify letters in environmental print. After students practice in small groups, the activity is moved to a learning center, where students can use it in playful interactions.

**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 cohesive, year-long plan to build students' concept development and consider how to vertically align instruction that builds year to year. The materials also 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 materials include comprehensive coverage of all skill domains, spanning throughout the school year. Materials contain 35 weeks of instruction and 10 themes. The "Scope and Sequence" and "Theme Guides" work together in scripted lessons that follow the "gradual release of responsibility" approach to support student learning and independence. The lessons activate prior knowledge and, as stated in the "Teacher's Manual," the themes provide meaningful hands-on experiences for students that connect the themes to skills covered across multiple domains. The themes cover multiple weeks and have a cohesive focus that builds upon itself. For example, the theme "All Around My Community" connects to the kindergarten social studies TEKS and builds background knowledge through well-crafted experiences. Week 1 covers "Places in My Community"; students connect with their experiences in their community. In Week 2, "People and Jobs in My Community," students connect with the people in their community and learn about jobs that help their community. Week 3 is "Getting Around in My Community," where students learn about maps and how people move around in their community. In Week 4, "Construction in My Community," students learn about building their community and how communities grow. The lessons are all vertically connected to kindergarten TEKS; the Scope and Sequence identifies the aligned TEKS in some lessons.

The materials include repeated opportunities for students to practice knowledge and skills throughout the school day. Materials follow developmental progressions that vertically align to content across grade levels. For example, the Teacher's Manual provides teachers with guidance

on how the “Science” strands are embedded in cross-curricular themes. Applying the Science strands within the themes allows for learning through extended hands-on opportunities, read-alouds, writing, and learning centers. Centers provide focused and intentional opportunities for review and practice of skills. For example, in Week 7, “All Around My Community,” all centers embed social studies. The “Pretend and Learn” center becomes businesses in the community, such as the post office and the grocery store. In the “Writing” center, students write about places in their community. In the “Creativity” center, students create a map of their community. In the “Math” center, students sort images of houses and buildings and count the number of houses they see on a map. The materials also include opportunities to review and practice skills throughout the learning day. For example, teachers and students use math to count snacks as they are handed out and notice numbers around the classroom and school.

More structured examples can be found in the progression of phonological awareness skills across the year. The Teacher’s Manual outlines the phonological awareness progression found in the curriculum and highlights how instruction moves from larger to smaller units of sound. At the beginning of the year, phonological awareness instruction starts with sentence segmentation and moves to compound words. As the year progresses, instruction moves to syllables, then alliteration, then rhyme, then onset-rime, then phonemes. While the lessons progress in the scope and sequence, they do cycle and allow for review. Additionally, the format allows for flexibility in instruction based on student needs.

The instructional materials include repeated opportunities for reviewing and practicing knowledge and skills in all domains. For example, in Week 14, “The Sky Above Me,” the materials recommend introducing vocabulary and extending the theme using rhymes or chants from a provided list; materials thus address the content areas of “Language/Communication” and “Science.” In Week 19, students participate in an activity called “Bar Graph”: The class creates a chart and a graph after reading the informational text *Every Pet Is Special* by Martin Mayer. The teacher has the option to read a narrative text, *What Pet Should I Get?* by Dr. Seuss, for this activity. The students are able to identify and use a graphic organizer to support comprehension of the text read aloud; they vote on which pet they would like at home and place data into a chart. The teacher shows the class how to convert the information from the chart into a bar graph.

**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 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. The materials also include supports to help teachers implement the materials as intended. They include resources and guidance to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials as intended. The materials include a school year's worth of prekindergarten instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include implementation support for teachers and administrators. A 35-week "Scope and Sequence" covers a school year. The Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines are referenced in each section of the weekly Scope and Sequence and in each lesson being used; however, there is no chart that delineates when or how the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines are being used in the Scope and Sequence, making it difficult for teachers to know if they are introducing a new standard or spiraling a standard that has already been introduced.

The "Start-Up Guide" provides the teacher with an overview of the curriculum features as well as an explanation of the curriculum components, Scope and Sequence, "Theme Guides," and "Supplemental Resources." The guide also informs the teacher that the materials are available in both print and digital formats and that the lessons include guidance for the teacher regarding the cycle of modeling, guided practice, and independent practice. There is also access to video demonstrations of the lessons, "Teacher Tips" for extensions and change, and scaffolding

suggestions to meet the needs of all learners. The Scope and Sequence presents lesson names in a specific colored font; they are provided in a weekly sequence that facilitates the progression of skills across the school year. The Start-Up Guide provides additional clarity on how the lessons are organized in categories with other skill domains integrated. It also explains that the use of the Theme Guide with the Scope and Sequence provides for a comprehensive learning experience that includes all the domains, including “Fine Arts,” “Physical Development,” “Social Studies,” and “Technology.” The Theme Guide provides opportunities to enhance the Scope and Sequence. Using both the Scope and Sequence and the Theme Guide will ensure that all skill domains are addressed during instruction.

Another resource, the “Teacher’s Manual,” explains that there are 35 weeks of instruction organized in the following domains: “Book & Print Reading,” “Phonological Awareness,” “Language & Communication,” “Alphabet Knowledge,” “Writing,” “Mathematics,” “Science,” and “Social and Emotional Development.” Most lessons in the Scope and Sequence include Teacher’s Tips that provide recommendations for extensions, changes, and scaffolding that will meet children’s diverse needs. The Teacher’s Manual explains that there are 10 themes that focus on building background information and content-area knowledge. The Teacher’s Manual provides the teacher with an in-depth look at how to facilitate the curriculum. It includes guidance on using the flexibility of the curriculum’s design to select instructional settings. It also specifies which lessons to repeat and the number of times to do so to meet the diverse needs of all learners. There are also supplemental resources, such as picture cards and work mats. These are available to download and print if using the digital format of the curriculum or as a companion resource if using the print version.

A “Welcome: First Steps” online page offers guidance to administrators on getting started with the materials. It begins with introducing “Getting Started with Texas School Readiness Online,” which is a planning guide for supporting prekindergarten teachers in the classroom. In order to guide administrators in supporting teachers to implement the materials as intended, the guide provides step-by-step instructions along with access to tools to assist with instructional planning, literacy and print centers, the overall design and management of the classroom, and learning centers; these can be found under the “Classroom Environment Checklist” and “Classroom Observation Tool.” The Environmental Checklist provides administrators with an in-depth checklist for what can be expected in a prekindergarten classroom environment. It is to be administered three times per year to ensure a rich and robust learning environment for three- and four-year-olds. The Observation Tool provides an in-depth approach to research-based best instructional practices for pre-k teachers. It can also be used three times per year or by section, depending on how the administrator would like to use it. The tool also provides novice, intermediate, and proficient teacher examples to help administrators score their teachers using the provided rubric. Once teachers have been scored, the administrators can then begin the coaching cycle using the online tracking system in “CLI Engage.” CLI Engage also provides training opportunities in the “TX Core Competencies for Practitioners and Administrators Training.” Materials assist in understanding the core competency framework and how it is integrated into the classroom.

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

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

## Meets 2/2

The materials provide guidance for strategic implementation 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.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide implementation guidance to meet variability in programmatic design and scheduling considerations. The “Scope and Sequence” contains 35 weeks of lessons to follow. The skills covered in each week progress along a developmental continuum that aligns with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Each week of the Scope and Sequence is connected to a theme and has suggested theme-related activities. The “Suggested Theme Sequence” connects the themes to the Scope and Sequence; put together, the themes and Scope and Sequence make a full instructional plan. For example, in Week 26, the suggested theme for the week is “Get Moving: Moving on Land.” The theme activities for the week are found in the “Theme Guide”; the subject area activities are found in the Scope and Sequence for Week 26. While the two parts are designed to work in harmony, most subject area skills do not have to accompany the theme. This allows for flexibility with small group instruction and for children to work on different skills as necessary without impacting the sequence of themed activities.

The materials strategically implement the content while keeping a consistent developmental progression of skills through the Scope and Sequence. The Scope and Sequence provides weekly lessons from which teachers can select based on student needs while continuing skill development and progression. In the “Start-Up Guide,” the teacher can select from “Target Lessons” that are to be used several times during the introductory week for the development of

skills. “Step It Up” lessons are optional lessons that challenge students and further develop target skills. “Additional Lessons” are previously taught Target Lessons for students needing additional review and practice of the previous week’s skills. Teachers can also offer these lessons as whole group or small group activities and use the Theme Guides to further develop and support the Scope and Sequence skills.

The “Teacher’s Manual” provides strategic guidance on implementation, ensuring that the sequence of content that is taught is consistent with the developmental progression of skills for each “Skill Domain Area.” For example, the Skill Domain Area of “Alphabet” provides guidance on how “Alphabet Knowledge” should be taught (setting up a letter wall, facilitating alphabet activities and games, and targeted letter instruction). The Teacher’s Manual also provides a strategic plan that introduces two to three letters per week and then spirals the instruction to provide repeated exposure to the letters. The sequence of letter introduction can be found in the Teacher’s Manual.

The materials are written as a full-day program and encourage teachers to use the flexible planning options to create their half-day program plans. The Teacher’s Manual includes a sample daily schedule and template for the full-day program. The weekly themes include multiple suggestions for center activities as well as many read-aloud book suggestions. The “Start-Up Guide” explains that many of the lessons in the Scope and Sequence and Theme Guide provide “Teacher Tips.” These tips provide recommendations to adjust instruction to differentiate learning that meets the needs of three-year-olds, four-year-olds, and those who need more support. The Start-Up Guide also explains that the curriculum provides flexibility that allows teachers to plan lessons for the week by adding or removing activities or lessons based on the needs of the learners. For example, if the class consists of three-year-olds, or if the program is a half-day program, the teacher can include fewer components in their lesson plan. The Start-Up Guide also provides explicit six-step guidance for teachers to plan lessons.

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

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

## Meets 2/2

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Teacher's Manual," in the "Family Engagement" section, explains the importance of the family's role in their child's education. The section explains that each "Scope and Sequence" provides two family activities to support the lesson learned in the classroom. The activities are created with the parent and child relationship in mind and target prekindergarten learning goals. For example, in Week 19, in the Family Engagement "Pick Up and Count" game, children practice counting to 10 while working on fine motor skills: They pick up items with a pair of kitchen tongs and count along with an adult. During Week 25, the Scope and Sequence includes two activities to share with families. One activity relates to the phonemic awareness activities used in school and is called "Buried Letters." This activity can be printed and sent home to share with parents. Otherwise, parents can access it electronically, which provides additional letter-sound practice. If the parents access it electronically, there is also a video with a parent doing the activity with her own child.

The digital "Family Engagement Toolkit" contains resources, "Teacher's Checklists," and an administrator guide regarding engaging families. It includes the PDF "Tips For Building Relationships with Families." The Teacher's Checklist is a strategy checklist that guides teachers on partnering with families, encouraging play-based learning and interactions at home, promoting conversations with families to individualize student support, and hosting family events to support children's development.

The Teacher's Manual explains that, in addition to the Scope and Sequence family activities, there are more family activities on the curriculum website. All Family Engagement information is available in both English in Spanish. An example of a Family Engagement opportunity is found in Week 8: The "Count and Match" activity contains explicit instructions, the materials needed,



and tips. A “Let’s Play” section provides the parent(s) instructions on how to facilitate the activity. The “Tips” section provides strategies such as scaffolding down by using only one dot card; or, if their child is familiar with the activity, to increase the number of dot cards. It also provides strategies such as substituting actual items in place of a dot card if it is difficult to engage the child in the activity.

The “Progress Monitoring System” provides a printable report for parents as well as a login option for parents to access reports. The parent reports, available in both English and Spanish, also include recommendations for activities to do at home to support the child’s growth. For example, if a child needs additional support in rapid vocabulary naming, the parent report will include suggestions for additional vocabulary practice from home. One suggestion might be an activity called “Farmer Round Says,” which encourages families to use toy animals to practice making animal sounds. The activity also suggests using a book with animal pictures as an alternative.

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

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

## Meets 2/2

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

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The curriculum is available both in print and digitally and is easy for teachers to use. The “Start-Up Guide” explains that the “Scope and Sequence” is organized in eight color-coded categories; the lesson names are always indicated in a specific font color in both curriculum platforms. The “Theme Guide” uses the same color-coded system. Each lesson is divided into three categories: “Target Lessons,” “Step It Up,” and “Additional Lessons.” Each week’s Scope and Sequence page opens to 10 color-coded tabs labeled with the areas “Book & Print Reading,” “Phonological Awareness,” “Language & Communication,” “Alphabet Knowledge,” “Writing,” “Mathematics,” “Science,” “Social and Emotional Development,” “Review,” “Repeat & Adapt,” and “Family Engagement.” These are in the same order and the same color for each week of the Scope and Sequence. Choosing a content area opens an overview of that week’s lesson for that area. The lesson titles are presented in pink font. Icons allow teachers to quickly identify English video demonstrations, Spanish video demonstrations, “Small Group,” notes or tips, “Theme Guide,” and “Songs/Rhymes.” Songs and rhymes are available in the *Complete Book of Rhymes, Songs, Poems, Fingerplays, and Chants* by Jackie Silberg and Pam Schiller. This book is included with the purchase of the theme library.

The digital lessons are presented in a neutral color and use a consistent font that helps guide the eyes to certain areas of the screen. A larger font is used for section titles. The “Teacher’s Tips” are in a grey box and provide a bulleted list of strategies. To the right of the page, a grey-colored column shows the activity grade levels, learning areas, “Head Start Early Learning Outcomes,” Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, and kindergarten TEKS alignments. This format is

consistent with each week's Scope and Sequence lessons. Some digital lessons include a link to access printable materials such as pictures or work mats.

Materials include authentic pictures in color that are easily identifiable by children and supportive of child learning. For example, in Week 3, the lesson "Pictures Need a Thousand Words" provides a PDF link to picture cards with actual photos of various scenes (e.g., beach, carnival, soccer game, thunderstorm, playground, and party). The pictures are colorful and depict real-life scenes, including environments, weather, actions, and people. The picture cards are also labeled with the scene. Students label, describe, explain, and make connections to the pictures. Materials contain clear graphics to support learning. The printable materials in Week 7 include a chart for students to use during an experiment. The chart includes pictures of a scale that students will use; the picture labels the two sides of the scale (e.g., "LEFT" and "RIGHT") with arrows. In Week 19, materials include three letter-sized work mats and nine half-sized picture cards of different habitats; labels are placed around the border of the pictures so children can easily identify and learn about the habitats. In Week 4, materials suggest using big books with large print in order to focus on specific parts of the book.

The materials appear to adhere to the "User Interface Design" guidelines regarding visibility of system status, flexibility and efficiency of use, and aesthetic and minimalist design. The pictures and graphics also appear to adhere to the User Interface Design Guidelines, with regard to recognition rather than recall, flexibility and efficiency of use, and aesthetic and minimalist design.