

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Section 1. Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines Alignment

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

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

Section 2. Integration of Content and Skills

- English materials somewhat include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections integrated in an authentic way to support students’ unified experience throughout the day.
- Spanish materials include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections integrated in an authentic way to support students’ unified experience throughout the day.
- English materials utilize high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration and support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains.
- Spanish materials utilize high-quality, culturally relevant, and diverse texts that are a mixture of translations, transadaptations, and authentic Spanish as a core component of content and skill integration and support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains.
- English materials fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure and include some guidance that supports the teacher’s delivery of instruction.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

- Spanish materials somewhat fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure and include guidance that supports the teacher’s delivery of instruction. Materials specify whether they are for three- or four-year-old children.
- English materials are supported by child development research within and across all domains.
- Spanish materials are supported by child development research within and across all domains

Section 3. Health and Wellness Associated Domains

- English materials include some direct social skill instruction and explicit teaching of skills; students repeatedly practice social skills throughout the day.
- English materials include some guidance for teachers on classroom arrangements that promote positive social interactions.
- English materials include some activities to develop physical skills, fine motor skills, and safe and healthy habits.
- The evidence from the English materials in this section’s indicator-level reports can be verified in full within the transadapted and translated Spanish materials.

Section 4. Language and Communication Domain

- English materials provide some guidance on developing students’ listening and speaking skills.
- Spanish materials provide guidance on developing students’ listening and speaking skills.
- English materials support expanding student vocabulary.
- Spanish materials somewhat support expanding student vocabulary. The materials provide few opportunities for students to develop vocabulary in a second language building from another language.
- English materials include strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in developing English language skills and developmentally appropriate content knowledge.
- Spanish materials include some strategies for supporting students’ biliteracy development.

Section 5. Emergent Literacy: Reading Domain

- English materials provide students with opportunities to develop oral language skills, including authentic text conversations.
- Spanish materials provide students with opportunities to develop oral language skills, including authentic text conversations.
- English materials provide some instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills, alphabetic knowledge skills, and print knowledge and concepts.
- Spanish materials provide some instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills and alphabetic knowledge skills and sufficient instruction

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

and opportunities in print knowledge and concepts. Materials have limited consideration for phonological awareness skill development specific to the Spanish language.

- English materials include a variety of text types and genres across contents that are high quality and at an appropriate level of complexity; general guidance is provided to teachers to develop student comprehension of texts.
- Spanish materials include some variety of text types and genres across contents that are at an appropriate level of complexity; materials develop students' comprehension of text read aloud. Materials do not support the teacher in scaffolding questions for students at a variety of language proficiency levels.
- English materials include some strategies to support ELs with their reading skills; however, materials do not provide guidance to teachers to use the child's primary language as a means to support learning English.
- Spanish materials include some strategies to support ELs with their reading skills, do not provide opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections, and provide some guidance for the teacher to leverage the student's knowledge of literacy in each language as an asset.

Section 6. Emergent Literacy: Writing Domain

- English materials do not include a variety of experiences through which students can engage with writing; materials somewhat instruct students along the developmental stages of writing.
- English materials support fine motor development alongside and through writing.
- The evidence from the English materials in this section's indicator-level reports can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Section 7. Mathematics Domain

- English materials follow a logical mathematical continuum of concrete, pictorial, then abstract representations.
- English materials provide instruction that builds on students' informal knowledge about mathematics.
- English materials somewhat develop young children's ability to problem solve, use number sense, and build academic math vocabulary.
- The evidence from the English materials in this section's indicator-level reports can be verified in full within the translated and translated Spanish materials.

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

- English materials somewhat build science knowledge through inquiry-based instruction and exploration of the natural world.
- English materials somewhat build social studies knowledge through the study of culture and community, and lessons do not progress in a logical sequence.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

- English materials somewhat expose children to fine arts through exploration.
- English materials include opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience or to explore and use various digital tools.
- The evidence from the English materials in this section’s indicator-level reports cannot be verified in full within the Spanish materials.

Section 9. Progress Monitoring

- English materials include developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools and guidance for teachers and students; materials do not include tools for students to track their own progress and growth.
- Spanish materials include developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools and guidance for teachers and students; materials include limited opportunities for students to track their own progress and growth.
- English materials provide some guidance for teachers to analyze and respond to data from diagnostic tools but do not provide guidance for administrators to support teachers in analyzing and responding to data.
- Spanish materials provide some guidance for teachers to analyze and respond to data from diagnostic tools but do not provide much guidance for administrators to support teachers in analyzing and responding to data.
- English materials include frequent and integrated progress monitoring opportunities.
- Spanish materials include embedded progress monitoring opportunities.

Section 10. Supports for All Learners

- English materials include some guidance, scaffolds, supports, and extensions intended to maximize student learning potential.
- Spanish materials include some guidance, scaffolds, supports, and extensions intended to maximize student learning potential.
- English materials provide instructional methods that appeal to different student learning interests and needs.
- Spanish materials provide instructional methods that appeal to different student learning interests and needs.
- English materials include some supports for ELs but do not include accommodations for linguistics commensurate with various English language proficiency levels.
- Spanish materials provide some support to ELs at various English language proficiency levels. Materials minimally utilize students’ primary language as a means to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in the target language.

Section 11. Implementation

- English materials include a year-long plan with practice and review opportunities that support instruction; there is no resource or guidance on how to vertically align instruction that builds year to year.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

- English materials include some implementation support for teachers but not administrators; implementation guidance meets variability in programmatic design and scheduling considerations.
- English materials do not include a Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines-aligned scope and sequence.
- English materials provide guidance on fostering connections between home and school.
- The visual design of student and teacher materials in English is neither distracting nor chaotic.
- The evidence from the English materials in this section’s indicator-level reports can be verified in full within the transadapted and translated Spanish materials.

Section 12. Bilingual Program Model Considerations (Spanish materials only)

- Spanish materials do not include guidance or recommendations specific to a bilingual program model.
- Spanish materials do not support teachers in understanding the connection between content presented in English and Spanish, nor do they provide guidance for teachers on how to help students understand this connection.
- Spanish materials include teacher and student resources in authentic and academic Spanish transadaptations and translations; materials provide limited support for the development of socio-cultural competence and include some representations of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Spanish language and Hispanic culture.

Additional Information: Technology, Cost, Professional Learning, and Additional Language Supports (Spanish materials)

- The publisher submitted the technology, cost, and professional learning support worksheets for their English and Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

2.1 Materials are cross-curricular and integrated in an authentic way to support students’ unified experience throughout the day and/or unit¹.

- 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.

2.1 Materials & Score	2.1 Rationale
2.1 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials are somewhat cross-curricular and integrated in an authentic way to support students’ unified experience throughout the day. The materials include specific and intentional experiences that provide cross-curricular connections between concepts across the units. The materials do focus on specific domains, but they do not provide purposeful connections to domains that are intentionally reinforced in the units.
2.1 Spanish IM Meets 4/4	Materials are cross-curricular and integrated in an authentic way to support students’ unified experience throughout the day and/or unit. Throughout the materials, there are very specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections that create a unified experience for students. The domains are named for each learning activity and purposefully develop or reinforce the objective.

English Evidence 2.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, includes a “Scope and Sequence” that provides a quick overview of the program and its developmental progression. Additionally, each unit provides a “Week at a Glance” resource detailing which information is taught in each content area. While these resources detail which domains are taught generally, they do not detail how specific learning activities connect to the Prekindergarten Guidelines or how they are integrated and reinforced.

¹ “and/or unit” included in the Spanish Prekindergarten rubric only.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

In Unit 1, the materials include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections. Students begin the day and lesson in “Language and Literacy” by reviewing the uppercase letter *L*; materials introduce the lowercase *l* using the song “Rhyming Riddles” and nursery rhymes. Students hear part of the song, and the teacher pauses, helping the students fill in the missing rhyming word. The teacher also uses picture tiles to practice words that rhyme with the students. For enrichment, the teacher and students recreate nursery rhymes with other words that rhyme. For example, “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall” becomes “Humpty Dumpty sat on a ball.” Later on, in the “Readiness and Writing” small group, students use their “Stamp and See Screen” to create the letter *L* by stamping a big line down and a little line across. For “Numbers and Math” small groups, the students use their “My First School Book” and flip crayons to trace, while the teacher models making a cross, using words like *little line down* and *little line across*. Students continue to trace the middle of a window, scarecrow, and kite. The group makes a traffic light with the guidance of the teacher. The last lesson of the day is “Science,” where the class takes a nature walk to look for leaves and other materials to make a nature letter *L*. Materials include cross-curricular connections to build background knowledge, make connections, and explore concepts in a variety of ways. These lessons reinforce the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, but they do not explicitly make the connection to them.

In Unit 3, the lessons’ focus is the letter *C*. The day begins with the Language and Literacy lesson. The “Identify Capital Letters” activity teaches students to recognize and name capital letters. It starts by reviewing the letter *C* and its sound. After this, students built the letter *C* with a big curve. Next, students place objects that begin with the letter *C* in the “Sound Around Box.” Students then search the box and name what was found. The teacher writes each student’s findings on the side of the Sound Around Box. Later, in the Readiness and Writing activity, students learn the capital letter *C* with “Roll-A-Dough Letters.” The concept is specifically connected as students roll lines and curves of dough to build capital letters. In the final lesson, “Describe Jobs,” the students learn about a job that begins with *C*, and the class focuses on costume designers. Before ending the lesson, students pretend to be costume designers; they use art supplies and paper bags to create costumes about the letter *C*. The lessons integrate the letter *C* through Language and Literacy, Readiness and Writing, and “Social Studies.” Lessons do reinforce concepts, but materials do not explicitly show how to connect the domains and how they are purposefully addressed.

The theme of Unit 6 is “Animals.” During a Language and Literacy lesson in this unit, the teacher reviews the letter *D* and its sound. Then, the teacher reads *How Do Dinosaurs Eat Their Food?* by Jane Yolen. After reading, the teacher asks, “What did the book tell us dinosaurs eat?” The materials prompt the teacher to go back and reread pages about their diet if children need assistance. The children discuss what dinosaurs eat, which is a purposeful way for children to demonstrate that they can describe a topic after listening to an informational text. After the discussion, the teacher instructs students to put dinosaurs into groups based on what they eat (i.e., meat-eating and plant-eating). Later, there is a mathematical skill listed for this lesson: “Sort objects by function or kind.” This domain is met through the sorting activity. In this

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

specific lesson, all of the skills and domains listed are met to some extent. For sorting, the topic is also revisited in other units. However, skills are not always purposefully developed or reinforced throughout all units and all domains in this same way.

Spanish Evidence 2.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Get Set for School Texas Correlations” download outlines the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines by addressing each domain and skills throughout the curriculum. All Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines are present, including their location within the instructional materials. For example, the correlations guide identifies that standard “1.A.1 Child is aware of where own body is in space and respects personal boundaries” is present in certain pages of the “Teacher’s Guides.” The guide also identifies that the skill can be learned and applied through the use of various “Teacher Tools and Manipulatives” (specific materials are listed) and “Technology Resources and Music” (song names are provided). This document is helpful during the planning process. Teachers can reference this document to see which domains are purposefully developed or reinforced in each learning activity.

The materials contain content-building information for teachers about the domains being taught or reinforced and how multiple domains are integrated. For example, the theme overview provides information about how the unit addresses and develops multiple skills and concepts across domains. This section is called “Semana a la vista” and is found on the lesson overview page before each week’s lesson. This section identifies the domains developed or reinforced within each activity. There is a key with various symbols to identify which domains are targeted in each lesson. Each symbol represents a different domain from the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. For example, the heart represents “Abordajes de aprendizaje/Aprendizaje socioemocional,” the talking head “Lenguaje/Comunicación,” books “Alfabetización emergente,” a pencil “Escritura emergente,” a ruler “Matemáticas,” a beaker “Ciencias,” a globe “Estudios sociales,” a paintbrush “Artes creativas,” and a running figure “Desarrollo física.” Most lessons include a combination of these symbols which signify specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections through an integrated curriculum.

The materials include lessons that integrate multiple developmental domains. In the “Lenguaje y alfabetización” section of a lesson from Unidad 1, the domains for the lesson are indicated. For example, “¿Qué estamos aprendiendo?” is indicated with the heart symbol, “Colaborar con los compañeros” with the talking head symbol, “Reconocer la hora del día y entender las relaciones espaciales” with the ruler symbol, and “Entender el impacto del clima” with the science beaker symbol. Based on the symbols, this lesson integrates four developmental domains: Abordajes de aprendizaje/Aprendizaje socioemocional, Lenguaje/Comunicación,

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Matemáticas, and Ciencias. The integration of these domains into one lesson supports specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections.

During a science lesson from Unidad 4, students discover more about the specific theme for the week. Students learn about the water cycle and scientists who study water issues, directly related to the weekly theme of “La Tierra.” The teacher reads a book about the water cycle and discusses the water cycle diagram. Next, with the help of a map, the teacher shows where a hydrologist can study water. This structure supports a very specific and intentional unified experience for students and authentically integrates the weekly theme into the lessons.

The materials include lessons in the domains of “Language and Communication,” “Emergent Literacy: Reading,” “Emergent Literacy: Writing,” “Mathematics,” “Science,” and “Social Studies.” The materials are organized around the common themes of getting ready for school, the body, community and games, the earth, machines, and animals. For example, in Unidad 6, the lessons are centered around the theme of “Los animales.” A Lenguaje y alfabetización lesson includes a read-aloud of the *The Cat in the Hat* and a “Habilidades de preparación y escritura” lesson includes an activity to trace and write a sentence about a horse running. In addition, a Ciencias lesson discusses information about the way animals breathe. This thematic organization provides multiple ways for students to learn and apply skills from various developmental domains through the material’s purposeful cross-curricular connections.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.
- Texts include a mixture of translated materials and those originally written in Spanish (Spanish only).
- Texts include content that is culturally relevant and diverse (Spanish only).

2.2 Materials & Score	2.2 Rationale
2.2 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials utilize high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration. The texts included in the units are strategically chosen to support content and skill development in multiple domains.
2.2 Spanish IM Meets 4/4	Materials utilize high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration. The materials utilize strategically chosen high-quality texts to support content and skill development in multiple domains. The texts included in the materials are a mixture of translations, transadaptations, and authentic Spanish, reflecting culturally relevant and diverse content.

English Evidence 2.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

There are a variety of texts in the “Books All Year” list in the “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1. Volume 1 also includes a list of “Book Connections”; these are books that support different themes and topics of learning.

In Unit 1, the book *My Five Senses* by Alikei is an easy-to-understand nonfiction book about the five senses. The text gives examples of how to use each of the five senses; illustrations clearly depict the content. This text includes science concepts and discusses the senses in an accessible way for prekindergarten children. Alikei is a well-known author who has written and illustrated over 60 fiction and nonfiction children’s books. Also in Unit 1, *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins is a story about children who are going to share a plate of cookies their mother has baked. The doorbell continues to ring, with more and more children coming over, so they must redistribute the number of cookies each child gets to eat. There is a math component embedded within the text: The children must figure out how to share the cookies. The text is

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

written in a predictable pattern that is easy for children to follow. Pat Hutchins is a well-known and award-winning author and illustrator; she has written and illustrated many early childhood favorites, a total of over 50 titles.

In Unit 5, the book *Favorite Nursery Rhymes* by Scoff Gustafson is a collection of 45 Mother Goose nursery rhymes. The book won the 2008 Silver Award in the category “Children’s Picture Books, Age 6 and Under” and is an Illinois Read 2013 selection for “Birth to age 4.” Scott Gustafson is well known for his illustrations. The book could be used to teach rhyming, problem and solution, counting, and several other skills. The materials provide one lesson using the book about problems and solutions with two of the nursery rhymes in the book.

In Unit 6, the book *Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister is an internationally well-known fiction story written by a well-known author. The book has been adapted into a short film and television series. It has won at least eight national and international awards, such as the Critici in Erba Prize, 1993 Bologna Children's Book Fair; 1993 Christopher Award; 1995 American Booksellers Book of the Year for Children's Book in 1995; 1995 Book Sense Book of the Year Award; 1995 Florida Children's Book Award; and the 1995 North Carolina Children’s Book Award. It was a 1994 nominee for the Book Sense Book of the Year Award. The book can teach social and emotional skills, make connections, problem and solution, and cause and effect, among other skills. The materials provide one lesson using the book, connecting it to another text.

Spanish Evidence 2.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Supporting students’ skill and content development is evident through the books embedded in the lessons. The materials include texts written by well-known and expert authors such as Dr. Seuss, Eric Carle, Beverly Cleary, Margaret Wise Brown, Alikei Brandenberg, and Lewis Carroll. For example, *Mis Cinco Sentidos* by Alikei is included in the curriculum library. According to <https://www.angelfire.com/zine2/jungchiu/Alikei.html>, Alikei is well known and the recipient of many awards, including the New York Academy of Sciences Children's Book Award and the Prix du Livre pour Enfants (Geneva). These authors’ contributions to children’s literature are of high quality because their books contain engaging plots, beautiful illustrations, well-developed themes, and exciting characters. This approach demonstrates how the texts are strategically chosen to support content and skill development.

The materials include multiple text genres such as nonfiction, fiction, poetry, songs, and nursery rhymes. In the “Recursos” section of the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder: Introducción al currículo,” there are two areas that list the books contained in the curriculum (“Conexiones con libros” and “Libros de todo el año”). In this same section, the “Biblioteca de Get Set for School” contains the books used in the lessons. The chart listing the titles includes

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

the genre, domains, and targeted skills. For example, the chart lists the fiction book *La semillita* by Eric Carle is used in “Ciencias” to target learning skills about nature, seasons of the year, and occupations. In addition, the fable *Ricitos de oro y los tres osos* by Valeri Gorbachev is used to target recognizing size, counting, and analyzing situations. The nonfiction book *Avión: Airplane* by Alex Summers is used to target experimentation, the senses, transportation, and size. The materials include various genre texts that support content and skill development in multiple domains.

The Introducción al Currículo section of the Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder lists books available in the instructional materials that are high quality, age appropriate, and authentic Spanish texts. *Abececirco* by Daniel Nesquens, *Abecedario salvaje* by Yanitzia Canetti, *La familia bola* by Mónica Carretero, and *Dentro de mi imaginación* by Marta Arteaga are just a few of the titles that were originally written in Spanish. The implementation of such books not only supports the native Spanish speaking students, but it validates their self-identity and promotes self-confidence.

In addition to authentic Spanish texts, the materials include bilingual texts originally written in Spanish and English. For example, *María tenía una llamita* by Ángela Domínguez, *¿Qué hay en el bosque?* by Santiago Ochoa and Michelle Garcia Anderson, and *Pío Peep: Traditional Spanish Nursery Rhymes* by Alma Flor Ada. These texts present authentic, academic Spanish that celebrates childhood and Latin American heritage. The side-by-side Spanish and English also helps students make connections between the two languages. The translated texts within the materials are of high quality where the story’s message or information is not interrupted.

The materials include books that are culturally relevant to children. Multiple texts and other print resources included in the materials are relevant to students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For example, *I’m Like You, You’re Like Me/Yo soy como tu, tu eres como yo: Un libro para entendernos y apreciarnos* by Cindy Gainer teaches students about diversity using kid-friendly language. This book uses terms such as *cabello lacio o rizado*, *familias con muchas personas o pocas*, *cuerpos grandes o pequeños*. This type of read-aloud represents diverse types of families and exposes students to different cultures.

The instructional materials include diverse texts throughout the curriculum that represent people of differing abilities and from various backgrounds, cultures, races, and ethnicities. Some of the titles include *Podemos llevarnos bien: Un libro de alternativas para niños*, *Todos los colores de nuestra piel: La historia de por qué tenemos diferentes colores de piel, ¿De dónde eres?*, *Un Pequeño Libro Sobre Sentimientos*, and *Escuchando a Mi Cuerpo*. Reading books representing diversity in so many areas allows students to be open to those who are different from themselves. The diversity and content of these texts help students better understand their own culture and that of others around them. These books also assist the teacher in forming a sense of acceptance and understanding of their own students.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

2.3 Materials & Score	2.3 Rationale
2.3 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide some support for developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains. The materials include guidance for teachers to connect activities to play and to facilitate activities to meet, reinforce, and practice learning objectives in a developmentally appropriate manner. Some specific instructions are provided for the teachers on classroom setup, and there is some lesson guidance to support planned learning activities. However, the materials do not provide consistent support for student choice throughout the units and learning areas.
2.3 Spanish IM Meets 4/4	Materials support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains. The materials include various opportunities for purposeful play that promote student choice balanced with direct instruction. The materials guide teachers on how to connect all domains to play, in addition to setting up and facilitating activities for student mastery of learning objectives. All of the activities in the materials are appropriate for the content areas and skill development.

English Evidence 2.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide” provides some information on child-led/free-play centers in the “Multisensory Activities and Centers” section. Most activities are labeled into child-led or teacher-led categories, and they are organized into “Language and Literacy,” “Readiness and Writing,” and “Numbers and Math” subsections. For the most part, these lessons include

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

step-by-step teacher directions dictating how students must complete the activity. Directions include guidance describing how the center must be set up and which resources need to be prepared for instruction. While students engage in purposeful play, they do not always receive a choice of what to do or how to do it. For example, the child-led activity “Build the Puzzle” has students building animal puzzles that correspond to letters. While students are at the center of the activity, they do not have a playful choice in the activity. In the “Wet-Dry-Try App,” students choose between a capital, lowercase, or number, but then the personal handwriting coach leads the child through the app instructions and guidance. Other activities like the “Mix and Make Shapes” do center around unstructured free play. However, these are primarily found in the Numbers and Math learning area with some similar activities also in the Readiness and Writing learning area. This section on Multisensory Activities does not include a subsection on oral language or science and social studies.

In Unit 1, during one of the first activities, students learn how to greet others when they meet people. The class sings and dances to the “Hello Song.” The teacher shakes the hand of each child while saying, “Hello, this is your right hand. I’m going to do something to your right hand.” The teacher adds a stamp or lotion to the student’s right hand. The teacher models and asks students to raise their right hand while saying, “This is my right hand. I shake hands with my right hand.” For “Enrichment,” the materials suggest the teacher ask about students’ left hands. Materials provide some opportunities for students to practice new skills through play, but other lessons, like this particular lesson, are teacher-directed.

During a Language and Literacy lesson in Unit 4, children learn to recognize and name lowercase letters. The teacher reviews capital *P* and introduces lowercase *p* and its sound. Using the “Sound Around Box,” the teacher says, “Let’s pretend this is an underwater treasure chest. Let’s explore and see what we find.” The materials guide the teacher to place *Pp* items in the Sound Around Box. Children take turns finding and naming items from the box. The teacher prompts children to talk about the item and writes the word on the Sound Around Box. This action repeats for each child. This activity teaches a new letter (skill) playfully, but there are no opportunities to broaden and deepen this knowledge, nor is there evidence of other related purposeful play in learning centers. The Language and Literacy lesson provides teachers with a script and instructions to follow for a playful lesson on the letter *p*, but it does not give guidance on creating more opportunities for play by exploring letter sounds or connecting to other domains.

The lessons in Unit 6 indicate the appropriate learning setting for instruction: small groups, large groups, and individual learning areas. There is an intentional balance of direct instruction and planned learning centers taking into consideration skill, content, and development. While some of these activities integrate play, the teacher directions do not always dictate which grouping to use or how to promote play when play is not integrated. In an activity that does integrate play, students playfully interact with the story *Mat Man Hats*. After reading, the teacher takes out a few hats, and the children try them on. Children have a chance to select a

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

role and talk about what each person will do before playing that part. In this case, there is clear teacher guidance for setting up the learning environment to promote positive learning. However, this lesson does not then provide learning areas that offer additional choice and related play. As with other units, there are play opportunities, but the materials do not include information to support the teacher's understanding of the importance of play as a foundation, nor do they connect play to all domains.

Spanish Evidence 2.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Teacher's Guide" includes recommendations for the organization and routine of activities to promote effective learning. For example, Volume 1 of the Teacher's Guide provides the teacher with classroom management tips such as the appropriate amount of time for each activity. The guidance states, "Tomate 10 o 15 minutos para cada área de aprendizaje, aumentando hasta 20 minutos hacia el final del año," which supports a developmentally appropriate amount of time for skill development. The materials also guide the teacher to establish a routine, a schedule, transitions, decide the location of each learning area, and plan ahead to "teach effectively." Another document that supports the teacher's ability to actively facilitate learning and discovery through play is the "Get Set For School: A Complete Pre-K Program for Kindergarten Readiness Success." This guide explains how the "multimodal, playful approach is at the heart of...success because young children are not ready to sit still and focus for long periods of time." This information helps set up a learning environment that promotes positive early childhood outcomes.

In addition, the "Organización del salón de clases" section of the "Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder" provides recommendations for how to organize materials for writing lessons. The materials guide the teacher to "apila las copias de los niños de Mi Primer Libro Escolar y Mi Primer Libro en Minúsculas en el estante. Deja los crayones Flip Crayons en la caja de plástico y los lápices pequeños para manos pequeñas en la caja y colócalas junto al libro de actividades." The recommendations in this lesson provide guidance to teachers on setting up and facilitating activities to meet, reinforce, or practice learning objectives.

The materials include a variety of opportunities designed for playful exploration during learning centers. In Volume 1 of the Teacher's Guide, "centros de juegos libres" are outlined. In each section, there are lists of activities "dirigidos por los niños." For example, a math center calls for the teacher to have "formas disponibles en una mesa o una área de juego o trabajo específico." The students create "imágenes o diseños con las formas." This activity provides opportunities for children to broaden and deepen their knowledge through play. The children are exploring shapes while creating images of their own. During this purposeful play, students use the shape

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

knowledge they have acquired in a way that promotes student choice and is also appropriate for the content and skill development.

The materials include guidance to support the teacher's facilitation of learning and discovery through play across learning settings and domains. For example, a *números y matemáticas* lesson from Unidad 1 includes a game to identify objects with several attributes using students' sense of touch. The teacher states, "Construimos a Mat Man con las piezas de madera. Vamos a jugar un juego." Next, students put their hand in a bag and guess what shape they are touching based on "tamaño (grande/pequeño) y forma (recta/curva)." After all the students have a turn, they order the pieces of wood by "tamaño y forma" and count each group of wood pieces together. This lesson helps teachers connect the "Números y matemáticas" domain to play.

The materials provide information on how lessons and activities implement play to effectively teach a concept. For example, a science lesson from Unidad 3 allows students to play and do an ice cream relay. The teacher gathers balls of various sizes and weights. The teacher explains, "Vamos a imaginar que las bolas son bolas de helado. Las bolas más livianas te permitirán ir más rápido. Las bolas pesadas te harán ir más lento." The students get in relay teams and race carrying balls of different weights. Given that the objective is for students to experiment with size, weight, and speed of balls, this form of play facilitates the discovery of this concept because children are exposed in an engaging way through play.

The materials provide guidance for teachers to support students in meeting learning objectives. Each activity plan includes step by step instructions for teachers to carry out the activities. For example, in Unidad 3, the students learn about healthy and unhealthy foods. The materials guide the teacher to have students name healthy and unhealthy food. Next, the materials prompt the teacher to read *Oh, the Things You Can Do That Are Good for You: A Book About Staying Healthy*. After reading, the teacher creates a T-chart with one column titled healthy and the other unhealthy. The students sort the pictures of food under each column of the T-chart. The instructions prompt the teacher to check for understanding by observing if students categorize the foods correctly and to provide verbal or physical prompts as necessary. At the end of the lesson, the teacher takes a picture of the chart and displays it in the classroom. These types of scripted details are provided for every lesson to assist teacher implementation and support students in meeting the learning objectives.

The materials also encourage teachers to use songs in many lessons to reinforce learning objectives. For example, in a science lesson from Unidad 4, the objective is for students to learn about rain. As students listen to the song "Canción de la lluvia," they imitate the sound of rain as it falls from the sky. The implementation of music during the lessons supports activities to meet, reinforce, or practice learning objectives.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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 and student populations².
- Materials provide differentiated use recommendations for half day and full day prekindergarten programs.

2.4 Materials & Score	2.4 Rationale
2.4 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure. While the materials do not explicitly state they are built for four-year-old children, most instruction is appropriately designed for this age group. Additionally, there are some explicit instructional alternatives specifically for three-year-old children. While organized to meet prekindergarten students’ needs, the materials lack comprehensive differentiation based on the level of development. There is a schedule for half-day and full-day programs, but the materials do not provide specific differentiated instructional recommendations for each aspect of the program.
2.4 Spanish IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials somewhat fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure. The materials specify whether they are for three or four-year-old children; however, the guidance is very disconnected from its implementation. There are some options and recommendations for differentiating instruction based on developmental levels and student populations. The materials are limited in the recommendations for half-day and full-day prekindergarten programs.

English Evidence 2.4

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provided in the “Teacher’s Guide” do not identify age groups for most activities. The Teacher’s Guide does indicate the activities are for pre-k students, but there is no specific identification for three- or four-year-olds. The Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1, provides a skill

² “and student populations” included in the Spanish Prekindergarten rubric only.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

sequence for two- to five-year-olds for “Language and Literacy,” “Readiness and Writing,” and “Numbers and Math.” This resource also provides a half-day and full-day schedule to implement the program. Both schedules include welcome activities, “Circle Time,” centers/small group, whole group, recess/gross motor play, and “Closing Circle.” The difference between the two schedules is the time allotments for each activity and the number of centers/small groups. The materials do not specify lessons that are best for half-day or full-day schedules. As well, there is no teacher guidance meant to help in planning and making instructional decisions for half-day or full-day schedules. The materials only provide guidance for centers and lessons.

At the beginning of the Teacher’s Guide, Volume 2, the materials provide an explanation of the “Week at a Glance” (a summary of the week); they state that it includes suggestions for pre-k with three-year-olds. Lessons seem most appropriately designed for four-year-olds; however, this is not specifically stated. Instead, the program summarizes how they are an appropriate “Developmental Curriculum.” In this section of the Teacher’s Guide, the program acknowledges that students will enter with different and evolving abilities: “They will not at all be developmentally ready to learn the same skills at the same time.” The program “teaches in developmental order by starting at a level that does not assume prior knowledge or competency.” However, this section and the daily lesson plans rarely reference age specifically. It is clear the daily lesson plans are designed with development in mind; they include step-by-step directions with the objective, materials, and vocabulary. There is a daily suggestion for three-year-olds; however, this section is short and based only on one content area most of the time. These plans lack clearly differentiated instruction for the level of development.

In Unit 1, students start the day in Language and Literacy by reviewing the uppercase letter *L*; materials introduce the lowercase *l* using the song “Rhyming Riddles” and nursery rhymes. Students hear part of the song, and the teacher pauses, helping the students fill in the missing rhyming word. The teacher uses picture tiles to practice words that rhyme. For enrichment, the teacher and students recreate nursery rhymes with other words that rhyme. For example, “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall” becomes “Humpty Dumpty sat on a ball.” Later on, in the Readiness and Writing small group, students use their “Stamp and See Screen” to create the letter *L* by stamping a big line down and a little line across. For Numbers and Math small groups, the students use their “My First School Book” and flip crayons to trace, while the teacher models to make a cross using words like *little line down* and *little line across*. Students continue to trace the middle of a window, scarecrow, and kite. The group makes a traffic light with guidance from the teacher. The last lesson of the day is science, where the class takes a nature walk to look for leaves and other materials to make a nature letter *L*. The suggestion for three-year-olds is to discuss top, middle, and bottom using body parts. Materials provide pacing that supports the short attention span of three-year-old and four-year-old children, but they do not provide additional scaffolding for three-year-old children beyond the above suggestion.

During a week in Unit 4, children learn to identify *Bb* and its sound, as well as identify, count, and write the number 9. Children also learn about patterns and light. The suggestions for

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

three-year-olds include using hands-on examples of words taught in “Oral Language,” such as having children shine a flashlight on the wall to see shadows. A suggestion for three-year-olds is also provided in a read-aloud. The teacher uses a picture walk with threes to teach students about bright light and dark shadows. Although this activity has a modification, there are no modifications for other academic domains or lessons. While reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, materials suggest using props to help three-year-olds understand the changes a butterfly goes through during its life cycle. When the class learns the vocabulary words *sun* and *star*, materials suggest teachers show children a globe and discuss that we live there, on Earth, and then have them draw or color a picture of the sun or Earth. These suggestions are found in the “Week at a Glance” and are the only ways the lessons or activities are differentiated for three-year-olds. There are additional supports for students in general and English Learners specifically, but there are few additional supports that explicitly differentiate based on developmental level.

In Unit 5, students focus on the letter *M*, shapes, and machines. The suggestions for three-year-olds are using pictures/objects that have the /m/ beginning sound and allowing students to hear the /m/ sound at the beginning of each object by repeating the object’s sound and name. Three-year-olds also review shapes with puzzles and manipulatives, review building “Mat Man,” and review learning and practicing good manners. The materials meet students at their developmental level through review.

Spanish Evidence 2.4

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Ejemplo de horario y horarios alternativos” section of the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder” specifies which lessons apply for a three-day week versus five-day programs. The materials state: “Sigue el alcance y secuencia de Get Set for School de lunes, miércoles y viernes. Agrega lecciones de ciencias o estudios sociales los martes y jueves cuando sea posible.” This document provides recommendations for differentiating programs that occur three days per week instead of five. Although the instructional materials are the same for half-day and full-day pre-k programs, this section’s sample class schedules provide differentiation. Both schedules have the same amount of time for whole group, small group, and teacher-led activities; however, the half-day schedule does not include lunch or nap time and has one recess instead of two. In addition, the half-day schedule suggests three center times instead of four. This guidance is only provided in the teacher’s guide and not within the actual lessons, which can make it difficult for teachers to apply in context.

In the “Introducción al currículo” section of the Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder, the development stages from ages two to five are presented in a developmental sequence. It is useful for teachers to see how their students’ abilities align with the specific skills

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

for the various domains available in this resource. Teachers can compare what a three-year-old versus a four-year-old child is expected to do. For example, at the age of three, a child is expected to know between 40 and 200 words, while that number increases to 200–400 words for a four-year-old. Although this guidance can help build teacher background knowledge, it is very general and does not include to which lessons this information could apply, nor do the lessons refer back to this chart. Furthermore, this section does not provide specific information to identify the materials for each age group. Since there is no differentiation between age groups, one can only assume that the materials are the same for both throughout the lessons. This means that every lesson might not be appropriate for one of the age groups. For instance, a three-year-old is expected to know numbers up to 10, and four-year olds up to 20. By looking at these development stages, the math domain in the entire curriculum is geared toward four-year-old students since the math lessons cover up to number 20 by the end of the year. Even though the teacher can use the developmental stages available in the Teacher’s Guide to lead instruction, differentiation for expectations of a three-year-old versus a four-year-old are not present in the lessons.

The “Semana a simple vista” section gives an overview of the weekly lessons and includes “sugerencias para niños de tres años.” This section provides one suggestion per day of the week for three-year-old students. While this part of the materials helps to differentiate lessons for three-year-old children, it is one suggestion and the connection to which activity it applies is not always clear. In addition, no differentiation of instruction for three or four-year-old students is available within the actual lessons or daily lesson structure.

The materials provide general scaffolding suggestions through the “Apoyo” and “Enriquecimiento” sections embedded within the lessons. For example, in a “Ciencias” lesson from Unidad 1, the students identify and classify pictures of plants and animals by color. The Apoyó section states, “Haz que los niños nombren los colores de las imágenes.” The Enriquecimiento section calls for students to discuss “¿Cuáles son algunas de las diferencias entre plantas y animales?” Although these sections help to scaffold for students who are not understanding the lesson or for students who are ready for a challenge, it does not specify ages or mention student populations.

The materials do not include additional learning activities such as supplementary read-aloud books, center activities, or movement and music activities, specifically for the full-day program. As a result, there is limited differentiation regarding the instructional materials between the two schedules. For example, in a math lesson from Unidad 4, the list of materials include “objetos para contar que comiencen con la letra P.” These objects are utilized to practice counting using items that start with the letter students are learning that particular week. This activity is expected to be carried out whether the program is half-day or full-day, but there are no additional opportunities for this activity to be reinforced during the full-day program. For instance, one of the center’s activities could be students drawing these objects and labeling them accordingly in an “ABC Journal.” Recommendations for supplementary opportunities

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

during full-day programs would enhance the differentiation between half-day and full-day pre-k programs.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

- 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 (Spanish only).

2.5 Materials & Score	2.5 Rationale
2.5 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials include detailed guidance that supports the teacher’s delivery of instruction. The materials provide detailed and explicit guidance for teacher and student actions that support student development and proficiency of content and skills across all units. The lessons and activities include explicit instructional strategies and instructions to support teaching the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Although there are explicit guidelines for teaching each lesson, lessons rarely include specific support connecting students’ prior content knowledge and experiences to new learning.
2.5 Spanish IM Meets 4/4	The materials include detailed guidance that supports the teacher’s delivery of instruction. The materials include guidance for teachers and provide explicit instructional strategies for teaching prekindergarten skills. The guidance includes teacher and student actions that support the development and proficiency of content and skills. The materials also provide guidance for connecting students’ prior knowledge and experiences to new learning.

English Evidence 2.5

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provided for the lessons include guidance to support teacher instruction. The materials include scripted and specific lessons across all domains and units. Each lesson is set up the same way, with the domain labeled clearly at the top. On the left-hand side, the materials list any materials needed for the lesson, the objectives children are learning in the lesson across domains, and vocabulary words taught in the lesson. The right side includes the actual lesson. The lesson begins by giving guidance on grouping (e.g., whole group, small group, pairs). Then,

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

the materials list the title of the lesson, such as “Make Two Words into One,” “Learn P with Roll-a-Dough Letters,” “Share a Set Evenly,” or “Study Plants.” At least once per day, the materials instruct the teacher to begin the lesson with a multisensory introduction that includes a song and movement. The lesson follows in a numbered format so teachers can follow the steps exactly as prescribed by the materials. The materials also script what the teacher says during the lesson.

In Unit 1, the teacher brings out a hat with some scarves inside and allows the students to guess how many are inside. The teacher waves a wand and pulls out scarves slowly while the class counts together, “1, 2, 3.” The teacher asks the students the number they just said. The teacher places the scarves in a line and checks with the students how many scarves there are by counting each one again. The teacher checks for understanding by observing the students while they count. Following the strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs), the teacher passes the scarves and other objects for the students to count. For enrichment, students count classroom objects with a partner. Materials engage students by using activities and new experiences appropriate for the age, but they do not provide detailed guidance connecting prior knowledge to new learning.

In Unit 3, students experiment with the size, weight, and speed of balls. The teacher displays balls of different sizes and weights. The teacher picks two and tells the class that one is heavy and the other one is light. The class rolls the balls down a slanted board, experiments, and sees that the heavier one is faster. The teacher models how to play “Ice Cream Relay.” The students pretend that the balls are ice cream scoops that they need to balance on cones. The students are divided into relay teams and race. After the race is over, the class discusses if the heavy balls or the light ones made a difference. The teacher checks for understanding by observing as the children experiment with their balls, seeing whether they understand the concepts of faster/slower and heavy/light. Following the strategy for supporting ELs, the teacher groups all the students into one team. For enrichment, the class makes a Venn diagram of two ice cream flavors, and the students choose their favorite flavor by filling in their names in the diagram.

In Unit 5, students describe roads, using *wide* and *narrow*, in a small group setting. The teacher tells the students that some roads can be wide or narrow. The teacher says they will see which of the cars and trucks she has can drive on narrow roads. The children sit around a table that has cars, trucks, and dough. The students help the teacher flatten the dough. The children take turns driving a car or truck on the dough. The group compares the tracks they made using the words *wide* and *narrow*. The children roll two cars next to one another to compare them. The teacher asks the students, “Does the road need to be wider or narrower than it was for one car?” The teacher checks for understanding by listening to the children discuss the tracks, using *wide* and *narrow* correctly. For support/ELs, the teacher tells the children to use their bodies to show wide and narrow. For enrichment, the students draw a map using wide and narrow roads. Although the concept of *narrow/wide* could be related to other lessons, similar concepts, or

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

students' prior knowledge, this lesson itself does not offer detailed guidance prompting the teacher to cultivate these relationships.

The materials include benchmark assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Teachers have access to "Classroom Observation Checklists" that they can use to determine students' previous knowledge and understanding. However, these resources are not explicitly tied to lessons, activities, and student experience throughout the year. Teachers can assess prior knowledge at different points in the year, but when delivering instruction, teachers do not have lesson-specific guidance that connects prior knowledge to new learning.

Spanish Evidence 2.5

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide detailed examples of student actions as teacher look-fors, specifically in the areas of "Language and Alphabetization," "Readiness and Writing," and "Numbers and Math." For example, the "Matemáticas" section of the "Etapas del desarrollo del aprendizaje" lists skills appropriate for each age from two to five. A two-year-old could be expected to "contar en voz alta hasta 3 y dar 1 objeto" and show how old they are using their fingers. Three-year-old students should be able to "contar en voz alta hasta 10," "contar de 3 a 5 objetos," and count objects up to three in any order. A four-year-old could be expected to "contar en voz alta hasta 20 o más," "contar de 6 a 10 objetos," and count objects up to five in any order. There is also guidance for five-year-olds. This guidance helps the teacher to understand appropriate skill expectations from their students to support student development and proficiency of content and skills.

The materials provide explicit teacher guidance to support students' development and proficiency of content and skills. For example, the "Actividades multisensoriales de Lenguaje y alfabetización" section of the "Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder" provides guidance for the use of alphabet cards to teach upper- and lower-case correspondence. The materials guide the teacher to give each student "una tarjeta de letras A-B-C Touch and Flip." The students explore around the classroom and "establezcan correspondencias con las letras de los objetos del salón de clases." The teacher gives each student a counter for each letter match that is found. In addition, the materials provide details to support the teacher in teaching letter names. The materials state: "Las letras minúsculas más fáciles de reconocer son las que se parecen a sus mayúsculas. Cuando llegue el momento de que los niños reconozcan las letras minúsculas, enseña primero las letras c, o, s, v, y, w..." These instructional tips provide the teacher with explicit guidance for teaching pre-k skills.

The materials include detailed guidance for student actions within the weekly lesson overviews that support student development and proficiency of content and skills. For example, the

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

preview for a weekly lesson in Unidad 1 lists the following student actions: “turnarse, escuchar/seguir instrucciones, hacer una predicción sobre un libro mirando imágenes e ilustraciones, usar el conocimiento previo para hacer predicciones sobre una historia, escuchar para saber qué sucedió en una historia, escuchar para conversar.” These student actions are carried out during the “Lenguaje y alfabetización” sections and help students master the objectives by guiding teachers to engage them in conversations, make predictions, and activate background knowledge before reading a story to the class.

The curriculum includes a balance of explicit teaching strategies and teacher guidance that allows students to explore the objectives in different ways. Each part of the curriculum’s lessons is broken down step-by-step and includes a script and directions for the teacher to follow. For example, in Unidad 3, the Social Studies objective is for students to learn about celebrations. The lesson begins with students dancing to the song “¡Al prekínder!” using movements (included in the materials). After the song, the lesson prompts the teacher to say, “¡El prekínder es una fiesta! ¿Cómo te sentiste cantando y bailando esa canción?” The teacher facilitates a discussion about different celebrations that students enjoy with their families to assist students in making a connection to celebrations. At the end of the lesson, the materials prompt the teacher to lead the students in planning a celebration for school staff to apply the learning. These step-by-step lesson instructions, provided for all lessons, provide teachers with the necessary guidance to effectively teach pre-kindergarten skills and support student development of content and skills.

The materials provide guidance for connecting student’s prior content knowledge and experiences to new learning. In a Lenguaje y alfabetización lesson from Unidad 4, students review the letter *B* and its sound. The teacher states, “Busquemos en la escuela o salón de clases objetos que comiencen con el sonido *B*.” Next, the teacher takes the students around the room, exploring for objects that start with the letter *B*. Students use their knowledge of object names and letter sounds to help them complete this activity. The teacher makes “una lista de todos los objetos encontrados que empiecen con *B*.” The students put together a collage of images, pictures, etc., of the objects they found. The materials provide detailed guidance for connecting students’ prior knowledge to new learning by having students review the letter sound and explore their environment for names of objects that start with the same letter.

Because each unit’s themes are interesting for the students, it makes it easier to connect their prior knowledge to new learning. The theme for Unidad 6 is “Animales.” In one particular lesson, students discuss what dinosaurs eat. The teacher reads the book *¿Cómo comen los dinosaurios sus alimentos?* and guides students to put plastic dinosaurs in groups based on what they eat. The students use their prior knowledge about food items (discussed in previous units) to determine which group each dinosaur should be placed in (carnívoros or herbívoros). This activity allows students to connect their prior knowledge to new learning.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

2.6 Materials & Score	2.6 Rationale
2.6 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials are clearly supported by child development research that enriches educator understanding of early childhood development. Research is academic, applicable to a Texas-specific context, and relevant. A bibliography includes citations that reinforce the validity of the recommended instructional approach.
2.6 Spanish IM Meets 4/4	The materials include a clear description of how the curriculum is supported by child development research. Although the majority of the research presented in the bibliography is not current, all sources are academic, relevant to early childhood development, and applicable to Texas. The materials provide research-based guidance for instruction that enriches educator understanding of early childhood development and the validity of the recommended approach.

English Evidence 2.6

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, discusses how the materials align with child development research. The instructional material is structured by the research written by Gessell, A., H.M. Halverson, H. Thomson, F.L. Ilg, B.M. Castner, L.B. Ames, and C.S. Amatruda: *The First Year of Life: A Guide to the Study of the Pre-School Child*. Gesell's work continues to be foundational research for developmental scales in four areas of growth and development: motor, adaptive (cognitive), language, and personal-social behavior. Originally published in 1925 and most recently updated in 2010, the Gesell Developmental Schedules continue to serve and guide

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

pediatricians and psychologists throughout the world today (Gesell at Yale Program in Early Childhood, 2020).

The material explains that it starts with vertical and horizontal letters, then progresses to letters that curve, and finally moves to letters with diagonals. The material states that research says writing development is significant to academic performance and has a negative impact if overlooked. The Teacher's Guide, Volume 1, describes the curriculum as a research-based approach that addresses different learning styles. It goes on to discuss how the materials acknowledge the developmental continuum for children and states that the materials meet the needs of all prekindergarten children, regardless of where they fall on that continuum. It does so by teaching in a developmental order that does not assume prior knowledge, instead of building knowledge and providing background knowledge to children. When describing the "Language and Literacy" academic content area, the materials lay out five different Literacy domains that are important for preschoolers to develop an understanding. These domains are linked to research-based strategies.

The Teacher's Guide, Volume 1, contains instructional approaches used in the lessons supported by research for language arts. Concepts of print include parts of a book, "hold a book right-side up," "pages are turned from the front to the back," and "reading is from top to bottom and left to right." It is based on research from 2004 by Nichols, Rupley, Rickleman, and Algozzine. Oral language includes the use of language to express feelings, thoughts, and observations; the approach is based on the book *Starting Out Right* by Burns, Griffin, and Snow.

A summary of the research framework can be found in the document "Get Set for School: A Complete Pre-K Program for Kindergarten Readiness Success." Included in this research are child development sources consistent with Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines research: International Reading Association, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Research Council, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, etc. At the end of this document are references and a bibliography that includes over 100 citations. These citations are primarily between 1990 and 2010; however, some research is as recent as 2018 and 2020. This research covers children's development within and across all domains, including citations specific to English Learners.

Spanish Evidence 2.6

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Research Review" section in the "Get Set for School: A complete Pre-K Program for Kindergarten Readiness Success" provides an explanation of how the materials align to child development research. The materials state that their "unique Pre-K program makes teaching easy and rewarding with: A research-based approach that uses several resources of

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

engagement, representation, and expression to involve a child’s whole body and her senses in learning.” This section also provides information about the importance of phonological awareness. The materials state that according to MacLean, Bryant, and Brandley (1987), “nursery rhymes, rhyming games, and finger plays provide an engaging and fun avenue for children to learn the sounds and rhythms of language” and children “who have knowledge of nursery rhymes develop stronger phonological awareness skills.” The materials provide clear descriptions of early childhood development research that support the curriculum.

Another part of the Research Review section discusses the “Math” domain. The materials state that children’s knowledge of numbers has been found to be a predictor of not just their future math skills but their overall academic success in all domains. In addition, the implementation of manipulatives, songs, movement, and read-alouds during math lessons supports child development and helps children make connections in a way that reinforces learning. There is a clear description of how the curriculum supports child development research; this document explains that “when students engage in exploration, it extends their knowledge in a meaningful and everlasting way.”

The Research Review section also discusses the “Emergent Writing” domain. For instance, the curriculum provides justification regarding how lessons in the Emergent Writing domain are organized. Students first start with learning pencil grip and then move on to stroke acquisition. The gradual release model is used with the instructional strategy “Wait, watch me. My turn first.” This scaffolding approach builds on students’ dexterities to encourage success since the teacher actively aids students to master these skills. Furthermore, the research explains how stroke acquisition is also reinforced when students participate in drawing. This information enriches educator understanding of early childhood development and validates the recommended approach.

The materials cite current research relevant to early childhood development in the field of second language development, specifically regarding English Learners (ELs), which accounts for a significant number of students in Texas. *Research-Based Methods of Reading Instruction for English Language Learners, Grades K–4* (S. Linan-Thompson and S. Vaughn, 2007) points out that one effective approach to help ELs who struggle is providing small group instruction where students with the same literacy skills are grouped together. When students work in centers, the teacher can group them accordingly. The research presented rationalizes targeting specific concepts to students who need more explicit instruction to develop the skills they lack.

The “Referencias” section of the teacher’s guide contains a bibliography with research presented throughout the materials, including academic articles and research books used for the lessons of alphabetization, writing, and mathematics. For example, a reference used in an “Alfabetización, escritura, y preparación” lesson includes the work of Marie Clay, who wrote “Exploring with a Pencil, Theory into Practice” in 1997. Another reference used in a mathematics lesson cites D. H. Clements, who wrote “Measurement in Pre-K to Grade 2

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Mathematics: Engaging Young Children in Mathematics” in 2004. Although academic and relevant, most of the research does not include sources acclaimed within recent years. Of the 124 research sources cited, only 23 were 10 years old or less.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

3.1 Materials & Score	3.1 Rationale
3.1 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials include some direct social skills instruction and some explicit teaching of skills. Materials contain lessons that embed self-concept skills, self-regulation skills, relationships with others, and social awareness skills, as laid out in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Materials include appropriate texts used to support the development of social competencies and the development of competencies to understand and respond to emotions. The materials provide guidance on teacher modeling; however, they do not have consistent examples to support this skill across all activities.
3.1 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 3.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Volume 1 of the “Teacher’s Guide” includes guidance on introducing and discussing particular topics. A sample “Circle Time” script contains guidance to include a social and emotional skills-themed book during this part of the day. The Teacher’s Guide also includes a list of all texts included in the materials. Many of the texts come from specific thematic units of instruction but can be used in a cross-curricular approach to support the development of the “Social-Emotional” domain. In the “Book Connections” section, which lists recommended texts for each unit, there is a specific “Social-Emotional Learning” sub-section. Titles on this list include *Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud and David Messing; *How Kind* by Mary Murphy; *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* by Mo Willems; *How Do Dinosaurs Play with Their*

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Friends? by Jane Yolen; and *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld. The materials also include suggestions for specific texts to support social and emotional competencies, such as *I'm Like You and You're Like Me: A Book About Understanding and Appreciating Each Other* by Cindy Gainer and *We Can Get Along: A Child's Book of Choices* by Lauren Murphy Payne. The materials include specific texts related to diversity, such as *All the Colors We Are* by Katie Kissinger; *Where Are You From?* by Yamile Saied Mendez; and *It's Okay to be Different* by Todd Parr. In addition, three unit themes in the materials support student exploration of social situations, which enhances social awareness: "Get Set for School," "My Body," and "Community and Play." Materials in the Teacher's Guide also include school-home connections and parent resources to address social and emotional issues. The materials also provide a list of additional books to reinforce or extend learning, including *A Sick Day for Amos*, *Good People Everywhere*, *Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?*, *Kindness is Cooler*, and *Say Hello Like This!* Links to additional learning resources online from "The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning" support social competences and social development.

In Unit 1, students sing the "Hello Song," which teaches how to *say hello* and shake hands with your right hand. The teacher models how to shake hands by shaking each child's right hand. Then the teacher models and asks children to raise their right hand and say, "This is my right hand. I shake with my right hand." Afterward, children take turns greeting and shaking hands with each other, which supports social awareness and relationships with others. This activity exemplifies direct teaching of social and emotional skills, which are gradually released, guiding teacher modeling. In addition, the materials integrate social and emotional skills throughout the daily lessons. For example, in Unit 1, children practice active listening during a read-aloud; however, this lesson does not include explicit instruction directing teachers to model active listening. While there are teacher models for certain skills, there are inconsistent social skill instruction models. The materials for each unit are linked to the Teacher's Guide and identify texts to support social competencies development; for example, *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* examines social skills, and *How Do Dinosaurs Play with Their Friends?* supports social awareness by demonstrating peer interactions. In one lesson of the unit, students learn about the sequence and parts of the body by building a "Mat Man" while the teacher passes out each part. This activity is repeated multiple times throughout the year. After sitting on the floor in a circle, students "build Mat Man on the floor," and teachers "give Mat Man parts to the children." Students sing the "Mat Man" song and can add accessories. A "Check for Understanding" tells teachers to observe the students: "Do they take turns and name the pieces correctly?" While this is related to social skill practice, the lesson does not include instructional guidance for the teacher to model and gradually release the activity to the students.

Unit 2 provides lessons to teach self-control and relationships with others. In the theme "About the Body," students count and name body parts; for example, "I have two eyes, two knees, two ears, etc." This lesson supports self-regulation skills aligned with Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. In another part of Unit 2, students work in pairs, taking turns to compare sets of more and less. The materials provide guidance to support the small group activity, which builds

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

relationships with others. Teachers are provided some guidance to model activities during the unit. For example, language and literacy activities, such as singing songs, require students to follow directions modeled by the teacher. Although the activities do provide modeling for some areas, not all activities include guidance for teacher modeling.

In Unit 4, multiple social and emotional skills are included in the lessons, with topics such as cooperation, demonstrating active listening, taking turns, and following directions. These skills are integrated within academic content. For example, in a math lesson on the number nine, children practice writing the number on a slate chalkboard. This lesson is identified as supporting turn-taking and listening skills since each child volunteers and waits their turn to model the writing skill demonstrated by the teacher. In a whole group “Oral Language” activity, children repeat the words *shine* and *reflect*, while a peer shines a flashlight on a wall (*shine*) and a mirror (*reflect*). The activity is identified as supporting turn-taking and engagement. Though there are multiple instances of social and emotional skills included or referenced in lesson plans, the materials do not include consistent teacher modeling guidance. Sometimes the teacher uses the instructional tool, Squawker (puppet), to summarize social skills, but these interactions often fall short of a full model. Teacher modeling in each lesson is limited to the specific skill identified as the lesson’s primary focus. The Teacher’s Guide provides some texts that link to social competencies. However, these books only relate to social skill instruction generally; while they are tied directly to some activities, they do not connect directly to social skill instruction or lessons specifically. Texts included in the Volume 1, “Books All Year” section are organized and connected to lessons via learning area (e.g., “Numbers and Math,” “Science,” “Language and Literacy”) and not via social skills.

Spanish Evidence 3.1

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

3.2 Materials & Score	3.2 Rationale
3.2 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials include repeated opportunities to practice social skills throughout the day. Materials provide consistent opportunities to learn, practice, and apply these skills throughout the day across the units. Practice opportunities are authentically integrated throughout all other content domains throughout the lessons.
3.2 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 3.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide” includes a materials list that provides additional activities to support lessons throughout the units. The materials provide a “Readiness and Writing” multisensory activity called “Shake Hands With Me.” This activity teaches children “how to meet and greet appropriately” while also teaching them about their right versus left hand. There is also a “My Turn, Your Turn” activity, which has the teacher take a turn while the child waits; then the child takes their turn and imitates the teacher’s actions. The instructional materials make recommendations of visuals, music, and structures that support children’s abilities to practice new skills and reinforce skills in a variety of ways throughout the daily lessons. The additional resources allow concepts and skills to be integrated across units while allowing children to continue to practice skills from earlier activities.

In Unit 1, students participate in a multisensory activity by taking turns greeting and shaking hands with each other; they follow the teacher’s model and use their right hand. This model repeats throughout the daily lesson, providing multiple opportunities for children to reinforce and practice social skills in a variety of settings. For example, the social skill of “taking turns” can

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

be found in multiple units across the materials and in multiple academic domains within Unit 1. In a “Social Studies” lesson in Unit 1, children discuss what makes a friend and give examples of a good friend. Together, the class makes a list of ten things friends do. This lesson promotes social skills through collaboration while integrating math and literacy skills.

In Unit 2, children participate in a literacy lesson that encourages discussion with others. For example, children listen to a book about a farm, *Growing Pumpkins*, to make connections to learning about the letter *F*. Following the reading, children create the letter *F* using wood pieces and engage in a guided discussion comparing frogs and fish. Students have further opportunities to have conversations with peers when discussing words that begin with the /f/ sound. During a movement activity later in the day, students hop like frogs, which helps develop a sense of space and awareness.

In Unit 4, some examples of social skills taught in one day include practicing turn-taking within a “Language and Literacy” lesson, practicing sequencing and demonstrating active listening skills during a Readiness and Writing lesson, and demonstrating listening skills during a “Numbers and Math” lesson when they are given instructions to work in their “I Know My Numbers Booklet 8” and follow directions provided orally by the teacher. This schedule provides children with opportunities to practice new skills in a variety of ways and in different settings since each activity is different. The skills are repeated and reinforced throughout the day and across different instructional domains to support the integration of skill practice.

In Unit 6, additional opportunities to learn, practice, and apply previously learned social skills are included for whole group and small group instruction. For example, in a small group activity, children match and stack large shape pieces while working collaboratively with peers. In a large group math lesson, children take turns making a shape and showing the shape to peers to support turn-taking and interacting with peers.

Spanish Evidence 3.2

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

3.3 Materials & Score	3.3 Rationale
3.3 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide some information for ideal classroom arrangements that support positive social interactions. The materials include lessons with embedded daily opportunities for students to practice social skills. They also provide teacher guidance on classroom arrangements to support teacher-student interactions in small group activities as well as student-student activities in learning centers. Although the activities are addressed, guidance on how to arrange learning centers in the classroom space is limited. Materials do consider a variety of factors like time of activities and location of resources, and their impact on students’ social development; however, they lack suggestions to engage students in classroom arrangement to promote student ownership of the space.
3.3 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 3.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The instructional materials provide guidance and visuals of effective classroom arrangement, including attention to the organization of the space and furnishings as well as daily routines to support students’ practice of social skills. For example, the materials provide suggestions for

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

designated areas for both teacher-led and child-led activities. The “Teacher’s Guide” provides information on the structure of child-led/free-play centers. The guidance for classroom centers supports children to “explore and interact with their peers through play.” The materials suggest hosting these centers at either a table or on the carpet. Although the activities are included, the materials lack specific guidance for teachers to support the practice of social skills and social development. For example, in Volume 2 of the Teacher’s Guide, children engage in a letter hunt: They are given a “Touch-and-Go ABC Flip Letter Card” and explore the room for objects that match the letters. The materials support peer engagement for the activity but do not include guidance on classroom arrangements for implementation in centers. The materials address the need to include positive transition activities to assist children with learning daily routines and rules while lessening potential behavior-related issues but lack steps to support classroom arrangements for this element of the day.

Materials in the “Introduction to the Curriculum” within Volume 1 of the Teacher’s Guide include how to organize a classroom and different areas in the classroom to support teacher-student and student-student interactions. For example, a visual shows the teacher on a carpet with three students working with letter cards, two students at a table sharing blocks, and a shelf with bins labeled with student materials. For teacher-led activities, the materials suggest setting up the classroom “to include one or more specific areas where children will know that a teacher or other adult should be present and directing the instruction.” Also: “Make sure your children are situated so they can easily see and hear you. It is also important that children can easily participate in the activities during group exercises.” For child-led centers, the classroom guidance states that “these could be at a table, but they could also be on the carpet or another designated section of the classroom.” In the “Classroom Setup” section of the Teacher’s Guide, there is specific guidance on establishing a table for the teacher-led center, or centers, if there is a teacher’s aide. The materials also instruct teachers to leave all other tables as child-led centers. This setup ensures that there will be a space for teacher-student interactions and multiple spaces for student-student interactions throughout the classroom. The Teacher’s Guide also provides diagrams and websites teachers can use to help design space needed for the implementation of the curriculum. The materials do not include options to support a variety of classroom designs and sizes.

Volume 1 of the Teacher’s Guide also provides support for the teacher and considers some factors when discussing physical space but contains limited guidance on the impact of physical space on students’ social development. The guide explains the importance of organization for the teacher and for the students: “An environment where children can easily locate items, know what comes next in the day, and understand why they are participating in various activities provides structure and builds security. A cheerful, well-organized classroom helps you to teach effectively and allows the children in your classroom to easily access toys and materials that will help them grow and learn.” The materials make specific recommendations for the placement of materials; for example, “Stack the children’s copies of ‘My First School Book’ and ‘My First

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Lowercase Book’ on the shelf.” The materials also consider time, daily routines, and specific activities when they make recommendations for classroom arrangement. The materials do not make specific mention of how the physical arrangement of the space supports social development, but they do mention that predictability and consistency strengthens a child’s sense of security. As each activity is summarized in the “Multisensory Activities” section, descriptions sometimes include supplies lists, tips about lesson tools or manipulatives, and organizing and storing supplies. While the directions may indirectly support positive social interactions, the rationale is not clearly stated, the directions mostly remain general, and guidance does not consider a variety of factors and components that may impact social development.

The instructional materials are implemented easily and effectively within a classroom arrangement that supports positive social interactions. Volume 2 of the Teacher’s Guide provides lessons that may be used in small groups, whole group, or both, to support social interactions. Some lessons provide embedded social interaction based on classroom arrangements. For example, in Unit 3, students work together and take turns blending onsets and rimes using tiles. The teacher has a choice to do this in various group structures. The flexibility in classroom arrangements allows the teacher to adapt the materials based on the needs of the children. For example, Unit 2 includes the read-aloud *Waiting Is Not Easy*, which supports emotional regulation and interactions with others. The materials provide guidance for both whole group and small group reading and setup. Although materials provide support for flexible grouping in the classroom arrangements, these supports include few additional resources for teachers to effectively organize or manage space ensuring positive social interactions.

The instructional materials cover classroom setup before children arrive at the beginning of the year but not what is done with children throughout the year. The materials suggest dedicating a shelf and area for specific resources and activities for each academic content area. For example, one activity guides teachers to “assemble the Sound Around Book and keep the Magnetic Wood Pieces inside the box, placing the box of Magnetic Picture Tiles and Color Tiles beside it.” The entire list can be found in the Classroom Setup section of the Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1. The materials suggest teachers plan ahead and keep all areas organized to make the classroom more efficient. Although there is guidance for teachers, there is no support for engaging and including children in a classroom arrangement. There is no evidence of classroom arrangements to promote student ownership of space.

Spanish Evidence 3.3

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

3.4 Materials include activities to develop physical skills 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.

3.4 Materials & Score	3.4 Rationale
3.4 English IM Meets 4/4	The instructional materials include activities to develop physical skills and refine motor development, including gross motor skills, through movement. The materials include consistent daily implementation of these skills and opportunities to develop skills in fine motor areas other than writing.
3.4 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 3.4

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Unit 2 focuses on “My Body” with various activities to promote children’s movement that develops gross motor skills. In the “At a Glance” section of the lesson guide, an icon of a person running indicates gross motor activities. Gross motor skills are incorporated in most domains per week, and they are noted multiple times throughout the unit. Some examples of physical skills and gross motor activities center on body awareness, balance, and the use of large muscle groups to maintain posture, position, and mobility. For example, in a science activity, physical movements are used to act out high and low stretches with body parts to promote physical awareness. Additional materials include the “Ants Go Marching” song, which guides teachers through a class movement activity. Most daily physical activities focus on writing, although there are some additional opportunities to develop fine motor skills that do not require writing. For example, a later Unit 2 math lesson includes finger-play: Children move fingers to show age. Other fine motor activities provide guidance on specific skills such as holding an item to stabilize it and using the hand to stabilize the tool in reading, developing pinch and grab.

In Unit 3, students dance and sing to a song called “I Am a Fine Musician,” which teaches them about various instruments. Movement is integrated within Unit 3 lessons, such as when

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

students sing “Sing, Sound, and Count With Me” and clap the syllables in children’s names. Activities promoting child movement that develop gross motor skills are embedded during instructional time. In this unit, there are also activities to develop fine motor skills, such as when students use wooden pieces and dough to build capital letters and “Tag Bags” to measure a table. As an extension of the unit activity, students have a choice to create drawings or art to retell a story. Most daily activities and resources require writing with crayons, dry erase markers, or chalk. However, additional activities integrate other manipulatives and do not require writing. Additional manipulatives include wooden pieces, plastic shapes, play-dough, puzzle pieces, etc.

Unit 5 includes additional activities to promote physical skills and gross motor development. For example, students move around the classroom to pair up with students who have the same letter card as them; once found, the pair sits down together. There is also at least one multisensory introduction a week, which includes a song and movement to introduce a concept. All of these activities are integrated into lessons. The materials come with albums, which support the teacher in incorporating musical songs and movement. Also, in this unit, there is evidence of activities to support fine motor skills of grasp and roll. For example, students roll playdough to make the letter *M*. In another activity, children use scissors to cut and paste the letter *N* from a magazine or newspaper.

Spanish Evidence 3.4

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

3.5 Materials & Score	3.5 Rationale
3.5 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide some guidance for students to develop safe and healthy habits. The materials provide some information for teachers on modeling safe and healthy habits for students and some opportunities for students to practice and reflect on these concepts. Some lessons relate to personal safety and health. However, the materials provide a limited variety of opportunities to learn about, practice, and reflect on safe and healthy habits, and the materials do not communicate the connection between physical and mental health.
3.5 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 3.5

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide” includes all the resources that are mentioned throughout the lessons focused on health and safety. For example, if a lesson during the “My Body” unit needs a resource, it will be provided for the teacher. Most of the resources relevant to safe and healthy habits are the vocabulary cards that contain a visual representation and the word for various body parts, and the verbs that accompany them. These resources provide support for a variety of activities focused on safe and healthy habits, but they do not provide direct guidance for teacher modeling. Several CD albums are also included in the resources, with songs that encourage incorporating movement into the lesson to promote health. There are also some books included with the materials that support children in developing healthy habits, such as *Oh, The Things You Can Do That Are Good For You: All About Staying Healthy* by Tish Rabe; *Germs Are Not For Sharing* by Elizabeth Verdick; *Pony Brushes His Teeth* by Michael Dahl; and *Wash, Wash, Wash: The Wash Your Hands Story* by Grace Garrett. An additional list of relevant

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

texts can be found under the “Book Connections” section of this resource. While there is a subsection dedicated to “Social-Emotional Learning,” the texts listed here are not accessible through the GSS portal. Teachers need to access the texts outside of GSS and develop their own lessons. The texts are summarized, but there is not an explanation communicating the connection between physical and mental health. While useful, it does not include activities ensuring students develop safe and healthy habits.

The materials do not provide opportunities for students to build on the lessons surrounding healthy habits, and there are no specific lessons on nutrition or exercise, so there are no corresponding activities. The materials in the Teacher's Guide do not provide information for teachers about the importance of developing physical skills as a connection to mental health, and they do not provide support for teachers to learn about the importance of planning and encouraging safe and healthy habits in children’s activities. The only support provided to teachers in this area is found in the Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1, which recommends that teachers “alternate the level of physical activity involved as much as possible,” suggesting that, after students listen to a lesson while sitting, the teacher incorporates movement in the next lesson or activity.

Unit 1 introduces body parts in connection to healthy habits. There is a science lesson to teach children to identify their body parts and the senses that go with them by looking at a visual poster of “Mat Man.” Throughout the unit, other lessons integrate these body parts and practice using different senses. This lesson teaches children to identify body parts but does not explicitly connect to healthy habits and the importance of physical movement for mental health. This unit also does not provide opportunities for teacher modeling of these concepts. The materials do not communicate ways to make a connection for children between physical and mental health in an appropriate way.

In Unit 2, the materials include one entire thematic unit entitled “My Body,” which includes lessons on personal health and healthy habits. During each week of the unit, there are sub-themes, such as dental health, how the brain works, and how our arms work. The lessons are taught during the “Science, Social Studies, or Oral Language” portion of the day, but they are not integrated into other academic content areas. Some science activities include identifying and describing body parts while singing a song called “Tap, Tap, Tap”; students find different body parts like their toes and nose. In another activity, students identify and describe parts of the body that are hard (bones) and soft (e.g., lips, skin). In a lesson on oral health, the teacher uses a parrot puppet to tell students what *brush* and *floss* mean. The next day, the teacher models, and students practice the skills. This activity is one example where teachers model healthy habits; however, modeling is not consistently included in most lessons on safe and healthy habits. Students also see how germs spread by placing glitter on their hands then touching other items. Afterward, students practice removing the germs by washing their hands. The activity also discusses proper hand washing, using warm soapy water, and singing the “Happy Birthday” song twice. These opportunities allow students to practice and reflect on

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

healthy habits after the teacher models the behavior. The Oral Language lessons all introduce relevant body vocabulary, such as *knee, leg, reach, bend, think, brush, floss, lungs, sneeze, and illness*, which reinforces health concepts for children. A Social Studies lesson teaches students about the community helpers who help them when they are sick. Although the materials address health and safety, there is no material to support the connection between physical and mental health. There is a week focused on the brain, but the lessons teach children that their brain is for thinking and remembering, rather than about mental health and feeling good.

In Unit 3, the materials include lessons related to safety. For example, the teacher reads *Oh, The Things You Can Do That Are Good For You: All About Staying Healthy* by Tish Rabe. After reading the book, the class classifies foods as healthy or unhealthy on a chart to be posted in the classroom. The materials also include the text *Crossing Guards* by Joann Early Macken. After the teacher reads the book, students practice “Stop and Go.” In this case, the materials do not include more specific guidance on how to model these habits further. Materials also do not include recommendations for teachers on how to address unsafe or unhealthy child habits in a positive and supportive way. While there are some lessons in Unit 3 that help students develop safe and healthy habits, this is not consistent, and children are not provided a variety of opportunities to practice and reflect on safe and healthy habits. There is also no information to support the connection between physical and mental health.

Spanish Evidence 3.5

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

4.1 Materials & Score	4.1 Rationale
4.1 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide some guidance on developing students’ listening skills, but they provide limited teacher guidance on modeling active listening for understanding. Materials to support teacher guidance and scaffolding of listening skills are not consistently high quality. Materials do provide opportunities for students to hear sounds and use appropriate sentence structure and grammar in a variety of contexts across lessons. Some lessons also provide opportunities for students to hear conversations that follow conversation norms.
4.1 Spanish IM Meets 4/4	The materials provide guidance on developing students’ listening skills by giving the teacher clear guidance for modeling active listening skills. The students are supported through daily opportunities to listen for understanding. The materials include opportunities for students to hear sounds, proper sentence structure, and grammar in various contexts. Students also have opportunities to hear conversations that follow standard norms.

English Evidence 4.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials included in the “Teacher's Guide” provide some activities to support listening across the curriculum units. The “Language and Literacy” section of the “Scope and Sequence” summarizes some opportunities for children to listen for sounds. The materials include activities that specifically focus on the sound of the week and provide daily activities that correspond to that sound. For example, in one week, the guide addresses the /s/ sound and identifies this as phonological awareness. The guide includes links to the “Sounds Around Letter” student apps,

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

which are designed to help learners develop fundamental alphabet knowledge. Children use active listening to select the correct word or sounds produced in the game. The “Oral Language” section provides guidance on sentence structure and grammar across activities. In one activity, children learn two action verbs, say the verbs in the sentence, and use them in conversations, practicing sentence structures. The Teacher's Guide also includes multisensory materials, such as the “Sound Around Box,” which can be used to teach children listening skills. The *Mat Man* book series is written to teach language and readiness skills as well as help children understand through listening. CD albums included with the materials give children practice with listening and following directions through movement and finger-plays. The “Books All Year” section shows the day and week in which texts are read. These texts expose children to a variety of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and correct grammar. The materials provide texts that focus on rhyming, like *Favorite Book of Nursery Rhymes* and texts that follow predictable patterns, such as *The Doorbell Rang*. The “Book Centers and Connections” section of the Teacher’s Guide includes some scripted phrases to help teachers introduce and review texts. Although there are multiple resources provided for activities, the provided read-aloud scripts for each text lack detail. Teachers have access to some prompts and discussion questions, but they rarely include teacher think-alouds or visual supports to promote modeling of active listening behaviors.

In Unit 1, a Language and Literacy lesson includes a focus for children to “demonstrate active listening.” In the “Sound Detective” lesson, the teacher models active listening to the students. The teacher plays sounds and asks children to identify if two sounds match. In another activity, students listen to the story *My Five Senses*. After the story, students answer questions, such as “What body part do we use to hear?” These question-and-answer sessions allow students to listen and practice conversation norms. Also, in Unit 1, students sing the “Hello Song,” which models greeting conversations. The teacher “models and asks children to raise their right hand and say, ‘This is my right hand. I shake with my right hand.’” Afterward, children take turns greeting and shaking hands with each other. The materials provide guidance for the teacher in modeling nonverbal conversation rules. Throughout the unit, the scripted lessons provide students with an opportunity to practice active listening; however, there are few specific lessons to enhance understanding of grammar or sentence structure in a variety of contexts. The skills are implied through other active listening skills but are only sometimes specifically addressed. One such example includes different lessons with the teaching tool, Squawker the puppet. In some cases, the teacher uses Squawker to converse with specific students. Different lessons teach students words like *look, listen, ears, pass, share*, but not with the intention of directly teaching active listening skills.

In Unit 3, while the teacher reads *Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons*, the class counts words in a sentence and the number of buttons. The materials include examples to support active listening for students in both a large and a small group structure. This lesson also includes a grammatically correct script to support the teacher in giving directions. The materials provide texts that include a variety of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and correct grammar.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Additional activities in Unit 3 provide support for teachers to guide and model sentence structures connected to conversational norms. In one activity, the teacher models how to greet someone and smile while making eye contact. Children then engage with peers to practice greeting phrases. The lesson extends communication activities by introducing the terms *manners/respect* and *polite/rude*. Children then engage in conversations guided by the teacher, practicing scripts that model the vocabulary terms. Although there are materials to support listening skills, activities in this unit do not provide opportunities for the teacher to model conversations in a variety of classroom settings.

In Unit 4, listening skills are embedded across multiple learning domains. In one activity, the teacher assigns specific pages in the “I Know My Numbers Booklet 10,” and the children trace and color the assigned pages. This lesson teaches academic content as well as active listening skills through asking and answering questions and following directions. Although active listening is inherent in the lesson, there is no specific guidance for teachers about the variety of ways children can demonstrate active listening skills. Each lesson provides one activity with one strategy, and it is not always specifically focused on reinforcing active listening skills. Another example in Unit 4 is in a “Numbers and Math” lesson. The teacher explains how children will measure lengths of items using “Tag Bags” as counting units. The teacher checks for understanding using specific question prompts, such as “When do we stop? We stop when we reach the edge.” Although the materials provide prompts, there is no support for the teacher to model active listening. One activity in Unit 4 provides grammatically correct, scripted lessons for teachers, but they are not consistent throughout daily lessons and content areas. Scripts that are present guide teachers to give clear directions; for example, in a math lesson in Unit 4, the teacher guides the children through a measurement activity using question prompts to address size and space. The teacher states, “Let’s find out how big our shapes are. We can cover them with small squares to find out. Let’s see if any take eight squares to fill. Let’s cover this medium square. How many small squares do we need?” This specific script prompts children to listen and understand to answer the teacher’s questions; however, this is inconsistent depending on the activity.

Unit 5 provides additional support for active listening. In one activity, the students role-play manners during a pretend dinner. The teacher models how to ask for items and how to leave the table, using phrases such as “May I have the salt, please?” or “Thank you for dinner. May I be excused, please?” In another activity, students learn about the adjectives *rocky* and *sandy* through active listening. The teacher states the words and meanings and provides a sentence using the words. The students then answer questions about the terms to demonstrate understanding. Not all read-alouds incorporate prompting for students to recall and answer questions about the story read to check for understanding. For example, students read *The Three Little Pigs* for a science lesson. One teacher prompt states: “Many of the things we use to build roads and houses are NATURAL. We call them natural resources because they come from nature.” The next directions tell teachers to read the book and “have children identify the natural resources used to build each house.” To complete the lesson, students draw their own

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

house using crayons. These directions do not provide the necessary scaffolds or supports to ensure students successfully listen for understanding. “Line It Up Cards” are sometimes used instead of read-alouds, and these sometimes include scripts that ensure listening for understanding. When students interact with the “Little Miss Muffet” story card and activity booklet, they look at the three story pictures, identify Miss Muffet’s problem and how she fixes it. These cards come with some scripted conversation starters for teachers to use with specific lessons: “This is an illustration (picture) from a nursery rhyme. Nursery rhymes are short poems or songs. Rhymes are words that sound the same at the end. Listen for rhymes as we read. What is the nursery rhyme about? What rhyming words did you hear?” While the materials do provide some opportunities for active listening like this one, most lessons contain limited support for teacher modeling of the skills.

Spanish Evidence 4.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Twenty-four Spanish songs support and enhance listening skills through the use of alliteration, rhyme, and repetition. Students listen to and sing songs such as “Pega, pega, pégalas,” “Estoy feliz de verte,” and “Adivina la rima” every day throughout the entire curriculum. This activity provides students the opportunity to hear sounds and appropriate sentence structure in a variety of contexts.

At the beginning of Unit 1, the teacher models conversation norms by shaking hands and greeting another person using Squawker (a stuffed animal) while students listen. The materials state: “Haz que Squawker le diga hola al ayudante. Hola soy Squawker. Es un placer saludarte.” The teacher introduces how to meet other people. The teacher says: “Cuando las personas se saludan, a veces se dan la mano. Darse la mano es juntar las palmas de las manos y moverlas hacia arriba y hacia abajo.” The teacher provides a sentence for students to repeat and practice with a partner. Students practice taking turns greeting each other by using the correct vocabulary such as *hola*. In another activity, the teacher explains and models looking into the other person’s eyes when speaking. The materials state, “Haz que Squawker mire al ayudante y diga hola.” Both of these activities allow the teacher to model active listening and students to hear and practice conversation norms.

In the next section of Unit 1, the teacher models how to draw a person, one step at a time, and sings a line of a poem that references the body part drawn. The teacher states, “Mi turno, Mat Man tiene una cabeza.” Afterward, students imitate the teacher’s actions to demonstrate understanding through listening. In a different lesson, the teacher models action verbs, nouns, and complete sentences. Students hear songs and form sentences using new nouns to demonstrate understanding. The teacher states: “Di las palabras con Squawker. Los amigos son personas que nos agradan” The students repeat each word and letter. This lesson allows

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

students to hear grammatically correct sentences and use appropriate sentence structure in various ways.

Throughout Unit 1 and 2, there are opportunities for students to hear sounds then distinguish between the two. For example, the teacher states, “Escuchemos las palabras. Ensalada...ensalada = igual. Ensalada...elefante = diferente.” This lesson focuses on the children listening to and identifying if two spoken words are the same.

In Unit 4, the teacher facilitates a debate and models the use of adjectives in conversations. The materials state: “Haz que Squawker diga: Las piscinas tienen un extremo profundo. ¿Qué puedes hacer en el extremo profundo? ¿Qué puedes hacer en el extremo superficial?” For enrichment and to further the conversation, the teacher says, “Los charcos son superficiales. Los lagos pueden tener puntos superficiales, pero pueden ser profundos en otras partes.” This enrichment opportunity allows students to deepen their knowledge of the terms under discussion.

Unit 5 includes a lesson where the teacher models proper manners for leaving the dinner table by saying, “Gracias por la cena. Con permiso, por favor.” The students practice using manners during snack time while the teacher checks for understanding. The teacher walks around and listens to student conversations to see if they are using please and thank you when requesting something. In this lesson, students hear and practice manners that follow conversation norms.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

4.2 Materials & Score	4.2 Rationale
4.2 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide students with some opportunities to practice sounds and appropriate sentence structure and grammar in various contexts. Materials provide some teacher guidance on setting up and facilitating activities that allow students to practice the production of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar, but this is not consistent across units. Materials do provide some guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion using conversation norms, but they do not provide teacher guidance on corrective feedback, speech production, sentence structure, and grammar.
4.2 Spanish IM Meets 4/4	The materials provide guidance on developing students’ speaking skills through frequent opportunities for oral language development in a variety of contexts. The materials include teacher guidance for giving corrective feedback on students’ speech and setting up and facilitating speaking activities focused on the production of sounds, sentence structure, and grammar. There is also guidance on how students can engage in discussions that include appropriate conversation norms when working with others.

English Evidence 4.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The materials provided in the “Teacher’s Guide” include resources to support students’ speaking skills. In the introduction, there is a section dedicated to “Oral Language,” which focuses on supporting children to use new words, develop oral language, and develop vocabulary skills through social interaction. The guide provides activities that encourage listening, retelling, answering questions, and narrating stories; these support children in producing a variety of sounds while practicing appropriate sentence structure and grammar. The Teacher’s Guide also provides some guidance on setting up centers to promote student interactions and discussions. The guide includes some information on language developmental milestones for prekindergarten children, stating that a four-year-old’s talking skills include that the child “recites nursery rhymes and fingerplays,” “begins to use irregular past tense,” and “compares and uses position and time words.” The materials state that a five-year-old’s talking skills include that the child “speaks clearly, fluently, with very few errors,” “knows many songs, rhymes, and a few poems,” and “uses correct past tense for many verbs.” This information gives teachers guidance on what is developmentally appropriate speech production and grammar, but it does not provide guidance on corrective feedback. Finally, the “Word Time Activity Booklet” explains the structure for Oral Language lessons. Children learn verbs on Monday, adjectives on Wednesday, and nouns on Friday. Each lesson includes two grammatically correct sentences that use the new vocabulary words to promote proper sentence structure and grammar usage in students. Although the teacher models these words, there is limited support for these concepts beyond this activity. “Checks for Understanding” prompt teachers to engage students in discussion and evaluate student language. While this structure provides an opportunity for feedback, lessons do not explicitly direct teachers to provide feedback at this time. For the most part, these Checks for Understanding tell teachers to observe a specific skill and then ask teachers a question about the skill. For example: “Observe as children discuss plain and fancy. Do they understand the meaning of the words?” There is no guidance directing teachers on corrective feedback of students’ speech production, sentence structure, and grammar.

In Unit 1, the materials provide some guidance to support speaking skills. In a lesson focused on the vocabulary words *meet* and *shake*, the teacher sets up an activity to support appropriate sentence structure. The sentences used in that lesson are “We can meet new people at school.” “We can shake hands.” The guidance for teachers states that “saying complete sentences aloud develops children’s speaking skills” but does not provide additional guidance on supporting children to implement the steps. The Unit 1 lesson gives the teacher guidance to “observe as the class says the words. Do they repeat the sentences?” The materials for Unit 1 also include an oral language lesson system called “Word Time.” The materials outline the lesson formation and the materials to be used: a parrot puppet named Squawker, word cards, and an Activity Booklet. These lessons teach students two new words each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday using Squawker. Teachers are advised to use props to enhance lessons when appropriate. There is support for teachers to guide appropriate sounds, sentence structure, and grammar, but no support for corrective feedback. The material for Unit 1 does include suggestions to set up individual learning areas to support child practice of sound and sentence structure. In the

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

“Readiness” section of the Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1, students use wood pieces to learn topics and the vocabulary to describe them. Materials also include a “Sound Box” that provides guidance to teach letters, rhyming, syllables, listening, cooperation, and more. Materials have checks for understanding in which students try to speak in a conversational form. Materials do not provide guidance on how to use all parts of the day to facilitate conversations. Some lessons have guidance on conversations, but this is not included across all lessons.

Unit 2 provides specific activities on speech through Oral Language lessons. In one activity, the students learn about the adjectives *high* and *low*. In this activity, students say the words in a sentence and use them in a conversation. Each Oral Language lesson used in the unit includes word cards and Squawker the parrot, which is used to model the words. The materials provide a consistent format across the unit to support the teacher in setting up activities for students to produce sounds and practice sentence structures and grammar. The format for each activity includes the following steps: 1) Look: Say the word with Squawker; 2) Do: Students imitate words; 3) Say: Repeat sentences given with words; 4) Talk: Conversation about words. Although materials provide consistent steps, they do not provide recommendations or scripts to facilitate conversations during unstructured times. Material is not provided to support corrective feedback.

In Unit 3, the materials use a song called “Letters Together Make Words” to teach students how to make words. Music and sound are used as a vehicle to increase speaking skills and speech production across content areas. Children engage in the practice of sounds by repeating the words from the song. Also, in Unit 3, Squawker the parrot is used again to model how to ask and answer questions about costume and clothing during an Oral Language activity. Students practice asking and answering questions like Squawker. There are additional opportunities to use and practice speaking skills across content areas throughout the unit. During a “Language and Literacy” lesson, the teacher reads *The Tortoise and the Hare*. The teacher says, “I will read a sentence slowly and quietly, just like a tortoise. When I point to you, you repeat the sentence quickly, just like a hare!” There is guidance for the teacher to listen to children accurately repeating the sentence.

A Unit 5 Oral Language lesson continues to build on speaking skills. In one activity, children learn the words *scoop* and *dump*. The teacher asks, “What else can scoop dirt?” Students have an opportunity to discuss the new vocabulary word as a large or small group. Other academic areas do not include open-ended questions as frequently; for example, a math lesson in Unit 5 has no scripted questions. The “Word Time Activity Booklet” includes support to set up activities to build oral language skills by acting out and describing words. There are also some specific activities included that focus on children practicing saying sentences; for example, in “Picture Game,” children take pictures out of a brown bag and say a sentence about what they see; in “Can You Say More?” the teacher reviews a sentence from the Monday or Wednesday Oral Language lesson and asks questions to encourage children to say longer sentences. This activity provides opportunities for children to use appropriate sentence structure and grammar.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Also, in Unit 5, students listen to the story *The Three Little Pigs*. Following the story, students discuss natural resources and how they can be used for building houses. This activity provides opportunities to use language in discussions and conversations, but the resources contain no guidance for corrective feedback.

Spanish Evidence 4.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

All components provide student-friendly and engaging activities by incorporating hands-on manipulatives, books, and songs. In the album *Sing, Sound, and Count With Me*, the movements to the music teach important math and literacy skills. Each song has suggested physical activities. For example, for the song “Las hormigas marchan,” the students march around the classroom and hold up their fingers to show what number they are on as they sing the song. The repetition of this song supports language development as students practice their speaking skills in a predictable manner. Vocabulary is also incorporated in the songs. For example, in the song “Sonríe,” students sing along and make facial expressions for each verse. In addition, “La canción de las sílabas” provides a creative activity where students clap out syllables throughout the song. These songs allow the teacher to facilitate activities where students practice producing a variety of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar.

The “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder” includes guidance to support the children’s oral language development. The section titled “Conexiones y centros con libros” includes opportunities for children to practice sound production through storytelling and dramatization. The materials state, “Haz que los niños usen el centro para el juego teatral y los materiales para volver a contar la historia.” This section also demonstrates how to set up and facilitate activities that allow students to develop their speaking skills. In the introduction, the “Etapas del desarrollo del niño” provides detailed expectations for language and alphabetization from ages two to five. Under “Uso de palabras,” the materials state the students should be able to “Empezar a usar verbos irregulares que indican pasado, pudo/pude (no podía)” and “Comparar y usar palabras de posición y de tiempo.” This information builds the teachers’ background knowledge surrounding expectations for language development at different ages, which helps to provide students with appropriate corrective feedback.

The materials provide opportunities for students to practice producing sounds using different songs and games, with sentence stems to support various language proficiency levels. For example, in Unit 1, the teacher models using Squawker the stuffed toy to use a complete sentence to say their name. The teacher says, “¿Cómo te llamas? Me llamo...” The students use the modeled sentence stem to tell their name while the teacher writes it on the board. To close the activity, the teacher and students sing the “Las letras forman palabras” song. This activity

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

supports students' speaking abilities and includes a sentence stem with prompts to support children's speech production and appropriate sentence structure.

Throughout the materials, there is teacher guidance regarding how to support students' speech production, sentence structure, and grammar. Each "Lenguaje y alfabetización" lesson has an "Apoyo" piece with extra activities the teacher can implement. For example, in Unit 3, the directions state, "Tiende las fichas de palabras por el niño a medida que dice su oración." This guidance indicates how the teacher is helping increase students' understanding of sentence structure by realizing that each counter represents a word. Another activity from Unit 3 provides guidance for students to ask and respond to questions using the song "Preguntar y responder." The materials state, "Haz la primera pregunta. Luego, guía a los niños para cantar la respuesta. Da la oportunidad a los niños para que se ofrezcan de voluntarios para cantar una pregunta. Observa a los niños mientras formulan y responden preguntas." In this activity, students respond to each other through song, which allows them to work collaboratively and engage in discussion while the teacher monitors their speech for opportunities to give corrective feedback.

The materials in Unit 5 provide guidance to conduct a read-aloud and identify rhyming words. The teacher reads *Green Eggs and Ham*, highlights words that rhyme, and checks for student understanding of rhyming words. This activity allows students to practice the production of sounds (rhyming words) within the context of a read-aloud. Identifying rhymes also capitalize on opportunities for students to develop their grammatical knowledge by studying the phonology of the words and understanding how inflection works within the context of language.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.
- Materials guide the teacher to access one language to build vocabulary in the other language (e.g. cognates, translanguaging, etc.) (Spanish only).

4.3 Materials & Score	4.3 Rationale
4.3 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials support developing and expanding child vocabulary that is age and sequentially appropriate. The lessons provide strategies to support vocabulary development that are integrated and authentically embedded across content learning.
4.3 Spanish IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials include some supports to expand students’ vocabulary. The materials follow a progression of vocabulary development, which is both age and sequentially appropriate. The materials also include a variety of strategies to support students’ vocabulary development, which are integrated into various subject areas. However, there is little to no guidance for the teacher to help students use one language to build vocabulary in the other language.

English Evidence 4.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Word Time Activity Booklet” provides a variety of strategies to support teachers in developing children’s vocabulary. It emphasizes quality exposure to vocabulary and gives children opportunities to connect with words authentically. These connections are made during the “Oral Language Word Time” lessons on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. These lessons use vocabulary cards with the printed word and illustration, a parrot puppet to engage the children, songs, and theme-related vocabulary across content areas. The Word Time Activity Booklet also contains two pages of additional activity ideas to use on days when there is not a specific “Oral Language” lesson scripted in the daily lesson plans. These activities include “Act It Out,” where children act out the verbs learned on Mondays, and “Fill in the Blank,” where the teacher says a sentence that uses a word children have learned but leaves a blank. For example, “A...works with cars.” The teacher gives children three choices: *mechanic*, *firefighter*, or *chef*.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Children complete the sentence by selecting the correct vocabulary word. The materials include suggestions to expand on the new content by reading specific texts that are included for each unit. The structure and sequence of the lessons support vocabulary development in an age and sequentially appropriate manner.

In Unit 3, there is a lesson focused on specific vocabulary terms. The teacher uses a macaw paper puppet (Squawker) to model the terms *first* and *next* and then provides the definitions of the new words. Students practice the terms by holding *first* and *next* cards and saying, "I am first in line. My friend is next in line." Materials provide child-friendly definitions of new words while also including meaningful ways for children to interact with and use new vocabulary words in context. In another example, the students learn the words *costume* and *clothing*; students say the words with Squawker. The teacher says, "A costume is something you wear for pretend play. Clothing covers your body and can keep you warm." The teacher provides visual representations of the words and has one child dress up in a cape. The teacher asks, "What is a costume? A costume is a kind of clothing." The class discusses costumes they want to wear and clothing they wear in winter. This progression for the vocabulary lesson builds on prior knowledge and provides visual examples for students to integrate new vocabulary words authentically through the activity.

The materials provide a wide variety of rich and rare vocabulary words and repeated opportunities to hear and practice language within a relevant context that supports a developmentally appropriate progression and sequence. In Unit 5, the students learn the words *wide* and *narrow*. The teacher gives a brief kid-friendly definition; the students make wide and narrow paths by moving around the classroom. The next day, the words are integrated into another activity where students make and compare tracks using different cars and trucks and use the words *wide* and *narrow*. "Word Time" is also built into Unit 5 and guides teachers to "physically demonstrate speaking, reading, and writing in the classroom." Word Time is also used in Unit 5 to practice a "Look-Do-Say-Talk" model. The teacher models the vocabulary words, such as *wide* and *narrow*; the children repeat and then discuss the meanings. This model stays the same for all units. Each day, children learn two new words for a total of six words per week. Most of these words are new and rare words that enhance vocabulary in a sequentially appropriate manner.

Spanish Evidence 4.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

On the side of each lesson, there is a "Vocabulario" section that specifies the new vocabulary for that lesson. In Unidad 1, the teacher models two new words using Squawker, a bird puppet, to explain new vocabulary words and engage the students. The teacher states: "Di las palabras con Squawker. Nuevo y viejo son opuestos. Nuevo describe algo que acabamos de comprar o

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

hacer. Viejo describe algo que tienes desde hace mucho tiempo.” Next, the teacher calls on students to show “el libro nuevo y el libro viejo.” Finally, the teacher observes as students, “hablan sobre los libros nuevos y viejos.” This strategy supports students' vocabulary development as they use new words in context and provides child-friendly definitions.

In Unidad 2, the teacher continues to use Squawker to introduce vocabulary, but also incorporates objects that represent those words. In this particular lesson, in order for students to have a better understanding and build a connection of what *duro* and *suave* mean, the teacher uses teddy bears (one soft and one hard) so students can feel the difference. This strategy uses objects to provide concrete and tangible opportunities to experience the new vocabulary in an age- and developmentally-appropriate way.

The materials allow students to interact with and use new vocabulary words in the context of the learning. For example, in Unidad 3, students have the opportunity to peel and cut a banana using a plastic knife, while learning the words *pelar* and *cortar*. Similar to the previous lesson from Unidad 2, this strategy supports children to learn the new words by using real objects in a fun and authentic activity.

The materials do not provide teachers with guidance for accessing one language to build vocabulary in another. Strategies such as cognates or translanguaging are not present in the materials. Within the Spanish materials, the word *inglés* appears only once in Unidad 4. The teacher states, “P es para menta (peppermint, en inglés).” This statement is the only example of drawing on students' prior knowledge in English while teaching in Spanish.

The materials guide teachers to discuss the meaning of words in Spanish only. For example, in Unidad 4, the teacher uses two vocabulary cards, *avión* and *nubes* while explaining the meaning of the words, using the stuffed puppet Squawker. The teacher explains the meaning in Spanish with no connection to English. Another lesson in this unit supports teachers with a variety of vocabulary words about the study of aviation. The materials include the vocabulary words *aviación*, *ciencias*, *vuelo*, *volar*, *vivo*, *no vivo*, *piloto*, *aeropuerto*. The teacher reads a book about airplanes or things that fly and then facilitates a discussion with the students on different terms related to planes and aeronautical scientists. The teacher states, “¿Qué trabajo estudia los vuelos? Un científico aeronáutico es alguien que aprende lo más que puede acerca de volar. Un piloto es una persona que vuela aviones.” The teacher uses the “Apoyo” section to strategically support students who may not grasp the lesson right away. These activities use strategies such as using content-related text, visuals, and discussion to model a variety of rich and rare vocabulary words.

Teacher guidance for meanings of words in Spanish is found in the “Lenguaje oral” section of the lessons. For example, in Unidad 6, the teacher uses Squawker and the “tarjetas de palabras” to introduce the words *ballena* and *océano*. The teacher begins by showing students the flashcards. The students follow along with Squawker as they repeat the definitions of the new

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

words: “La ballena es el mamífero más grande que existe. Un océano es una masa de agua salada muy grande.” Although this activity supports expanding students' vocabulary in Spanish, the materials do not guide teachers to discuss the meaning of words in both English and Spanish.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

4.4 (English) 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.

4.4 (Spanish) Materials include appropriate strategies for supporting students’ biliteracy development.

- Materials include a variety of strategies for supporting students in developing Spanish and English language proficiency.
- Materials highlight opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections.
- Materials guide the teacher to leverage student’s prior knowledge in each language as an asset.

4.4 Materials & Score	4.4 Rationale
4.4 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials include appropriate strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their English language skills development. The strategies provided in the materials are specific to ELs, and the materials include a variety of strategies for the teacher to use to assist students. Much of this guidance also integrates the child’s first language as a foundation for learning English. Additionally, materials often develop student vocabulary in both English and the home language.
4.4 Spanish IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide some strategies for supporting students’ biliteracy development. The materials include strategies to support the development of students’ language proficiency in English or Spanish; however, they do not provide opportunities for cross-linguistic connections. Therefore, the materials promote monolingual literacy as opposed to biliteracy. Without cross-linguistic strategies, there is no guidance as to how the teacher can leverage students' prior knowledge in each language.

English Evidence 4.4

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide” lists key principles for teaching ELs. In these principles, they include information about giving ELs “opportunity to develop sound-symbol awareness in the Home Language, in addition to English, because skills transfer cross-linguistically.” Furthermore, the materials also advise teachers that ELs come to the classroom with language that can be used as a resource for learning. This resource also includes specific classroom strategies for teaching ELs. These include: using labels in the classroom that include both English, Spanish, and other languages that children may speak; trying to incorporate vocabulary words in the languages children speak; pre-teaching vocabulary before read-alouds; encouraging teachers to teach vocabulary in authentic contexts, including scripted lessons, but also during “teachable moments” throughout the day; and helping children create “Word Journals” to keep track of words as they learn them.

Each lesson also includes one support labeled as “Support/EL.” Unit 1 lessons include supports such as verbal or tactile prompting, connecting body parts to the parts of a book, saying letters slowly, and showing children other things they can *pass* and *share* during a lesson that teaches those vocabulary words. The materials also include a “Making Predictions” lesson where teachers preview the pictures and repeat the names of objects in the pictures prior to the activity. This lesson integrates well with other specific tips for pre-teaching curriculum to ELs. Specific pre-teaching tips include saying the word in both the child’s home language and English; using tangible items to provide an authentic context for the word; using visuals, non-verbal cues, gestures, or physical prompts; creating drawings or art; and having struggling ELs work with a peer to help in their understanding.

In a Unit 2 “Social Studies” lesson, students “learn that people speak different languages.” The teacher teaches students how to say *hello* in Spanish and then asks them if they or their family speak Spanish. The teacher repeats the activity in Chinese as well as any other languages spoken in the classroom. Generally, teachers also have access to research on cognates and how they can assist Spanish speakers with learning the English language. As well, EL students are encouraged to use provided digital tools and apps to support their English language acquisition. These tools give them an opportunity to hear sounds, interact with digital read-aloud books, and use the “Word Time Word Cards” to create a class word wall.

In Unit 3, included EL supports guide the teacher to provide visual and physical prompts as well as shorten an activity for ELs. Each vocabulary word taught comes with a word card that contains that word printed on it and an illustration. This visual helps to build language in a developmentally appropriate manner; the use of strategies like visual and physical prompts are helpful for ELs.

In Unit 5, students learn the words *row* and *steer*. The teacher uses a macaw paper puppet and vocabulary cards that depict the action. The materials provide child-friendly definitions of new

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

words while also including meaningful ways for children to interact with and use new vocabulary words in context. The *row* vocabulary cards include a drawing of a canoe with a person rowing. Also, in Unit 5, students learn the words *steep* and *level*. The vocabulary lesson has the children incorporate physical activity and visuals throughout.

Spanish Evidence 4.4

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The usage of songs found throughout the materials allows for students to engage in repetitive phrases. The availability of these songs in both English and Spanish supports students in learning new words in both languages. The lyrics in songs such as “Counting, Counting” and “Cuento, Cuento” are the same in both languages, supporting English and Spanish proficiency. While these songs allow students to participate and develop their skills in both languages actively, the rest of the student activities, teacher resources, and research materials available in this curriculum do not support biliteracy development.

The materials offer many supports for literacy development in Spanish; however, there are no cross-linguistic connections made with the English language. For example, in Unidad 2, students learn about the letter *F* and its sound. Next, students name the things they have seen in the past that start with that letter. Activities like this allow the teacher to leverage students’ prior knowledge to develop new concepts, thereby expanding vocabulary. These language development strategies can be found in a variety of subjects. The “Lenguaje oral” strategies are represented in the materials with a small speaking head icon and include an oral language objective to describe what the children should be able to do. For example, in a “Social Studies” lesson from Unidad 2, the students compare different countries’ sizes using the vocabulary words *grande* and *pequeño*. The lesson objective is for students to “utilizar el lenguaje para distintos propósitos, utilizar una variedad de palabras para etiquetar, y describir lugares.” This type of activity only supports the development of students’ Spanish language proficiency.

The materials do not include comparisons of content vocabulary or structure in the two program languages. Rather than being a program that intertwines the two languages into one cohesive system, it is divided into the English curriculum and the Spanish curriculum. For example, none of the lessons or “Vocabulario” sections in Unidades 3 or 4 included references to English vocabulary connections. Students learn vocabulary in Spanish, thereby developing proficiency in only one language. Furthermore, there are no references to cognates to help leverage students’ prior knowledge in either language as an asset.

The materials provide opportunities for students to learn thematically-related terms in Spanish through discussions in the different content areas, for both small and whole group settings, as well as learning centers. The materials are organized into six themes corresponding to each of

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

the units. For example, Unidad 4 has language development activities to learn *separar y reciclar*. The teacher uses Squawker, the puppet, to teach the students about separating trash from other recyclable items. Then students answer questions such as “¿Por qué haríamos eso?” and “¿Cómo podemos reciclar ropa?” This activity provides students with opportunities to learn and discuss Spanish vocabulary terms and supports students’ Spanish language development. This lesson and other activities do not include guidance on whether the teacher can accept an answer in either language when asking a question, and if so, how the teacher should respond and allow for opportunities to make a cross-linguistic connection.

The materials provide teachers guidance on using prior knowledge as an asset to develop new concepts in the Spanish language; however, there is no evidence of this for the English language. In a Lenguaje oral lesson from Unidad 5, the students learn two new vocabulary words: *empinado* and *nivelado*. As part of the lesson, the teacher asks students to use their background knowledge of the concept being studied, “¿Qué otras formas hay de bajar por una colina empinada?” and “¿Qué otras cosas están niveladas?” The students respond to the teacher and also turn and talk to discuss their responses. However, the materials do not provide opportunities for the teacher to leverage students’ prior knowledge in another language to support learning.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

5.1 Materials & Score	5.1 Rationale
5.1 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide students with some opportunities to develop oral language skills, including authentic text conversations. Materials provide opportunities for students to listen and engage in discussions to understand the information in texts, but they do not provide opportunities for students to ask questions. Materials provide opportunities for students to engage in discussions, yet they are not consistent on how to build oral language through the texts. Materials provide few supports and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion.
5.1 Spanish IM Meets 4/4	The materials provide consistent opportunities for students to listen actively, ask questions, and engage in discussions to understand and share information in texts. The materials provide support and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion.

English Evidence 5.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide some opportunities for students to engage in active listening, open-ended questions, and discussion throughout the units. In Unit 1, the students predict what will happen in the story *Maria Had a Little Llama* by Maria Tenia. The teacher shows the front cover of the story and asks the students to predict what they believe will happen in the story. The teacher then reads the title and asks the students if their prediction has changed. The teacher continues to read and stops periodically to get new predictions. After the reading, the teacher reviews the predictions and compares them to what actually happened in the story. The

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

teacher checks for understanding by observing how and why the students make predictions and if their predictions make sense.

In Unit 3, the students learn about the people who create books, and they also learn about bullying when they read *The Recess Queen* by Alexis O’Neill. The teacher discusses an author and illustrator’s roles while showing the book to the class. The teacher takes the students on a picture walk of the book and asks them to make predictions before reading it. After the story, the teacher asks the students how the book made them feel and discusses what they can do if they are bullied. Students role-play different scenarios to practice solving conflicts. The teacher checks for understanding by observing the students during the picture walk and listening to their predictions.

In Unit 5, the teacher reads *The Gingerbread Man* by Catherine McCafferty and gives each child a gingerbread man cookie or cutout. The teacher tells the students to pretend they have caught the gingerbread man and want to share him. The teacher asks students how they can share the cookie equally in a group discussion. The teacher then uses a knife or scissors to model to the students how to cut the gingerbread man symmetrically from head to toe. The teacher checks for understanding by asking children about the process and listening to their responses. There are no specific tips for the teacher to expand upon children’s conversations related to this text.

Text-based discussions are meant to take place during read-aloud. Teachers are sometimes provided with specific prompting questions, but most prompts are general teacher-actions. Often students are directed to discuss predictions they have about stories and how to solve problems. The lessons include questions to ask the students, but they do not support further student collaboration or discussion. For example, the questions related to the Unit 6 text, *Ready for Robins*, include: “Can you make a home for the birds? What could the parents say to each other? What will they do next?” These types of questions sometimes require students to share information and ideas about the text, but as written, they do not provide enough additional support to ensure collaborative discussion or to ask questions.

The materials provide an extensive list of related books in the “Book Connections” section of the “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1. These books are recommended to further expand the concepts in the Teacher’s Guide, but no further guidance is provided on when or how to teach these texts. The Scope and Sequence does not include suggested time to read these texts, nor is there a dedicated time for read-aloud texts in the example half-day and full-day schedules. The “Books All Year” section defines when text-based lessons are integrated into the curriculum; teachers read texts roughly two to three times a week, with some weeks lacking a scheduled read-aloud. Beyond lessons that include text-specific questions, the teacher also has access to the “Book Centers and Connection” section in the Teacher’s Guide. This two-page section includes read-aloud interactive tips, pre-reading suggestions and prompts, a section dedicated to comprehension review, and a section describing how to connect the story to art. The comprehension review section provides some guidance for text-based student discussion. There

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

are four bullet points, and suggestions include: “Check the children’s predictions and ask questions about why their predictions did or did not happen.” “Discuss any problems and solutions.” “Discuss how the story made each child feel.” “Have children retell the story.” While this guidance relates to the text, it does not ensure students consistently develop necessary oral language skills.

There are times when read-aloud texts are replaced with “Line It Up Story Cards” and activity booklets. There are five story cards with associated activity booklets, and the booklets include additional teacher prompts that help promote discussion. However, these resources are not text-based in the traditional sense: there is some text for the teacher to read, but three pictures make up the foundation for each activity. While students may be working collaboratively in discussion, these resources do not ensure authentic text-based conversations.

Spanish Evidence 5.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Introducción al currículo” section of the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder” includes interactive tips to use when conducting a read-aloud. Teachers express excitement when they read a book to the class, which motivates students to listen. Before reading, the teacher does a picture walk with the students and encourages them to make predictions. During the picture walk, the teacher asks two or three questions about each picture, so students can further discuss their ideas and thoughts. For example, the teacher asks, “¿Qué está sucediendo aquí?” After the students make predictions, the teacher begins the read-aloud. The guide also recommends revisiting students’ predictions and asking questions to confirm whether the predictions were correct. This sequence fits every book the teacher reads in class. The repetition of this process supports students in listening actively and engaging in discussions that further their understanding of the information in texts.

The Introducción al Currículo section also provides ideas for students to retell stories through creative arts, such as music, dramatic play, art, and food. For example, these ideas can be implemented through the book *La oruga muy hambrienta* by Eric Carle during whole group, small group, or centers to support oral language development. Through music, students use instruments to create music that helps others understand how the story made them feel. This activity would require the students to engage in discussions about why they chose that rhythm. Finger puppets in the “Dramatic Play” center would allow students to act out events in the correct sequence. Through art, students create drawings to retell the story. In addition to the artwork, they can record themselves telling the sequence of events based on their drawings. Another way that encourages students to use the correct sequence of events is with food. Students use real food items to retell the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. These activities

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

provide students with consistent opportunities to engage in discussions that require sharing information and ideas about the texts.

The Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder includes another section, “Lecciones y aprendizaje multisensorial,” which provides activities that support and guide students to work collaboratively by engaging in discussion. For example, during an “Oral Language” lesson in Unidad 1, students take turns when asking what each other’s names are. One student begins the conversation by saying, “¿Cómo te llamas? Me llamo...” Then the other student responds with an appropriate answer. Taking turns is a key part of having a successful dialogue; therefore, students work collaboratively to practice this skill during authentic peer conversations.

The materials include open-ended questions to develop students' oral language skills. The teacher asks questions during read-alouds such as “What is happening?” “Tell me more about...” or “Why do you think that?” For example, during a “Lenguaje y alfabetización” lesson from Unidad 1, the teacher asks, “¿Qué crees que pasará en esta historia?” Asking this type of open-ended question prior to reading a story engages the students in a discussion about the text and helps them better understand the information they are about to hear.

The materials provide opportunities for children to listen actively and engage in discussion to understand texts. For example, in a “Lenguaje y alfabetización” lesson from Unidad 2, the students make predictions about a text before it is read aloud. The teacher asks, “¿Cuáles son tus predicciones sobre lo que sucederá en esta historia?” The students make predictions, and the teacher asks students to justify their predictions. The teacher asks more questions to engage students in a discussion, such as “¿Qué predicen que sucederá?” and “¿Cambiaron sus predicciones?” The teacher stops once or twice during the lesson to see if any students want to change their predictions. This lesson provides consistent opportunities for students to listen actively and engage in discussions to understand the information in texts and draw predictions about stories and plots.

Students have consistent opportunities to engage in discussions that require them to share information and ideas about the texts. In Unidad 4, the teacher uses the “Tarjetas de historias” during a “Language and Literacy” lesson to help students generate a list of facts from the informational text *Cultivando papayas*. The students participate in a shared writing activity as they contribute what they know about papayas after hearing the story read aloud. Activities like this promote oral language development through authentic discussions related to texts read aloud.

The materials provide guidance and support for students to work collaboratively and engage in discussion. For example, in a “Lenguaje y alfabetización” lesson from Unidad 6, the teacher reads *¿Cómo comen los dinosaurios sus alimentos?* by Jane Yolen. After the read-aloud, students work in small groups and discuss how to group dinosaurs according to their diet type. During the discussion, the students use words such as *meat*, *plant*, *sharp*, *flat*, and *teeth*. Not

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

only does this activity provide an opportunity for students to work collaboratively, but also engage in discussion using new vocabulary.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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 take into consideration the specific characteristics of Spanish phonics (syllabication) and their implications when teaching phonological awareness (Spanish only).
- Materials include a variety of types of activities that engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds/syllables³.
- Materials allow for student practice of phonological awareness skills both in isolation and connected to alphabetic knowledge skills.

5.2 Materials & Score	5.2 Rationale
5.2 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide some direct (explicit) instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills. The materials follow some components of the continuum, but they do not explain the research-based developmental continuum nor how the publisher decided on the scope and sequence of phonological awareness. Materials include various activities that engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds. These activities allow students some opportunity to practice phonological awareness skills in connection to alphabetic knowledge skills, but rarely do they practice these skills in isolation.
5.2 Spanish IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials follow the research-based developmental continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness in English but have limited consideration for the specific characteristics of Spanish phonics. Materials include a variety of engaging activities that allow for student practice of phonological awareness skills both in isolation and connected to alphabetic knowledge skills, specifically identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds/syllables.

English Evidence 5.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

³ “/syllables” included in the Spanish Prekindergarten rubric only.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The introduction guide reference articles on phonological awareness, including “Structure of Preschool Phonological Sensitivity” (2002), “The Development of Cross-Language Transfer of Phonological Awareness” (1995), and “Phonics, Phonological Awareness, and the Alphabet” (2004). When examining phonological awareness instruction across the materials, the basis of instruction is the letter. Across Units 1–5, students spend a week per letter and phonological awareness is included periodically. While some early lessons help students discriminate between noises and words, phonological awareness instruction seems to vary along the developmental continuum. For instance, during a single week in Unit 3, students identify words in sentences and letter sounds at the beginning of a word, and students build sentences into words. However, the materials do not provide a research-based scope and sequence detailing phonological awareness instruction. Based on the organization of phonological awareness instruction, materials seem to only somewhat follow the research-based developmental continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness.

In the Unit 1 lesson “Learn New Words,” the students learn new words that begin with the letter *S*. The teacher places pictures that begin with the letter *S* in the “Sound Around Box.” Students select a picture and share their experiences with that picture. In another lesson, “Identify Beginning Sound,” students learn to identify the beginning sounds of their names and others in the class in a whole group setting. The lesson uses the song “I’m Happy to See You.” Instead of saying *you*, the teacher uses the names of students in the class while holding a sentence strip with the student’s name. To identify the sound, the teacher emphasizes the beginning sound in the student’s name. In Week 6 of Unit 1, there are multiple opportunities for phonological awareness practice. The lesson “Distinguish Letters, Words, and Sentences” includes scrolls listing a letter, a word, or a sentence, and students have to identify which one it is. In a different lesson, “Position Letters,” students are introduced to the letter *L* and its sound. In the final lesson, “Make Rhyming Words,” students use picture cards to produce a rhyming word. Distinguish Letters, Words, and Sentences; Position Letters; and Make Rhyming Words all connect to the weekly focus letter *L*. In Distinguish Letters, Words, and Sentences, the letter, word, and sentence all contain the letter *L*. In the lesson Make Rhyming Words, *L* words are used to introduce rhyming. Phonological awareness skills are connected to alphabetic knowledge, but they are rarely practiced in isolation.

In Unit 3, in the “Identify Final Sound” lesson, students identify ending sounds in words. In the lesson, students stretch the ending sound, /s/, to ensure they hear the final sound. For support/English Learners, materials suggest using harder sounds (/k/, /d/, /g/, /p/, and /t/) to ensure the sounds can be heard clearly. In the lesson “Make One Word into Two,” students break down compound words into two words. In this whole or small group lesson, students select a picture card representing a compound word from the Sound Around Box and break the word into two (*sunglasses* becomes *sun* and *glasses*). The Sound Around Box contains compound words beginning with the letter *J*, as that is the week’s focus letter. In this lesson, students analyze words as they separate compound words. Week 16 has three days that focus on phonological awareness. In “Build Sentences with Words,” students are introduced to the

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

letter *G* and its sound. Students use words that begin with *G* to create sentences like “Goats eat grass.” Students use colored tiles to help count the number of words in the sentence. In a different lesson, “Learn New Words that Begin with *G*,” students learn words beginning with the letter *G*: *giraffe*, *goat*, *grass*, *glider*, and *goose*. Students are encouraged to share their experiences with one of the words chosen. In the final phonological lesson in Week 16, “Combine Onset and Rime,” students blend onsets and rimes of words beginning with the letter *G*. This phonological skill is connected to alphabetic knowledge, but students do not have an immediate opportunity to practice the skill in isolation. The next five “Language and Literacy” lessons cover naming objects that begin with *S*, reviewing *S* and building its capital letter, repeating words that start with the letter *S*, identifying the lowercase *S*, and identifying when words end in *S*. After that, students divide compound words, name and build capital letter *J*, combine root words into a compound word, match capital and lowercase *J*, and identify when words begin with *J*.

In Unit 5, there are multiple phonological awareness lessons in Week 26. In the “Divide Onset and Rime” lesson, which is a whole or small group lesson, students group words into families using words with the ending /n/ sound. At the beginning of the lesson, students are introduced to the letter *N* and its sound. Students group words ending in *-an* and *-un* into word families. Students use the *-an* and *-un* ending sounds to create new words. Students synthesize words in this lesson as they add a different beginning sound to *-an/-un*: *van*, *pan*, *can*; *sun*, *bun*, *fun*. In the next lesson, “Review *N* and Its Sound,” students say the name and sound for *N* as they write. In the lesson, students look around the classroom to find words beginning with the letter *N*. The last lesson in Week 26 is “Sort Syllables.” In the lesson, students clap and count the number of syllables in a word to develop phonological awareness. Using the “1-2-3 Touch and Flip” cards, students say and clap the word and place the picture under the number of syllables. The lesson provides an enrichment activity that increases the number of syllables to four-syllable words. The lesson also focuses on using words beginning with the letter *N*. Again, most of the phonological awareness skills in Unit 5 are connected to alphabetic knowledge, and not enough practice is completed in isolation.

Spanish Evidence 5.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide rich and varied playful opportunities to engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds/symbols. Volume 1 of the “Teacher’s Guide” provides information about the different materials available to experience, manipulate, and interact with sounds, such as the “Caja Sound Around” and the “Line It Up” cards. Both of which include activities to develop phonological awareness. For example, the Line It Up cards have several pictures with the same initial sound that support children in hearing words that start with the same initial sound and later, they learn which letter corresponds to each one. Another activity

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

involves filling the Caja Sound Around with “elementos conocidos cuyo sonido inicial sea el que estás enseñando.” Activities such as this are engaging and help students to identify sounds.

There is very limited evidence in the materials that incorporates the specific characteristics of Spanish phonics or its implications when teaching phonological awareness. The vowels should be introduced first, followed by consonants. In Spanish, children start forming words with syllables as they learn consonants. Unfortunately, the materials do not consider this sequence or its implications when teaching phonological awareness. Given that the pronunciation of a word is phonetically regular in Spanish, the recognition of syllable units has less of a focus in the curriculum than single phonemes. While the “Lenguaje y alfabetización” lessons implement plenty of opportunities for students to practice the identification of syllables, this mostly takes place in the last three units of the curriculum. This specific skill should appear from the very beginning as it is one of the most basic skills Spanish-speaking students need to learn.

Phonological awareness activities start out by focusing on hearing the sounds rather than connecting sounds to print, following a research-based developmental continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness. In a Lenguaje y alfabetización lesson from Unidad 1, the teacher tells the students they will pretend to be detectives. The objective is for students to detect or distinguish if sounds are the same or different. The sounds are from their environment and not necessarily alphabet related, which lays the foundation for the listening skills needed to distinguish sounds. This structure follows the research-based developmental continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness by teaching sounds first without the use of print. Once letter knowledge begins to develop, children benefit from the inclusion of letters in phonological awareness activities later in the curriculum.

The materials provide guidance to teachers for setting up learning experiences to engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds. For example, in a Lenguaje y alfabetización lesson from Unidad 1, the teacher plays the song “Ajetreo” and students identify sounds. This activity requires students to discriminate environmental sounds from speaking sounds. The teacher asks, “¿Qué sonidos escucharon? ¿De dónde venían esos sonidos?” The students respond and then practice imitating the sounds from the song. This activity engages students in identifying sounds.

According to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, the materials introduce skills in a way that follows the Spanish phonological awareness continuum. There are many opportunities to practice all the skills in the continuum, beginning with rhyming and sentence segmenting followed by syllable and onset-rime blending/segmenting in later units. For example, in Unidad 4, the teacher leads the students in a syllable segmentation activity. The teacher explains: “Las partes pequeñas de una palabra se llaman sílabas. Nombremos imágenes y aplaudamos por cada parte de las palabras.” The students separate words such as *rosa* into syllables (*ro-sa*). Educators can also find all the phonological awareness activities found in the curriculum in the “Índice” of Volume 2.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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 in Spanish.
- Materials provide teacher guidance on direct introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds (English only).
- Materials provide teacher guidance on direct (explicit) introduction, modeling, and using letter names, digraphs, and sounds (Spanish only).

5.3 Materials & Score	5.3 Rationale
5.3 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials provide direct (explicit) instruction and opportunities for student practice in alphabetic knowledge skills. The materials follow a research-based, strategic sequence for the introduction of alphabetic knowledge across the units. The materials also provide teacher guidance on directly introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds.
5.3 Spanish IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials do not follow a research-based, strategic sequence for the introduction of alphabetic knowledge in Spanish. The materials provide teacher guidance on direct introduction, modeling, and using letter names, digraphs, and sounds; however, there are missing digraphs and letters from the Spanish language.

English Evidence 5.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, states that the curriculum is “structured around the research-based sequence of letters that best support fine motor development in children.” The research-based sequence is from *The First Year of Life: A Guide to the Study of the Pre-School Child* by Gesell, et al. Each week has a focus letter; for instance, in Unit 2, each week focuses on one of the letters *Ff, Ee, Hh, Tt, Ii*, and *Uu*, in that order. Unit 4 follows a similar sequence, with the letters *Dd, Pp, Bb, Rr, Kk*, and *Aa*. Unit 6 is the last unit and follows a different format, reviewing various letters each week since children have been exposed to all the letters of the alphabet at this point. There is a built-in review in the last six weeks during Unit 6. During the first few weeks, there is no focus letter, just an emphasis on learning names and familiar words.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

In Unit 2, during a “Language and Literacy” lesson, the children learn the letter *E*. On Monday, the teacher shows the letter *E* card. The teacher introduces the letter and sound. The teacher places the *E* card on the ground with other letters that have been taught and asks a child to pick and name a letter. The children finger-trace the letter. The teacher repeats until all letters have been chosen. This activity gives children an opportunity to learn the new focus letter and review letters taught in previous weeks. On the same day, the “Readiness and Writing” lesson has the children practice with letter *E* by building the letter with wood pieces. The following day, the teacher reviews letter *E* before a read-aloud for Language and Literacy. For Readiness and Writing, children practice letter *E* by creating it out of playdough. Similar activities occur throughout the week, giving children opportunities to practice with the focus letter every day. Each week follows a similar format; though the actual activities may change, the opportunities to practice letters stay frequent. The materials begin by introducing the capital letter and then introduce the corresponding lowercase letter in the middle of the week. The materials thus provide a structured sequence for the introduction of alphabetic knowledge.

In Unit 4, the students learn the letter *P* in one week with various activities. During the Language and Literacy lesson, the materials guide the teacher to introduce *P* and its sound. Each week, the teacher is instructed to do this on the first day of the week so that children learn the focus letter. The lesson that follows is a phonological awareness lesson, but the words used to teach compound words all start with *P*, like *pancake*. The Readiness and Writing lesson builds on new knowledge by reviewing the letter. While building the letter *P* with wood pieces, the teacher says, “Watch as I build *P*. Big Line down, Jump to the smiley face, Little Curve to the middle. We made *P*.” Children imitate the teacher model with their own wood sticks. On Day 2 of the week, the teacher introduces *P* and its sound during Language and Literacy again. The phonological awareness lesson that follows is on another skill but again instructs the teacher to use words that begin with *P* when working on rhymes. The materials suggest *pan/can* as an example rhyme and *pail/pig* as a non-example. During Readiness and Writing, the teacher repeats the procedure of building the letter *P* (with the accompanying script), but this time out of playdough instead of wood pieces. The students again imitate these actions. These lessons are very explicit and give the teacher guidance on what to say and have the children do. All of these activities incorporate letter knowledge in meaningful ways. These hands-on activities to create the letters and gain exposure to them allow children to learn through multisensory methods.

The format across all units is very similar, though some activities do change. The earlier units have a heavier focus on letters, while later units also incorporate phonological awareness skills into alphabetic knowledge lessons. All the lessons are scripted and detailed, so the teacher has guidance on introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds.

Spanish Evidence 5.3

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials do not follow a research-based, strategic sequence for the introduction of alphabetic knowledge of Spanish. According to information from the Texas Reading Academies, the progression of Spanish alphabetic knowledge “begin(s) with the consonants that are more useful in generating and decoding Spanish words (e.g., *m, n, b, p, s, l, d, t,* and *f*.)” In addition, “consonants should be taught in combination with vowels for immediate application to syllable reading.” However, the letter sequence provided in the introduction section of the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder” does not introduce the letter *L* until Week 6 and the letter *M* until Week 25. The materials do not include instruction of the letter *Ññ*; therefore, the materials do not follow a research-based, strategic sequence for the introduction of alphabetic knowledge in Spanish.

The Spanish alphabetic knowledge progression is learning vowel sounds, making distinctions between strong and weak vowels, learning consonant sounds, and matching vowels with consonants to form syllables (Beeman and Urow, 2012; Honig, 2013; Calzadilla Perez, 2012; Dehaene, 2019). The materials do not start with vowel sounds; instead, they start with the letters *L, F, E, H,* and *T*. Students are not introduced to all the vowels until Week 24 out of 36 total instructional weeks. Therefore, the materials do not follow a research-based, strategic sequence for the introduction of Spanish alphabetic knowledge.

The materials do not provide teacher guidance on directly introducing, modeling, and using digraphs. The five Spanish digraphs are *ch, ll, gu, qu,* and *rr*. The only information the materials provide regarding digraphs is for the *ch* and *ll*. The “Resources” section from the “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, states that “there were many challenges to the inclusion of *ch* and *ll*. The conclusion of the Spanish Royal Academy in 2010 was that *ch* and *ll* are digraphs and not alphabet letters.” These digraphs are not included in the lessons, and teachers do not have the guidance they need to introduce or model using these five Spanish digraphs.

Although digraphs are not included, the materials do provide rich and varied playful opportunities to experience, manipulate, and interact with letters. One of the teacher-led activities that supports this practice is “Camino de letras,” from the introductory section of the Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder. The teacher shows “una tarjeta de letras y luego escribe letras mayúsculas en cartulina.” The teacher lays the letter cards down on the floor, and students name each letter to continue on the path. This activity provides students with opportunities to practice using letter names as they move throughout the classroom.

The materials provide teacher guidance on directly introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds. For example, in a “Lenguaje y alfabetización” lesson from Unidad 2, students learn the letter *E* and its sound. The materials state, “Muestra la tarjeta de la letra *E*. Presenta la letra *E* y su sonido.” After the teacher presents and models the letter, students identify the letter *E* from three other letters, using the sentence stem provided. Finally, students

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

trace the letter *E* with their fingers. The materials provide explicit teacher guidance to introduce, model, and use letter names and sounds.

The curriculum primarily focuses on one letter each week. The review of other letters throughout the scope of the school year mainly takes place during the center activities the teacher decides to implement each week. For example, even though *C* is the letter for week 13 in Unidad 3, the teacher uses activities such as the “Line It Up” cards to review other letters previously introduced. The teacher shows the students one of the Line It Up cards, and students find the matching letter in their alphabet cereal. Activities like this give students multiple and ongoing opportunities to have targeted experiences with the letters.

The materials embed movement-based activities to support student understanding of letters and sounds. Many lessons use the “Canción del alfabeto” to practice the letters. For example, a lesson from Unidad 4 provides teacher guidance in the “Introducción multisensorial” section. The materials state, “Canta y señala al ritmo de la Canción del alfabeto.” After the students sing the alphabet song, the teacher leads the students in a review of the letters *c*, *o*, *s*, *v*, *w*, *a*, and *d*. The students each get a card with one of those letters. The teacher calls out a letter, and if the students have that letter, they pass under the limbo ribbon. The teacher monitors to ensure students correctly match the letter called. This lesson provides teacher guidance on direct introduction, modeling, and using letter names through music and movement.

In Unidad 6, students work with letters to identify and compare their characteristics, including sounds. The teacher specifically reviews *Cc*, *Oo*, *Ss*, *Vv*, and *Ww* and describes the difference between uppercase and lowercase letters. The teacher states: “La letras mayúsculas son todas del mismo tamaño. Las letras minúsculas pueden tener diferentes tamaños: Pequeñas, altas, o descendentes.” The students manipulate magnetic letters by separating them into capital and lowercase letters, and they name all the letter names and sounds. Direct explanation and developmentally appropriate manipulatives support students in learning their letter names and sounds.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

5.4 Materials & Score	5.4 Rationale
5.4 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide some direct (explicit) instruction in print knowledge and concepts and opportunities for student practice. The materials provide some instruction in print awareness as related to books/texts. There are minimal experiences for students to develop an understanding of print in context to the students’ experience at school. The materials do not provide a developmentally appropriate continuum for the development of print awareness knowledge, nor do they provide a research-based sequence of foundational skills.
5.4 Spanish IM Meets 4/4	The materials provide direct instruction in print awareness and connect print awareness to books or texts. Materials provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print within the school context. The materials include a research-based, developmentally appropriate sequence of foundational skills instruction and the development of print awareness knowledge.

English Evidence 5.4

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide some direct instruction in print knowledge, but not in all units. Sometimes lessons state to review the parts of a book without additional support. When the materials have planned read-alouds, they include questions to use before the reading to help children develop knowledge about print, rarely do they include questions during or after the reading. Materials do not include recommendations for setting up a print-rich environment or

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

engaging opportunities to experience authentic print within the school day. The materials do not include charts, lists, or big books.

Even though there are lessons that teach some print awareness components, they are not labeled as print awareness, and they are not in the scope and sequence. There is not a provided continuum for the development of print awareness or a progression of the teaching. That being said, some lessons become more complex as the year advances, and there are some examples of explicit instruction in print awareness. Students learn the part of a book in the first unit and distinguish letters by Unit 5.

All read-alouds found in the scope and sequence include some guidance for the teacher to implement during instruction. First, teachers are directed to the “Books All Year” section of the “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1. This section also directs teachers to the Statement of Correlation” and “Book Connections” sections. This information primarily consists of two book lists: one list of supplementary recommended books and another list of books integrated throughout the curriculum. This resource is supposed to include “tips regarding how to effectively integrate books into your Pre-K classroom each time you read a book with children.” However, the only remaining parts summarize research, support, and resources for learning; parent resources for school-to-home connection; and a sample circle time discussing opening, pledge, calendar, weather, songs, and closing. This last section, “Sample Circle Time,” does tell teachers: “Daily for at least a week, read a book regarding a social-emotional learning topic.” This section does not provide teachers with direct instruction (explicit) lessons in print awareness.

An additional section in the Teacher’s Guide titled “Book Centers and Connections” provides some general guidance for teachers when conducting read-alouds. Spanning two pages, this section consists of four subsections: fun and interactive read-aloud tips, read-aloud time, comprehension review, and retelling the story through arts. Here, the teacher introduces the book by “going over parts of the book with each read-aloud” and conducts a “Picture Walk.” The parts of the book reviewed include the spine, front, and back of the book. Then, teachers talk about the title, author, and illustrator before discussing each picture and making predictions. There is no explicit reference to any specific-text, nor is there any explicit connection to print knowledge. The directions are for general use and guidance. In the “Let’s Read: Read Aloud Time” section, teachers are reminded to show their excitement, keep the book facing the children, maintain a reasonable reading pace, summarize the title page, add voice variations for each character, and change reading expression. For review, teachers check children’s predictions, discuss problems and solutions, discuss feelings, and have children retell the story. This lesson is the extent of direct and explicit print awareness instruction found in Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1.

Usually within the lesson plans (Teacher’s Guide, Volume 2), there are three to five questions or prompts meant to help teachers specifically teach the text. For example, when students read *The Tortoise and the Hare: An Aesop Fable* in Unit 3, prompts include: “Let’s read *The Tortoise*

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

and the Hare. A tortoise moves slowly and quietly. A hare moves quickly. Listen carefully as I read the story. I will read a sentence slowly and quietly, just like a tortoise. When I point to you, you repeat the sentence quickly, just like the hare!" Many lessons do not reference print knowledge and concepts; those that do, do so indirectly.

Also, in Unit 3, the students learn about jobs and school safety. The teacher explains that there are many jobs in the community, and one of them is a crossing guard. The teacher asks the students if they have a crossing guard. The teacher reviews the parts of a book and reads *Crossing Guards* by Joann Early Macken. After the book, the teacher uses a safety sign to explain "stop and go" on the sign. The students play "Stop and Go" using the safety sign. After the game, the class discusses safety. The teacher checks for understanding by observing if the students listen to the story and ask questions.

In Unit 5, the teacher reviews capital and lowercase letters and their sounds. The teacher passes out "A-B-C Touch and Flip" cards to the students, one to each student. Half of the students get a lowercase letter, and half get an uppercase letter. The students find their matching letters. The teacher asks the students with V and v to go to the front and tells the class an uppercase letter and a lowercase letter. The teacher repeats the step with other letters. The teacher checks for understanding by observing if the students match their letters.

Spanish Evidence 5.4

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Introducción al currículo" section of the "Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder" recommends labeling objects around the classroom such as cubicles with the names of students, which helps them identify their belongings as part of their daily routines. In addition, the information suggests labeling learning areas, school supplies containers, and curricular student books. This labeling not only creates an environment that allows students to self-direct their learning, but also connects print awareness to their daily lives. The constant exposure to letters and words helps them make connections to how written language carries meaning.

Materials include opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print in context to the students' experience at school. In the "Actividades dirigidas por el maestro" section of the Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder, the materials guide teachers to use a wall chart to review the letters of the alphabet with students. The materials state "Canta la 'Canción del alfabeto' lentamente mientras señalas las letras minúsculas...puedes usar un gráfico de pared o las tarjetas A-B-C Touch and Flip Cards." The use of a wall chart provides opportunities for students to develop their letter knowledge within a print-rich environment.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The activities follow a developmentally appropriate continuum to teach print awareness skills explicitly. The activities engage children in learning that becomes more complex as their knowledge increases. For example, a “Lenguaje y alfabetización” lesson from Unidad 1 focuses on “distinguir letras, palabras, y oraciones.” The teacher introduces the letter *L*, with examples of it being used in a word, sentence, and on its own, as a letter. Next, the students sort paper strips with letters, words, and sentences into groups while the teacher observes for understanding. Later in Unidad 3, the materials include “tarjetas de palabras: construir/disfrazar,” which serve as an anchor for print awareness, when used in the lesson. The teacher gives definitions and students construct a block tower and put on a costume to connect the definition to a real-world example. All of this ties back to ensuring students understand the objective, “comprender que la escritura tiene significado.”

The sequence for introduction includes reviewing print awareness concepts throughout the scope of the school year. Lessons at the beginning of the year focus on identifying letters. For example, in a Lenguaje y alfabetización lesson from Unidad 2, students practice recognizing capital letters. The teacher puts the “tarjetas de letras: E, F, L” on the floor, and students take turns picking up the letters and showing them to the class, “con el lado correcto hacia arriba.” Lessons later in the year support identifying words in a book or focus on talking about appropriate use of punctuation, which is supported by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. According to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, print concepts start with distinguishing between elements of print, understanding print directionality, and identifying conventional features of print that communicate meaning such as punctuation and case.

Materials provide direct instruction in print awareness and connect print awareness to books. For example, in a Lenguaje y alfabetización lesson from Unidad 3, the teacher reviews the letter *C* and its sound, then reads aloud the book *Pete el gato and His Four Groovy Buttons*. The teacher asks students to stand up with every word they hear in various sentences. The lesson states, “Haz que cinco niños se sienten en fila. Lee una oración sencilla.” The teacher states, “Voy a leer una oración. Cuando te señale, ponte de pie.” While repeating each word from the sentence, the teacher points to each student to stand up when it is their turn. This activity provides direct print awareness instruction connected to text in an interactive and developmentally appropriate way.

A “Social Studies” lesson in Unidad 5 includes an activity where students identify the letter *X* in environmental print. The teacher shows pictures of different crossing signs. Students find the *X* in each picture and share what it means in each sign (e.g., animal crossing, train crossing). This lesson provides students the opportunity to recognize that print has meaning and develops an understanding of print’s everyday functions in context. This type of activity is so valuable that it could be included on a more consistent basis throughout the curriculum to give students more opportunities to use logos and signs they see in their daily lives to develop literacy skills.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

5.5 Materials & Score	5.5 Rationale
5.5 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials include a variety of text types and genres across content that are high-quality and at an appropriate level of complexity. The texts are all easily-accessible for children when read aloud by the teacher. The resources provide strategies to support children’s connection with background knowledge and through previewing books before the read-aloud if needed. The materials include both fiction and nonfiction texts as well as nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and songs. The texts selected are high-quality and engaging, with both familiar characters as well as high-interest topics for the prekindergarten age range. There is some support for the use of environmental print through guided activities.
5.5 Spanish IM Partially Meets 2/4	The texts included in the materials are at the appropriate level of complexity and are engaging for prekindergarten students according to their developmental levels. Materials include a variety of types of texts, such as fiction and nonfiction, but have limited poems, songs, and nursery rhymes. Texts include opportunities for students to interact with the stories, including repeated parts, and read-aloud texts cover a range of student interests. The materials include some environmental print throughout the classroom.

English Evidence 5.5

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The introduction of the “Teacher’s Guide” includes texts engaging to pre-k students as well as opportunities for students to interact with stories. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* is

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

a repetitive story that allows students to chime in to answer what each animal sees. *From Head to Toe* is another interactive story. The book includes questions such as “I am a cat and I arch my back, can you do it?” and allows characters/students to answer by demonstrating. *The Three Little Pigs* is another story students can re-enact as they build different houses, and the wolf huffs and puffs and blows the houses down. The materials provided in the Teacher's Guide cover a range of concepts, such as body awareness and colors, that are developmentally appropriate for pre-K students. Across all units, there are engaging texts written by well-known early childhood authors; children have ample opportunities to interact with texts across a range of interests. The text list has many early childhood favorites, like Dr. Seuss and Karma Wilson, as well as newer titles like *I'm NOT Just a Scribble* by Diane Alber. The Teacher's Guide, Volume 1, also provides guidance about how to set up a “Book Center” and help children make connections with books. Guidance includes making a read-aloud more fun and interactive through previewing the book, asking questions about the pictures in the text, and using voice variations for each character. The materials offer guidance for teachers on how to have students retell the story through other centers such as “Art,” “Music,” and “Dramatic Play.” The materials also suggest rereading books and putting new and previously read books in the Book Center to make them readily available for students to engage with.

The materials include a list of “Book Connections” in the Teacher's Guide, Volume 1, divided into sections based on interest and content area. Sections include “Animals, Art, Chef/Cook/Healthy Food, Dramatic Play, Environment/Recycling, Letters, Motors and Machines, Science and Technology for Kids, Music and Musicians, My Body, Numbers, Counting, Colors, Shapes, Science, Flight, Light, Plants, Water Cycle, Weather, and Social-Emotional Learning.” This list offers suggestions of other titles that relate to topics pre-k students may be interested in, as well as the books included with the materials that fall into those categories. The texts identified in the Book Connections are appropriate for preschool-age children and vary in complexity to support the specific needs of the classroom.

The texts identified in the units provide children with content that is developmentally appropriate and includes a range of topics to support a range of student interests. For example, Unit 1 contains the text *My Five Senses* by Alike that the teacher reads aloud; according to Scholastic, this text is written for pre-K through grade 1 and has a Lexile level of AD590L. Based on the by-hand qualitative measures of the IRLA leveling system, the Lexile accurately reflects this text's difficulty when it is read independently. The purpose of this text is for the teacher to read aloud information to the students as an introductory activity to explore the hearing sense. The text contains a mixture of simple sentences and complex sentences, but each sentence has a corresponding picture to help students understand it. The following simple sentences are accompanied by a picture of a child highlighting his ears by pulling them forward: “I can hear! I hear with my ears.” The following more complex sentence has corresponding pictures of a frog under the sun and a baby sister crawling: “When I see the sun, or a frog, or my baby sister, I use my sense of sight.” *My Five Senses* by Alike engages children to explore their surroundings using their five senses. This text also shows how to be aware by using multiple senses at a time: We

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

see, hear, smell, and touch when playing with a dog. The text provides illustrations that support the reader to understand each page and provides guidance to directly engage with the text by mimicking the picture.

Unit 2 includes *Waiting Is Not Easy!* by Mo Willems. This text is recommended for ages 4 to 8, which includes pre-k children (4 to 5 years old). The text's Lexile level is listed as "Beginning Reader," which is appropriate for pre-k students. The text has easy-to-understand words, and the plot is easy for children to follow. The text can be incorporated into lessons and is a recommended read-aloud during a "Language and Literacy" lesson. The story is relatable to children: Piggy has a surprise to show Elephant, but Elephant cannot wait to see it. The text provides opportunities for children to interact by modeling the characters' behaviors. While this text teaches the skill of patience using the characters Elephant and Piggy, the text also connects with children who are interested in animals, which can support a wide range of interests.

Unit 5 contains the text "Little Miss Muffet" from *Favorite Book of Nursery Rhymes* by Scott Gustafson, which according to Scholastic, was written for pre-k through grade 2; a Lexile level is not provided because it is a collection of nursery rhymes. "Little Miss Muffet" has a DRA level of 8, which correlates to a 200–300 Lexile level. The teacher reads the nursery rhyme aloud, and students describe the problem and solution. The students engage in the activity by moving the story cards to mirror the sequence and select answers to questions such as "What is Miss Muffet's problem?" "How did she fix it?" and "What would you do if a spider sat beside you?" The activity provides material that is developmentally appropriate for this age group and supports student engagement across a variety of interests.

Fiction texts include:

The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig (science fiction)
Aesop's Fable: The Lion and the Mouse (folktale)
What Pet Should I Get? by Dr. Seuss (rhyming fiction)
How Do Dinosaurs Eat Their Food? by Jane Yolen (fiction)

Nonfiction texts include:

Actual Size by Steve Jenkins (informational)
Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert (informational)
10 Things I Can Do to Help My World by Melanie Walsh (informational)
All About Light by Lisa Trumbauer (informational)

Examples of a variety of text types include:

Favorite Book of Nursery Rhymes by Scott Gustafson (collection of nursery rhymes)
 "Humpty Dumpty"
 "Little Bo Peep"
 "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater"
 "Polly Put the Kettle On"

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

“Pat-a-Cake”
“Hey Diddle Diddle”
“Old King Cole”
“The Old Woman in the Shoe”

Goldilocks and the Three Bears (classic children’s literature)
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Eric Carle (nursery rhyme)
The Tortoise and the Hare by Janet Stevens (fable)

The Teacher's Guide, Volume 1, guides and provides pictures on setting up the classroom to incorporate environmental print. Teachers are told to label centers and the materials that belong to each center. Students use letter cards and vocabulary cards in the “Language and Literacy” center that contain a visual to help students decode them. The materials provide classroom environmental print to support print awareness development; however, materials lack additional activities to support environmental print in the classroom or in lessons throughout the units.

Spanish Evidence 5.5

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include books with storylines and characters that are easy to understand and are at the appropriate level of complexity for children’s developmental level. For example, *Llaman a la puerta* by Pat Hutchins and *Mis cinco sentidos* by Alike are titles in the “Biblioteca de Get Set for School” curriculum library list. They are of an appropriate level of complexity for a prekindergarten classroom. This section also includes titles such as *La oruga muy hambrienta* by Eric Carle and *Ricitos de oro y los tres osos* by Valerie Gorbachev, both including highly predictable storylines.

The materials include multiple genres of text, including both fiction and nonfiction texts. The Biblioteca de Get Set for School includes fiction books such as *Llaman a la puerta* by Pat Hutchins, *María tenía una llamita* by Ángela Domínguez, and *Olivia* by Ian Falconer. Nonfiction texts include *Las mascotas* by Sindy McKay, *Mis cinco sentidos* by Alike, and *¿Por qué debo reciclar?* by Jen Green. The materials also include a variety of classic children’s literature, early childhood favorites, and popular current titles such as *El Gato Ensombreado* by Dr. Seuss and *Los Tres Cerditos* by Eric Litwin. All of these titles are included as part of the classroom library and are sometimes referenced in more than one lesson in the curriculum.

The materials include a variety of songs but are lacking in poetry and nursery rhymes. For example, *Pio Peep: Traditional Spanish Nursery Rhymes* by Alma Flor Ada and Isabel Campoy is a suggested title listed in the curriculum but does not actually come with the materials. This book

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

includes a collection of traditional Spanish nursery rhymes and poems and would be highly beneficial to include in a bilingual curriculum. Although there are limited poetry and nursery rhymes, there are a variety of songs available in the instructional materials through the *Sing, Sound and Count With Me* and *Get Set for School Sing Along* albums. However, there are only a few songs with words in Spanish to accompany the musical track and the majority of the songs are the instrumental version. Therefore, teachers are left to figure out where the words are for these tracks in Spanish.

The texts in the materials cover a variety of topics pre-k children would find interesting. The topics are related to the themes presented in the curriculum, including “ocupaciones, naturaleza, animales, formas, letras, y cuidado del medioambiente.” For example, the classroom library includes books about animals such as *María tenía una llamita* by Ángela Domínguez, *El Abece visual de los animales salvajes* by Marisa Do Brito Barrote, *La oruga muy hambrienta* by Eric Carle, and *Mascotas* by Sindy McKay. Other themes include weather with texts such as *Lluvia* by Carol Thompson and *El tiempo* by Kristin Baird Rattini.

The materials include some use of environmental print throughout the classroom. The “Introducción” section of the *Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder* suggests creating the vocabulary cards then leaving them visible and available for students. This environmental print is designed to “facilitar la lectura y mejorar el entendimiento con ilustraciones coloridas.” This information provides guidance to include opportunities for students to use environmental print in the classroom.

The texts incorporate engaging content that includes opportunities for students to interact with the stories. In Unidad 1, the book *Llaman a la puerta* is part of a math lesson where students count people in the book. The teacher reads the book aloud and pauses for the children to count every time a friend arrives in the story. The lesson supports more than one content area. The lesson supports reading skills as the teacher models reading practices and math skills as students engage in a repetitive activity with counting. In addition, in Unidad 3, the teacher uses the book *El hombre de pan de jengibre* to introduce the math objective of dividing one object into two equal pieces. After the whole group read-aloud, the students pair up and discuss how they will cut a gingerbread man cookie to ensure each person gets an equal part. Using this text along with the math activity supports the objective while increasing student engagement and interaction in order to complete a developmentally appropriate task.

In Unidad 6, students learn to recognize their own names as well as those of their classmates. The teacher sings the song “Estoy feliz de verte” as the students sit in a circle and tap their knees or clap to the song’s beat. The students take turns standing up during the song when the teacher holds up a name card with each of their names. After the song, the teacher says “Libba, Libba inicia con MAYÚSCULA y se deletrea L-I-B-B-A, Libba,” while spelling the student’s name and pointing to each letter. This activity supports children’s literacy development as they are

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

actively engaged in print that is very meaningful to them. This lesson strategically uses a song to reinforce skill development; however, only a few songs with words are provided in Spanish.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.
- Materials support the teacher in scaffolding questions for students at a variety of language proficiency levels (Spanish only).

5.6 Materials & Score	5.6 Rationale
5.6 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials give general guidance for teachers on approaches to develop students’ comprehension of texts read aloud, but they lack specific guidance to help teachers connect texts to children’s experiences at home and school. There is some support to guide teachers on basic text structures and understanding of text, but this is not included across all units.
5.6 Spanish IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials include guidance for the teacher to connect texts to children’s experiences at home and school. The materials also provide guidance for the teacher on basic text structures and their impact on understanding the text. There are no supports to scaffold questions for students at a variety of language proficiency levels.

English Evidence 5.6

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, provides guidance for teachers to use during read-alouds; this information can be found in the “Book Centers and Connections” section of the Teacher’s Guide. In one example related to basic text structure, the materials suggest using a picture walk to “teach children how to use pictures as clues to understand the story and make predictions about what might happen at the end.” The materials also include guidance around asking two to three “wh” questions about each picture during the picture walk. During the “Let’s Read: Read Aloud Time” section, the teacher summarizes the book title, author, and illustrator. After reading, the teacher checks the children’s predictions, discusses problems and solutions, and asks, “How did the story make you feel? What surprised [*sic*] about the story?” These questions give children opportunities to make connections to the text, but they do not guide the teacher

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

to connect the text to children’s experiences at home or school. The strategies provide general guidance supporting the comprehension of the read-alouds, but they do not help teachers communicate how basic text structures impact the understanding of text.

The Teacher’s Guide also includes a section titled “Book Connections,” summarizing additional suggested book titles for teachers to add to their classroom libraries. The “Books All Year” section summarizes when each read-aloud book is integrated into the curriculum. This section also includes books specifically meant to “support social-emotional learning discussions in your Pre-K classroom.” These eight texts include a brief description of the book and how it can be utilized to support social skill instruction. However, these sections of the Teacher's Guide do not provide guidance for teachers to connect specific texts to children’s experiences or connect basic text structure to understanding.

There is a page-long section titled “School-to-Home Connections” in the Teacher’s Guide that summarizes ways to build connections between school and home. Some of these suggestions include communicating during Pre-K events, sharing assessment information, sharing curriculum and music, reading to children at home, etc. While these suggestions are meant to increase student comprehension and success, the child’s experience at home is not being used to develop their comprehension of texts read aloud.

In Unit 1, the students predict what will happen in the story *Maria Had a Little Llama* by Maria Tenia. The teacher shows the front cover of the story and asks students, “What do you predict will happen in this story?” The teacher then reads the title and asks the students, “Now that you know the title, what do you predict will happen? Did your prediction change?” The teacher continues to read and stops periodically to get new predictions and check for understanding. The materials provide predicting questions for the teacher to use but no support to guide the teacher on how to use the text to teach and model making predictions and inferences. The materials also lack guidance for teachers to help children identify and use basic text structures to develop comprehension of the text read aloud.

Unit 2 uses the same guidance as previous units. In one activity, children listen to the story of the *Growing Pumpkins* and predict “What do you think will happen?” The students make predictions using illustrations and prior knowledge. The teacher checks for comprehension through the students’ responses. In another activity, children learn to detect characters’ feelings in a story. The lesson guides the teacher to read the “Story Cards for ‘Little Miss Muffet.’” During the reading of the story cards, the materials guide the teacher to have students make connections. The teacher asks, “What is happening?” about the first card (she is eating). The teacher asks, “How do you feel when you’re eating?” to help children connect to the character in the story based on their own experiences. Then the teacher asks, “How does Miss Muffet feel?” (happy), and the children answer by holding up an emotion face on a craft stick. This activity helps children understand emotion by connecting to their own life experiences. Specific

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

strategies for comprehension are not provided for each activity in the unit, but the Teacher's Guide can be used to support all reading activities in the unit.

In Unit 3, students learn about being a chef to build oral language. The teacher reads aloud *Chefs and What They Do* by Liesbet Slegers; after the reading, the teacher asks the students about their experiences in a restaurant or at home to assess comprehension. After reading the story, students pretend to be chefs and cooks. The materials provide guidance for the teacher to support children in making personal connections to texts: "Discuss the story and ask children about their experiences in a restaurant or at home." In an "Oral Language" lesson in Unit 3, students learn the nouns *grandma* and *relative* while asking and answering questions. The text connects children's experiences at home and at school. Later, in "Q&A with Nouns," students look at the corresponding illustrated vocabulary cards and then repeat words, say sentences, and discuss relatives that may live with or visit as a check for comprehension of the terms.

Spanish Evidence 5.6

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials guide teachers to connect books to children's experiences at home and school. For example, the "Recursos" section of the "Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder" includes suggestions for teachers to involve the families in promoting a love for reading. The materials suggest assigning specific weeks for students to bring books from home or the local library to share in class. Materials recommend that teachers share reading strategies to implement at home. Additionally, the curriculum stresses the importance of recommending families practice their first language at home, supporting second language acquisition. This information supports teachers in helping children bring their experiences to the classroom and make personal connections to texts.

Volume 1 of the "Teacher's Guide" includes activities that support comprehension of texts read aloud, such as "Line It Up." This section directs the teacher to have the children retell stories, color pictures, and explore letters. The story cards use pictures to help students retell a story by identifying the beginning, middle, and end. The materials state, "Las tarjetas de historias incluyen imágenes que se usan para enseñar la introducción, el medio y al final de cinco historias diferentes." This section provides guidance for the teacher on basic text structures and their impact on understanding the text.

The materials guide teachers to use books with basic text structures to support children in making predictions and understanding a text. For example, in a "Lenguaje y alfabetización" lesson from Unidad 1, the objective is to make predictions about the book *Mat Man A Pasear*. Students make predictions before and during the read-aloud. The teacher states: "Voy a leer un libro. Antes de leerlo, vamos a predecir lo que pasará." After beginning to read aloud, the

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

teacher stops one or two more times to allow students to make new predictions or confirm previous ones based on what really happened in the story. This lesson provides guidance for the teacher to use basic text structures to support understanding the text.

The materials provide teachers with scaffolding questions for students to support comprehension; however, there is no evidence in the materials that the level of complexity in the questions corresponds to a variety of language proficiency levels. For example, in the same *Lenguaje y alfabetización* lesson from Unidad 1, the teacher asks various prompting questions about the book. Some of the questions are open-ended, such as “¿Qué predicen que pasará en esta historia?” Others are closed-ended, such as “¿Qué ven en esta imagen?” Although the lesson incorporates varying questions, there is no correlation to a variety of language proficiency levels.

The materials include suggestions for classroom experiences that help children make connections to texts. For example, an “Estudios sociales” lesson from Unidad 3 includes a read-aloud about costumes. The teacher asks open-ended questions, such as “Si fueran diseñadores, ¿qué tipo de disfraces querrían hacer?” Afterward, the students create their own costumes. This lesson provides suggestions for teachers to provide children with classroom experiences that connect to books.

Some lessons include a read-aloud but do not offer opportunities to scaffold questions in order to comprehend the text. For example, in a science lesson from Unidad 4, the teacher reads a book about rain, but there are no questions included. The teacher states: “Los meteorólogos estudian fenómenos del tiempo, como la lluvia.... La lluvia se produce cuando las nubes se llenan de mucha agua.” The teacher continues to explain the experiment they are going to conduct. The lesson script helps teachers explain how clouds work; however, it lacks the implementation of scaffolded questions for students at a variety of language proficiency levels.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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) (English only).
- 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 (English only).
- Materials provide opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections (Spanish only).
- Materials guide the teacher to leverage the student’s knowledge of literacy in each language as an asset (Spanish only).

5.7 Materials & Score	5.7 Rationale
5.7 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials include strategies that support English Learners (ELs) in their development of emergent reading skills. While some general strategies utilize the child’s home language, few strategies use the child’s knowledge of literacy in their primary language. When referenced, home language knowledge is not consistently used to build and transfer knowledge to English language and literacy skills.
5.7 Spanish IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials do not provide opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections. The materials provide guidance for the teacher to leverage the student’s knowledge of literacy in each language as an asset.

English Evidence 5.7

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide” provides some strategies to support ELs. A list of books and folktales is included to support ELs, along with tips for implementation. Additionally, the Teacher’s Guide includes a “Resources” section dedicated to English Learners summarizing strategies to help them learn. Specific strategies include pre-teaching vocabulary words that will be present in the read-aloud so that children can comprehend what is being read; listening to digital read-alouds in English to build comprehension and vocabulary; pointing out cognates; and using digital tools such as the “Sound Around Letters App” where students hear, use, and record their own voice when learning letter sounds. Some of these strategies use the students’ primary language to

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

help them build English language and literacy skills. For instance, teachers use the students' primary language as they label objects around the room and teachers start by saying vocabulary words in students' primary language before teaching the word in English. Guidance in this section will be useful; however, it does not reference different language characteristics, patterns, rules, or tendencies that could be leveraged when teaching ELs.

Some support for emergent literacy skills in ELs is provided in Unit 1. In one activity, students recognize their names in print to build language and literacy skills. Each child receives their own name strip. The teacher asks a child to say their name and asks, "What is the first letter in your name? What sound does it make? Can you find your name somewhere in the classroom?" The teacher repeats the process with the other students. The EL accommodation for this lesson is to help children identify the letters in their names and match the letters in the classroom. This activity supports appropriate strategies for emergent reading but lacks a variety of strategies for supporting ELs to develop emergent reading skills. In another activity, students learn concepts of print. In the "Recognizing Parts of a Book" lesson, students listen to the story *Mat Man Shapes*. Prior to listening to the story, students learn about the parts of a book: *title*, *spine*, *front*, and *back*. The support for ELs is to teach *front* and *back* by showing the front and back of the book and different items in the classroom. Finally, in an "Oral Language" lesson called "Q&A with Nouns: Friends/People," students learn two nouns. The support for ELs has children repeat each word and sentence. The activities in the unit provide a variety of strategies to support ELs, but they do not utilize students' home language as a tool for knowledge transfer into English.

In Unit 2, children predict what will happen in a story that the teacher reads aloud. The selected text is *Waiting Is Not Easy!* by Mo Willems because it uses the letter *E*, which is also the week's focus letter. As general support or support for ELs, the materials suggest a picture walk-through of the book before asking for predictions. This strategy helps children who do not understand the concept gain a better idea of how to make a prediction, and it provides background knowledge for students. While helpful for ELs, the strategy is not specific to this group of learners. During another "Language and Literacy" lesson in Unit 2, the materials suggest previewing vocabulary for "feeling words" with ELs before using story cards to tell the story of "Little Miss Muffet." The suggested support for students and ELs does provide a strategy to help students develop emergent reading skills, but that is not consistently the case throughout the materials. Since there is only one specific EL strategy listed per lesson, sometimes the support is limited in its potential to help build emergent reading skills. Rarely do these strategies build upon students' home language to support emergent literacy and language knowledge in English.

In Unit 3, students match uppercase to lowercase letters. The teacher reviews *J* and introduces *j*. The teacher gives out "A-B-C Touch and Flip Cards"; half of the students get a *J*, and the other half get a *j*. Students find a partner to match the uppercase to the lowercase letter. The lesson's EL accommodation is to use fewer A-B-C Touch and Flip cards and prompt the students to use both sides of the cards.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Strategies used during Language and Literacy lessons in Unit 6 include using familiar stories to teach a concept, prompting children with the sound of a letter before asking them to identify it, using other books to demonstrate *real versus make-believe* after a read-aloud, and giving children more background knowledge about jobs by reading them more books about different career paths. All of these supports help build language and emergent literacy skills in English, but they do not include the use of students' knowledge of literacy in their primary language. These strategies are also not specific to ELs and are labeled both as "Support" and "EL Support" for the teacher to use as needed.

Spanish Evidence 5.7

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide some teacher guidance in the "Apoyo a estudiantes aprendices de inglés como segunda lengua (ELL)" section to support ELs in their development of emergent reading skills. There is no evidence that the materials provide opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections. The lessons do not have information about connections between each language, nor do they include lessons explicitly teaching the similarities between both languages.

Since the curriculum does not provide opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections, there are no possibilities for students to bridge their prior knowledge in their first language to English skills. In a lesson from Unidad 2, the objective is for students to identify words that rhyme. Once a student understands the concept of rhyming, they can leverage this skill in the second language. Unfortunately, the curriculum does not support these types of connections between languages. Furthermore, according to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (2015), "ESL children draw upon their phonological awareness skills in their first language when developing phonological awareness in a second language." The curriculum only attempts to support this practice in one lesson from Unidad 4, which focuses on the letter *P*. In the "Enriquecimiento" section, the teacher makes the following cross-linguistic connection: "*P* es para menta (peppermint, en inglés)." However, this is not an accurate connection, given that *peppermint* and *menta* do not start with the same letter or sound.

The materials include information about transadaptation in the "Research Review." Although some of the books of the classroom library are bilingual, such as *The Gingerbread Man, Bilingual Edition* by Catherine McCafferty, there is no reference to cross-linguistic connections in the lessons. The same is true with the "A-B-C Touch and Flip cards" and "Line It Up Story" cards. The letter sounds or stories addressed in the lessons are either in English or Spanish, with no opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

There is some evidence that the materials guide teachers to leverage the student's knowledge of literacy in English or Spanish as an asset. "Get Set for School®: A Complete Pre-K Program for Kindergarten Readiness Success" includes information about "Get Set for School Spanish" as an "opportunity for students to think, speak, and learn in their home language." The materials provide guidance for the teacher to leverage students' home language in the Apoyo a estudiantes aprendices de inglés como segunda lengua (ELL). The materials state, "Recita el alfabeto y enseña los nombres de las letras en inglés y el idioma del hogar cuando sea posible." This practice is not addressed in the actual lessons. The materials guide the teacher to create their own "tarjetas de palabras para representar los otros idiomas presentes en su clase e incluya imágenes o dibujos para representar el significado de la palabra." The materials are limited in the guidance provided to leverage students' literacy in each language as an asset. The "Recursos Adicionales" section of the Apoyo a estudiantes aprendices de inglés como segunda lengua (ELL) lists different websites, such as Colorin Colorado and WIDA, both of which are well known for their materials and support of second language learners.

Also in Apoyo a estudiantes aprendices de inglés como segunda lengua (ELL), teacher guidance is provided in the section labeled "Preparación para lecciones usando el idioma del hogar." The teacher is directed: "Investiga e incorpora palabras de vocabulario específico en los diferentes idiomas representados en tu clase." The materials state that all the materials the teacher needs to present the vocabulary in the classroom languages can be found in the curriculum: "Todos los recursos de herramientas disponibles en inglés están disponibles en español, tales como aplicaciones y recursos de enseñanza digital en español, lectura en voz alta digital de *Mat Man* en español y libros de actividades multisensoriales en español." Not all materials listed in this section are in Spanish.

The materials include teacher guidance for using cognates to support cross-linguistic connections. In the section "Enseñanza de cognados: uniendo el inglés y el español," the materials highlight the fact that 40% of words in English are Spanish cognates. The section guides the teacher to use cognates as a starting point for learning the English language for students in the class. Materials give cognate examples such as *family/familia*, *activities/actividades*, *artist/artista*. However, the materials do not include teacher guidance or instruction in the lessons for this cross-linguistic strategy.

Get Set for School: A Complete Pre-K Program for Kindergarten Readiness Success states that "Spanish language read-alouds offer transadaptation through language-rich books, helping students build knowledge in their home language." While there are a few bilingual titles, such as *Bilingual Tales: Los tres cerditos/The Three Little Pigs*, there is no indication of strategies, activities, or lessons that support the implementation of these books. The book itself does an excellent job as a transadaptation, but this is not relevant if it is not utilized as an asset during reading instruction. A science lesson from Unidad 5 references this title as a way to explore natural resources by discussing which ones the three little pigs used to build each of their homes.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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 modeled writing (Spanish only).
- 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.

6.1 Materials & Score	6.1 Rationale
6.1 English IM Does Not Meet 0/4	The materials do not include a variety of experiences through which students can engage with writing as expected in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines’ writing domain. The materials include activities focused on specific letter formation but lack opportunities for children to imitate adult writing. The materials include guidance to teach writing in small and large groups but do not include materials for independent writing or for children to participate in group or shared writing experiences. Some activities include drawing to transfer to writing, but these are not included in all units. There are no activities to support children in writing in response to reading or making explicit connections between reading and writing.
6.1 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 6.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, students learn how to build letters using wooden pieces. The teacher shares the wooden pieces with the whole group. Students explore the pieces by looking at similarities and differences in size and shape. The next day, the students dance and sing the “Wood Piece Pokey,” which helps the students name each piece (“Little Line, Big Line, Little Curve, Big Curve”). After the song, the teacher guides a conversation with the students about the names

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

of each wooden piece while students hold the pieces. The following week, for four days, the students build “Mat Man” with wooden pieces for the head, arms, legs, and feet. On the fifth day, the teacher models how to draw a Mat Man one step at a time while the students repeat after every step. The instructional materials provide direct writing instruction on letter formation and drawing, but there are no opportunities for children to imitate adult writing in authentic ways. The activities also do not provide or lead to independent writing opportunities or provide shared writing opportunities. Although activities introduce letters with the wooden pieces and Mat Man, these activities do not transfer to writing opportunities. The materials also do not guide teachers to conference with children to support the writing process. In addition, in Unit 1, there are no opportunities to write in response to reading or make explicit the connection between reading and writing.

During a week in Unit 4, the writing lessons focus on teaching the formation of the letter *P*. The materials follow a similar format to other units: The week begins with the teacher using wood pieces to build *P*. The teacher says, “Watch as I build *P*. Big Line down, Jump to the smiley face, Little Curve to the middle. We made *P*.” Then, children imitate the model and build *P* on their own mat. The writing lessons that follow include using the “Roll-A-Dough” letters to build *P*; using the “Stamp and See Screen” to stamp or write *P*; using the “Wet-Dry-Try Slate” to practice forming the letter *P* with a variety of materials; and finally learning *P* through tracing, coloring, and drawing in “My First School Book *P*.” Some math lessons include instruction on writing with regard to forming numbers; for example, using “I Know My Numbers Booklet 8,” children trace the number 8 and practice writing the numeral. These are all direct and explicit lessons on writing and letter formation, but they do not provide authentic opportunities to teach writing. The lessons in Unit 4 include teacher modeling and explicit instruction, with children then imitating and practicing on their own, but the lessons do not support independent writing activities. The materials do not provide specific opportunities for group writing on shared experiences throughout the unit. Unit 4 does contain one example of drawing to transfer to writing during a science lesson on plant life cycles. After reading *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle or another book about the plant life cycle, children create art that shows the plant’s life cycle. The materials review the five steps in the life cycle for the teacher to use to prompt children when they make their art. This activity is one opportunity for drawing in detail, which transfers to writing, but the activity does not provide other opportunities for children to write in response to reading.

Unit 6 focuses on developing correct habits for writing lowercase *r*. Children learn how to trace and copy lowercase *r* using multisensory magnetic blackboard sets. Students use the first lowercase book to finger-trace and name the image. Then they trace and copy *r* with their pencil and say, “Dive down, swim up, and over.” Although there are specific directions on letter formation in the activity, there are no extensions or guidance to support children in imitating adult writing. The lesson on the letter *r* is implemented in small and large group settings. The guidance supports teacher instruction during these activities, but there are no opportunities for independent writing. Materials do not include opportunities for group writing on shared

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

experiences or opportunities for illustrations/drawing with details, which would transfer to writing. Unit 6 also lacks opportunities to write in response to reading; it does not explicitly link reading and writing.

Spanish Evidence 6.1

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

6.2 Materials & Score	6.2 Rationale
6.2 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials mostly instruct students along the developmental stages of writing. The materials provide information on letter formation and address specific skills for each age, but they lack strong guidance for teachers to nudge students along the writing continuum. Although a variety of activities focus on writing, there is little guidance for teachers on how to include appropriate student contributions to writing and the writing process, as specified by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.
6.2 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 6.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide” provides the teacher guidance on some writing skills but does not address developmental stages. For example, there is information on how to write capital letters based on specific ages. The process starts with recognition; top-to-bottom, left-to-right directionality; top start for letters; correct letter formation; and letter orientation. There is a visual showing how students who are up to three years old focus on horizontal and vertical lines; students up to four years old focus on circles and plus signs; students up to six years old focus on squares and triangles for writing. The materials focus on handwriting strategies and coloring rather than writing through a sequence of developmental writing stages. The materials recognize that children develop writing skills at different rates when writing letters, but they do not guide teachers to ensure that children recognize that writing has a purpose and that print is meaningful. In “My First School Book,” students learn to write capital letters in a developmentally appropriate order: vertical and horizontal letters, “Magic C,” “Big and Little

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Curves,” and then “Diagonals.” In “My First Lowercase Book,” the first set of lowercase letters have the same formation as their capital counterparts, and then they “continue to learn lowercase letters based on similar formations and frequency of use.”

During a week in Unit 2, children learn about the letter *F* through multiple activities. Children begin the week building the letter *F* with wood pieces on the mat, using words for each step: “Big Line down. Jump to the smiley face. Little line across the top. Little Line across the middle.” The teacher models before children build on their own, following the “My Turn, Your Turn” instructional model. The following day, they move to stamping the letter *F* on the “Stamp and See Screen.” When using the Stamp and See Screen, children can stamp the lines of the *F* with magnetic pieces or write with the magnetic chalk stylus. In a follow-up lesson, the teacher models writing *F* with chalk on a slate chalkboard. Everyone uses a little sponge cube to trace the letter, a piece of paper towel to dry the letter, and then a chalk bit to write the letter. Finally, children get out their copy of “My First School Book F.” Children finger trace *F* and use a crayon to trace the letter, repeating the instructions they learned earlier in the week. Additionally, children review writing their names in small groups. First, they finger trace the letters of their name using the tactile side of letter cards. Then, using “Capital Practice Strips,” the teacher models writing each letter, and students imitate it on their own. This process helps children learn how to form capital letters with repetition; there are multiple opportunities to see the writing modeled for them; students write in different modalities. There are limited opportunities for authentic writing through the week of building letters, writing on different materials, and practicing tracing and writing. All writing is focused on letter formation. Guidance for struggling writers mainly focuses on grip, with few specific suggestions for teachers to nudge children along the writing continuum successfully. “Readiness and Writing” lessons focus primarily on letter formation, not on the writing process or taking an idea and using it to inspire writing. There are some opportunities for writing practice in “Language and Literacy” lessons, as well as integrated cross-curricularly into other areas and subjects. Additionally, some “Line It Up Story Cards” ask students to complete writing tasks. In the “Growing Pumpkins” card, students generate a fourth story card to share their ideas. While students are primarily drawing, the teacher writes as children dictate, showing them that their spoken word can turn into print. Teachers work with children one-on-one to add text to their illustrations. Similar activities can be found in the story cards for “Isabel’s Birthday,” “Little Miss Muffet,” and “Ready for Robin.” While students create a butterfly journal in the “How a Butterfly Grows” card, there is less connection to the writing progress in this card than the other four cards. The directions state: “Invite different children to draw the habitat each day. Label their pictures with the life cycle stages or body parts. Welcome questions. Track class questions and answers in the journal.” This activity is actually framed as an “Explore Science” activity. While contributing to writing instruction, there are only five Line It Up Story Cards in total. They are integrated a few times into the scope and sequence and do not ensure teachers include appropriate student contributions to writing and the writing process.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

By Unit 6, children have learned their uppercase letters. The objectives for Readiness and Writing lessons change to “develop correct habits for writing lowercase letters,” and there is a different focus letter each day of the week. Each lesson follows the exact same format throughout all units, no matter the letter of focus. The teacher begins with a “Multisensory” introduction, using the magnetic lowercase and blackboard set to review the size of *J* versus *j*. Using the “Wet-Dry-Try,” the teacher demonstrates *j*. Each child in the group gets an opportunity to try with the blackboard. Then, using “My First Lowercase Book,” children finger trace *Jj* and name the pictures on the page. Children trace and copy *j* with a pencil, saying the directions “Down, Turn, Dot.” The teacher reads the sentence on the page aloud, “J is for jeans.” Children trace *Jj* with a pencil and then color the picture and add detail. There are two different opportunities for teacher modeling of writing, but these opportunities do not explain how to differentiate based on students’ developmental stages of writing. The “Check For Understanding” guides teachers to observe as the children trace and copy letters and to make sure they start letters correctly. Beyond this general guidance, teachers do not consistently receive letter-specific or activity-specific guidance to identify malformed or mis-started letters or explanations for how to fix these mistakes. The lessons in Unit 6 are primarily focused on tracing and writing lowercase letters correctly. There is limited authentic writing, opportunities for dictation, or the creation of authentic writing experiences.

Spanish Evidence 6.2

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

6.3 Materials & Score	6.3 Rationale
6.3 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials support fine motor development alongside and through writing. The materials provide units where fine motor skills are a part of the writing process. The materials include a variety of opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills through different tools and guidance across all units.
6.3 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 6.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the Unit 1 “Trace the Strokes” lesson, students trace vertical and horizontal strokes to support fine motor development. Students learn to hold a tool with a proper grip to write and a helping hand to stabilize the paper. In the lesson, students finger trace the post going down and the rails going across on the picture. Finally, students use the flip crayon to trace/draw and color the picture. The “Teacher’s Guide” introduction provides information on teaching grip through this activity. It suggests there are two types of grips: standard and alternate. This lesson uses the little crayon, which encourages fine motor development: “When students flip the crayon, they use in-hand manipulation skills, which lead to improved coordination.” The activity provides support for differentiation and uses different tools to support fine motor development.

In Unit 3, students learn to write the letter C using a “Wet-Dry-Try” slate. In the lesson, students develop a correct pinch grasp, hold a tool with proper grip to write, and use the helping hand to stabilize the object. When students receive the slate, a letter C is there as a model for students to trace. The teacher then demonstrates letter C formation. As the teacher is demonstrating, the teacher is also saying the words for each step (e.g., “big curve”). For the remaining portion

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

of the lesson, the teacher models and students follow: Wet (child uses a little sponge cube to trace the letter); Dry (child uses a little piece of paper towel to dry the letter); Try (child uses a little chalk bit to write the letter). During the lesson, students focus on the fine motor skills of pinch and grasp and gripping as they use the sponge, paper towel, and chalk. Also, in the lesson, the teacher models for students how to form a letter *C* using the little sponge, the little piece of paper towel, and the little chalk. The activity provides students with multiple tools and surfaces to practice writing and provides support for the teacher to guide and differentiate writing instruction.

In Unit 6, children learn to write on double lines and to write the lowercase letters *c*, *o*, *s*, *v*, and *w* using different tools. When teaching children how to develop correct habits for writing on double lines, the teacher uses the magnetic lowercase and blackboard set to introduce the placement of lowercase letters. The teacher then uses “My First Lowercase Book” to show children that some letters are small; children finger trace the little lines. Children trace the small lines with a pencil, then the tall lines, then the descending lines. There are hand motions for each type of line. The following days are focused on specific lowercase letters. When teaching a lowercase letter, the teacher uses Wet-Dry-Try with students before they get out their My First Lowercase Book to finger trace, then trace the letters and the sentence on each page. In the unit, there is guidance within “Readiness and Writing” lessons for support/English Learners or those with specific needs. These include practicing capital *Cc* on the blackboard for students before copying and tracing only lowercase *c*; finger tracing the magnetic letter before copying and tracing *o*; using chairs to create curves and having children walk the curves to practice changing directions, like when writing the letter *s*; and reviewing the capital *W* and *V* on the Wet-Dry-Try slate. While there is not a variety of differentiation, these suggestions help children with letter formation specifically.

Spanish Evidence 6.3

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

7.1 Materials & Score	7.1 Rationale
7.1 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials follow a logical, mathematical continuum of concrete, pictorial, then abstract representations. The materials provide units that include concrete manipulatives to support progression from concrete, to pictorial, to abstract mathematical competencies. Throughout the units, the 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. The materials support the logical mathematical continuum by utilizing concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations.
7.1 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 7.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials across all units focus on five mathematical competencies: “Numbers and Operations,” “Geometry,” “Patterns and Algebra,” “Measurement and Time,” and “Data Representation and Probability.” These competencies are spread out through the “Scope and Sequence” of the materials, with the first few weeks focused on exploring math through the various manipulatives included with the materials. The following weeks include concrete lessons on math concepts. Children may learn multiple concepts in one week, and concepts are taught multiple times. Almost every math activity includes using some type of manipulative, starting with concrete, hands-on activities that progress to pictorial representation at a later stage

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

through materials such as number cards. The materials include multiple concrete manipulatives to use while teaching mathematical concepts and to enhance lessons across the materials. Math manipulatives included with the materials are “1-2-3 Touch and Flip Cards” that help with number naming, one-to-one correspondence, and number formation; “Mix and Make Shapes” that teach geometry; “4 Squares, More Squares” that help teach geometry, spatial awareness, counting, matching, pattern making, and graphing; and “Tag Bags” that help teach counting, sorting, and measuring. These materials are utilized across units to reinforce mathematical concepts through a variety of lessons and support conceptual understanding of mathematical competencies aligned to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

In a Unit 1 lesson, “Learn 1 and Develop Correct Habits for Writing 1,” students learn to recognize and write the number 1 across activities that progress from concrete to pictorial to abstract, using concrete manipulatives. Students begin with concrete manipulatives, counting 1 using their bodies. Students hold up one finger and count down the center (e.g., “one head, one forehead, one nose, one mouth”). Next, students count one object using different manipulatives. As students are counting one object, they also engage in one-to-one correspondence: “One crayon in one hand; one block in one cup; one cap on one bottle.” Students then trace and write the number 1. Students begin by finger tracing the number 1, followed by writing the number using a crayon. Finally, students color and draw the number 1. The given coloring sheet shows how to write the number 1, a picture of one caterpillar, a picture of the representation of 1 (one finger), and more tracings of number 1. This lesson encompasses each mathematical competency (concrete, pictorial, and abstract). The activities in Unit 1 provide support to build conceptual understanding in counting. During this unit, students also learn additional math concepts aligned with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. In one activity, students learn about geometry by identifying, describing, and making squares through a variety of activities. The students begin by singing the “Shape Song,” while the teacher shows and describes a big square. Students then receive squares to explore through touch. Later, students receive a whole square manipulative to identify and describe. The next day, students use the “My First School Book” to trace and draw squares using straight lines.

In Unit 4, a lesson sequence focuses on growing patterns that include concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations. During the “Numbers and Math” lesson on Monday, the teacher uses the 4 Squares, More Squares manipulatives to grow a pattern. Children have a turn growing the pattern with teacher support. The following day’s math lesson moves from manipulative learning to real-world exploration. The teacher says, “Now, let’s look for patterns on the butterflies. Do you see any stripes? What colors do you see?” Children describe the butterfly patterns and then create a tissue paper butterfly from the patterns they saw. This lesson sequence goes from concrete pattern building with manipulatives to pictorial representation when children identify and create butterfly wing patterns. During other weeks and units, materials use other manipulatives to teach patterns.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

In Unit 5, children explore, recognize, and add numbers. Students use six red and four green Tag Bags to add numbers, while the teacher guides and asks students to identify the quantity of each color. Students continue to practice “counting on” from 1 to 20, using blocks, Tag Bags, and square pieces throughout the lesson. Later, they use Touch and Flip cards that contain a picture of tiles that correspond to a number. Students need to use the number and make the number using tiles. During small groups, the students count bottle caps, trace the number on a “Tactile Card” with their finger, and write the number on the “Wet-Dry-Try” chalkboard slate. The materials provide lessons and practice for the students that progress from concrete, using manipulatives, to pictorial, to abstract representation, focused on counting. The materials provide multiple opportunities and activities that build number sense in recognizing and adding numbers 1 to 20.

Spanish Evidence 7.1

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

7.2 Materials & Score	7.2 Rationale
7.2 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials provide instruction that builds on students’ informal knowledge about mathematics. Teachers integrate assessments and progress monitoring tools to inquire about students’ development status and mathematical knowledge. Materials integrate math concepts across curricula, while teachers use centers and other areas of the classroom as vehicles for math exploration.
7.2 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 7.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide” provides an observation checklist to note development as students play and participate in math activities. The observation checklist evaluates skills such as building with blocks, completing shape puzzles, using positional words, sorting objects, comparisons, and counting aligned to the specific developmental skills for children between the ages of two and five. The lessons build upon a child’s informal understandings of mathematical concepts through shape, exploring measurement, and addition/subtraction. The lessons become more complex as they move through units. Materials provide cross-curricular opportunities for math to be integrated throughout the day. For example, during “Circle Time,” students discuss the calendar: days of the week, the month of the year, and date. They count from 1 to the current day, every day. The Teacher’s Guide also provides suggestions for classroom setup to support math exploration in the classroom. One example is to include a “Math and Number” shelf that holds the “I Know My Numbers” booklet, “4 Squares, More Squares,” “Tag Bags,” and “Mix and Make

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Shapes.” These resources allow students to explore math concepts and skills using a variety of materials.

In Unit 2, “My Body,” children duplicate sound and movement patterns. The materials guide the teacher to introduce the lesson with the “Pattern Dance” and provide teaching scripts to support the activity. The teacher says, “Let’s find the pattern. Tap, tap, tap, clap, clap.” The teacher makes the sound and motion, and the children follow. The materials guide the teacher to observe as children tap and move to see if they can duplicate the sound and movement. This action is an example of an informal assessment, noted as a “Check For Understanding” throughout the materials. A Check for Understanding is listed for each “Numbers and Math” lesson daily. This check ensures that, throughout lessons, the teacher is inquiring about students’ developmental status and the knowledge they are acquiring. Although this specific activity is limited to math and does not have any cross-curricular ties to other academic areas, some “Science” lessons include math concepts during this unit. For example, students look for patterns, similarities, and differences when sorting classroom objects into *hard* and *soft*. In the same activity, teachers are using the classroom environment as a vehicle for math exploration.

Unit 3 focuses on “Non-Standard Units of Measurements.” Students use hands-on materials to measure a table using Tag Bags. Students begin at the edge of the table and add tag bags to make a row on the table. This activity promotes the use of materials in the environment to explore math concepts and skills. In another lesson, “Play the Ice Cream Relay Game,” students experiment with the size, weight, and speed of balls. They use balls of different sizes and weights and guess which ball will be the fastest. After experimenting to see which rolls faster or slower, students run a relay while holding different weighted balls. The lesson integrates the concept of prediction by guiding students to guess the outcome based on the weight of the balls. Teachers can use the observational check for this week to inquire about students’ developmental status in regards to this lesson.

In Unit 5, the lessons include building and describing triangles and rhombuses. The class sings and moves to the “Shape Song.” The teacher shows a triangle, explaining that it has three sides and three corners. The teacher asks the students, “Where have you seen this shape?” Three children lie down and make a triangle. The teacher models how to build different types of triangles by using wood pieces. Students trace triangles in a picture of real objects and then draw triangles using “My First School Book.” The next day, the teacher shows how to build a rhombus using wooden pieces, explaining that it has four sides and four corners. The students make their rhombus also using wooden pieces. The teacher asks the students, “Can you make a skinny rhombus? A wide rhombus?” My First School Book provides students with pictures of real objects, like kites and crossing signs, that include triangles and rhombuses for tracing. After tracing, students practice making their rhombus. This is an example where students are building connections to real-world concepts, and teachers emphasize how math is all around. In another activity in Unit 5, students use wooden pieces to make letters during “Readiness and Writing.”

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The materials allow for the resources to be used across content areas, and often lessons authentically integrate mathematics throughout the day.

Spanish Evidence 7.2

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

7.3 Materials & Score	7.3 Rationale
7.3 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	Some activities allow children to ask thoughtful questions and recognize problems in the environment, but materials lack consistency across the units. The materials include some activities to support mathematical reasoning with familiar materials, but these do not always connect to familiar materials in the classroom or outside world.
7.3 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 7.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, teachers guide students to problem solve using familiar classroom materials. Students ask and answer thoughtful questions during the “Classify Same or Different” lesson as they describe things that are the same and things that are different. Students discuss the shape, color, and size of the objects shown using colored squares. Later in the unit, students repeat the activity using coins. In another activity in Unit 1, students develop a way to solve the problem of how many scarves are in the hat. The teacher waves a wand and pulls out scarves slowly, while students count together “1, 2, 3.” The teacher asks the students, “What was the number we said?” The teacher places the scarves in a line and says, “Let’s check. How many did we say? Let’s count again: 1, 2, 3.” In this lesson, the teacher asks all the questions, and students do not develop their capacity to ask thoughtful questions. While there is guidance meant to help students find a solution to the question, teacher guidance does not prompt students to ask questions or provide feedback. Even though there is an unstructured time for students to ask questions, this is not tied to the skill of problem solving, recognizing problems, or using mathematical reasoning.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

In Unit 3, students engage in activities to support mathematical reasoning using familiar materials from the outside world. In one activity, the teacher guides students to recognize a problem focused on sequencing steps in the correct order. The teacher tells the students, “I need to put on my shoes and socks. Help me figure out what to do first.” The teacher models the problem and asks the students questions while talking through steps. The teacher says, “First, I tie my shoes. Next, I’ll put my shoes on.” The teacher then allows time for the students to respond and correct the steps. The teacher then models the correct sequence by saying, “I have to put my shoes on before I tie them? Ok.” The teacher continues by starting to put on the socks. The children correct the teacher again. The teacher asks the students, “What should I do first? Next? Last?” Similar to lessons in Unit 1, the teacher is the primary person asking questions and leading the problem solving. While “Checks for Understanding” provide a clear time for teachers to discuss and debrief with students, these opportunities do not provide the scaffold and support necessary for students to develop their own problem solving skills. The materials encourage the teacher to ask questions that build informal mathematical reasoning, but the lesson does not provide guidance or opportunities for students to ask thoughtful questions.

In Unit 5, students explore the concept of sharing, which is used in everyday life inside and out of the classroom, to solve the problem of how to divide a gingerbread man equally. The teacher reads *The Gingerbread Man* by Catherine McCafferty and gives each child a gingerbread man cookie or cutout. The teacher tells the students to pretend they have caught the gingerbread man and want to share him. The teacher asks the students, “How can we cut the gingerbread man so you can share it equally?” The teacher uses a knife or scissors to model to the students how to cut the gingerbread man symmetrically from head to toe. The materials encourage the teacher to ask questions that build curiosity about informal mathematics. Materials do not provide guidance for the teacher to have the students ask questions or for the teacher to provide feedback. Sometimes typical responses may suggest students respond with a question; however, this does not ensure students build their question asking capacity. Even so, this lesson utilizes an embedded, playful way to build mathematics interest in students.

In Unit 6, children participate in making and analyzing a pictograph. In this lesson, skills include using manipulatives to find a solution and representing data using pictures in a simple graph. After children place a sticker under *dog*, *cat*, or *fish* to determine their favorite type of pet, the teacher asks questions that force students to compare the length of the rows and determine the class favorite. Scripted questions for the teacher include “Which row is longest? Which row has the most? Which row has the least?” The teacher explains, “The rows help us see the favorite pet.” Together, students work to problem solve the question, “What is the favorite pet for the class?” These examples expose students to many different types of questions and allow them to problem solve through discussion. However, there are no supports meant to elicit questioning from the students themselves.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Spanish Evidence 7.3

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

7.4 Materials & Score	7.4 Rationale
7.4 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials provide frequent, spiraled, and varied opportunities for students to participate in activities that build number sense across units, but they lack support for teachers to build conceptual understanding in math. The materials include multiple activities, but they do not have consistent formats of continuity between lessons.
7.4 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 7.4

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, includes information about how the materials build children’s conceptual knowledge in math. The Teacher’s Guide includes materials to support manipulatives, music, and rhymes to teach counting, comparisons, spatial awareness, patterning, sequencing, matching, sorting, problem solving, and geometry skills. The materials also include math concepts in the “Oral Language” lessons. The materials come with several activities that help build conceptual knowledge for children, including “My First School Book” and “I Know My Numbers,” which teach children to form numbers; the *Sing, Sound, and Count With Me Music Album*, which includes songs about math; “1-2-3 Touch and Flip Cards,” which promote number formation, naming numbers, counting, and sequencing; “4 Squares, More Squares,” which promote geometry and spatial awareness skills through activities; “Tag Bags,” used for counting, sorting, measuring, ordering, and building; and “Mix and Max Shapes,” which are multisensory materials that teach geometry. The materials provide support in alignment with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

During Unit 2, the “Numbers and Math” lessons provide several opportunities to participate in number sense activities. The materials include one lesson on comparing sets to see *more* and *fewer*, one lesson on matching shapes of objects, two lessons on the number 2, and one lesson on sorting shapes by sides and corners. There is some consistency that builds off of other lessons. For example, on Day 3, children learn to write the numbers 1 and 2 on the “Wet-Dry-Try” slate during a small group lesson. The next day, during a whole group math lesson, children count the number 2 with their bodies, then with objects, and then trace and write the number in their My First School Book. Although the materials provide support to implement the activities, there is no specific guidance for teachers directly related to promoting number sense.

Unit 3 builds on concepts introduced in previous units; After students count sets of objects in Unit 1, the Unit 3 “Combine Sets” lesson teaches students to combine sets of objects. In the lesson, students use Tag Bags and 1-2-3 Touch and Flip Cards 1–7. Using these materials, students combine sets to learn *how many in all* by counting. Students also connect numerals to quantities they represent. The first student counts the number of Tag Bags aloud and receives the corresponding number when complete. The second student adds to the first student, and the teacher asks, “How many in all?” (“three and two make five in all”). Although the concepts are reinforced from previous units and across Unit 3, there is no specific guidance provided to support teachers to build conceptual understanding.

During a week in Unit 6, children explore transformations, identify and describe shapes, count object sets, and review how to name and write numerals 1 to 5. Although different concepts are addressed, there is no connecting method between the lessons to build conceptual knowledge of number sense. For example, in one lesson, children identify and describe shapes. The teacher says, “We can make one shape out of two shapes.” This activity requires an understanding of those numbers to successfully comprehend and complete the activity. Other lessons include songs to promote number sense, such as when students sing a song to line up according to the number Tag Bag each student is holding. The song teaches ordinal number names, but it also requires students to recognize the numeral they are holding. No guidance is provided for the teacher to support the conceptual understanding at this stage.

Spanish Evidence 7.4

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

7.5 Materials & Score	7.5 Rationale
7.5 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials include opportunities to hear and practice vocabulary, but most terms are only sometimes repeated throughout the year. The materials include guidance to support students’ development and use of academic math vocabulary, but they only sometimes provide guidance for teachers to scaffold and support children’s learning.
7.5 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 7.5

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

While math vocabulary is usually taught in the math lesson, sometimes vocabulary is introduced or practiced in “Oral Language” lessons. For these Oral Language lessons, instruction is organized into an “I Say, We Say, You Say” model, but it is not consistent in other lessons that teach math vocabulary. For instance, when students discuss *more* and *less*, the teacher does not define the terms for children, and instead, students learn the definitions through a hands-on activity. For example, the teacher scoops rice into a container for students to fill, and all directions and supports are verbal. No scaffold helps students understand the concepts if they struggle to understand through the provided activity. Students learn the terms *heavy* and *light* similarly in Unit 2.

Other vocabulary terms, like *one* in Unit 1, do have comprehensive instruction. During the math lesson titled “Number 1,” students hear and use the term in authentic ways. They build the number 1 and count one object. Students make the number 1 using dough and a stamp. The class names objects of which there are one, like a head, a nose, and a crayon. After a few days of making and counting to 1 using objects, the students use “My First School Book” and count the pictures in the book to make 1. The book also allows students to trace and write the

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

number 1. In this unit, the materials provide a variety of repeated opportunities for students to hear and practice the vocabulary word *one* in authentic ways. Although the vocabulary is present, the instructional materials do not guide teachers to scaffold children’s academic math vocabulary development or provide strategies for layering academic math vocabulary.

In Unit 2, materials use math vocabulary within the lesson to listen and practice vocabulary related to the concepts of *big* and *small*. In a small group lesson, the teacher guides the children to identify stuffed animal sizes using the words *too big*, *bigger*, *compare*, *small*, and *smaller*. Children gain additional practice using the terms in a later activity, where they bring in photos of family members and describe who is taller and shorter. Although the lessons do provide support for vocabulary, the materials do not guide teachers to scaffold the vocabulary development of children. In another activity, children use the vocabulary words *heavy* and *light*. The teacher introduces the lesson and says, “We are going to hold things to learn about weight.” The teacher shows children a pair of items, such as an empty milk jug and one filled with water. The children pass around the empty milk jug to hold and observe its weight. The teacher says, “This jug is light.” This action is repeated with a filled jug, and the teacher says, “This jug is heavy.” The teacher models the math vocabulary for children several times before they move into partners. In partners, one child picks up both items in a new set to determine which is heavy and which is light. The activity provides repeated opportunities to apply the new math vocabulary to real-life items. The materials provide a script for the teacher to use while introducing the vocabulary words *heavy* and *light*, but there is limited guidance for teachers to scaffold and support students’ development of academic math vocabulary.

While there are repeated opportunities to practice vocabulary, there is not a variety of lessons that engage children with that vocabulary. This Unit 6 activity teaching students the words *heavy* and *light* is identical to the activity with those vocabulary words in Unit 2. While this does give repeated opportunities to practice with math vocabulary, it does not provide new vocabulary exposure or provide the vocabulary to children in different contexts. *Heavy* and *light* are sometimes integrated into other lessons, but these activities lack references connecting instruction between lessons. Children are not reminded of other opportunities they have had to use this vocabulary.

Spanish Evidence 7.5

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

8.1 Materials & Score	8.1 Rationale
8.1 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials partially build science knowledge through inquiry-based instruction and exploration of the natural world. The materials develop children’s observation of their environment, but there are limited opportunities to develop children’s questioning of their environment. While the materials provide hands-on opportunities for students to explore physical science, life science, and earth science, students do not explore scientific topics with scientific tools.
8.1 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 8.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, students discover and explore objects in nature. The teacher reviews the letter *L* and discusses that the word *leaves* begins with *L*. The teacher explains that the students are going on a nature walk to collect leaves and other things to make the letter *L*. The teacher asks the students, “What other things do you think we may find while walking around outside?” The class takes cups to collect their findings and returns to the classroom. When the class returns, the teacher models how to write the letter *L* using a flip crayon: “Big Line down. Little Line across.” The teacher repeats using glue. The teacher takes the materials collected in the nature walk and puts them on the *L*. The materials provide a planned opportunity for children to learn through observation. The materials also guide the teacher to talk to children as they play, using an open-ended question that encourages children to think. Although the teacher asks guided questions, the materials do not develop children’s ability to use questions to learn. The

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

materials do provide an opportunity for students to communicate ideas before their explorations and discoveries, but they do not include the use of scientific tools.

In Unit 4, children learn how to determine if objects will sink or float. The teacher begins the lesson by discussing how ducks float on water. The teacher asks, “What other animals float on water?” and discusses the concepts with the children. Children take turns placing different items in water to see if they sink or float and discuss the results. During this lesson, children learn to communicate, ask questions about sinking or floating, and learn through observation. Although communication is part of this activity, other science lessons in this unit do not provide other opportunities to learn various ways to communicate. For example, when learning about plants’ life cycle, children demonstrate their understanding by creating art to show the life cycle but do not engage in discussion or questioning. There are several other science activities in this unit that include hands-on activities. Children make rain during an earth science lesson, pretending a sponge is a cloud. They add water to a sponge with a spoon until the sponge becomes too wet and begins to drip. The materials instruct the teacher to give every child a turn to make rain. Although the activities support hands-on learning, there is no use of scientific tools throughout the unit.

In the “Observe and Demonstrate Force and Motion” lesson in Unit 5, students observe, investigate, describe, and discuss objects’ position and motion. This small group lesson begins with a review of *steep* and *level*. The teacher gives an example with the classroom floor and a ball: “Is our classroom floor steep or level? Level, that’s right. Watch as I set this ball on the floor. Did the ball move? No, the ball did not move because there was no force to make it move.” Students have opportunities to observe and communicate about the activity. The teacher asks questions to guide the lesson, but these are closed questions and are not the basis for further exploration. Instruction does sometimes utilize manipulatives and non science-specific tools to support measurement and provide hands-on experiences. However, students do not receive enough opportunity to explore science-specific tools.

Spanish Evidence 8.1

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

8.2 Materials & Score	8.2 Rationale
8.2 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials somewhat build social studies knowledge by studying culture and community. The materials do not follow a logical sequence of social studies; instead, they jump between the different stages in the sequence. There are some opportunities to explore commonalities and differences, but many of these opportunities are not deep or authentic. While there are some opportunities for children to learn about the past and the present, there are limited opportunities to learn about routines or the future. Additionally, there are no opportunities for students to learn about the roles of consumers in their community.
8.2 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadaptated and translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 8.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In Unit 1, the “Social Studies” lessons begin with students comparing and contrasting qualities in friends and then moves into a lesson on maps. By Unit 2, students examine a world map and compare sizes of countries. The focus is for students to use the vocabulary words *big* and *small*. The following lessons teach children that people speak different languages. During this lesson, the teacher teaches children how to say *hello* in Spanish and Chinese. The teacher includes any other languages that children may speak in the classroom. This lesson is one of the few examples providing children an opportunity to explore commonalities and differences in others. While these lessons are aligned with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines where students use

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

geographical tools, students follow up these lessons with one where they talk about the people in their families. They number the members, discuss members, and draw members. Then, after discussing families, children learn to identify community helpers. During the activity, the teacher asks questions to have children think of helpers that play specific roles. For example, the teacher asks, “Who can help you when you are sick?” While these lessons cover self, family, community, and country, they do not progress in a logical sequence. In addition, few lessons in Unit 2 discuss routines or past, present, and future events. There are no lessons in Unit 2 that provide opportunities for children to explore the roles of consumers in their community.

Unit 3 focuses on specific jobs in the community. During the “Describe Jobs” lesson, the teacher discusses a chef’s job. The teacher begins the lesson by questioning students about who cooks food at school or in a restaurant. After the discussion, students listen to a read-aloud, *Chefs and What They Do*. Following the read-aloud, students discuss their experiences at home or a restaurant. Finally, students pretend to have a restaurant and cook, take orders, and serve customers. Although the lesson allows students to pretend to play different roles, each role’s importance is not shared in the lesson. While the lesson addresses community helpers and work, the lesson does not provide material to support students’ learning about the consumer’s role.

Finally, in Unit 6, the materials provide a Social Studies lesson for children to connect to life events by comparing themselves to their baby pictures. This lesson is a whole group lesson; children bring in photographs from home. Children show their baby pictures and model how they have changed over time. Although the unit discusses changes from past to present, there is no additional material to address support for the Social Studies continuum. Students discuss self and family, but there is no discussion of community, city, state, or country in the unit. During this same activity, children explore commonalities and differences and make a connection to life events during the discussion, but there are no other opportunities in the unit.

Spanish Evidence 8.2

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadapted and translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

8.3 Materials & Score	8.3 Rationale
8.3 English IM Partially Meets 2/4	The materials include a variety of experiences through multiple mediums, but they do not emphasize the students’ engagement in the process of creating rather than the product that is created. There is often just one type of experience for the entire day; commonly, it is singing and moving to a song. Sometimes various additional experiences are integrated; however, a variety does not occur every day.
8.3 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 8.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Full Day Pre-K Class Schedule” in the “Teacher’s Guide” shows that students have morning and afternoon “Circle, Music, and Movement Whole Group” time. Instruction primarily occurs in the following four learning areas: “Language and Literacy”; “Readiness and Writing”; “Numbers and Math”; and “Oral Language, Science, or Social Studies.” The rest of the day is dedicated to lunch, rest time, two recess/gross motor play times, snack time, and small group free centers. As structured, the materials do not consistently guarantee a variety of daily fine arts experiences through multiple mediums. Lessons sometimes include coloring and encourage creative drawing, but there is no mention of the artistic process. Instead of being process-focused, lessons usually include directions to create a product. Learning centers partially expose children to fine arts through exploration, but this does not ensure a variety of daily experiences.

In Unit 1, students learn how to greet others when they meet people. The class sings and dances to the “Hello Song.” The teacher shakes the hand of each child, saying, “Hello, this is your right hand. I’m going to do something to your right hand.” The teacher adds a stamp or

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

lotion to the student's right hand. The teacher models and asks students to raise their right hand, saying, "This is my right hand. I shake hands with my right hand." The students take turns shaking each others' right hands. The teacher checks for understanding by observing that the students use their right hand when shaking hands. The materials include opportunities for movement and dance that are integrated across the instructional materials; resources offer a selection with a variety of songs and music. Although song and dance are included, students are not exposed to a variety of fine art mediums every day.

In Unit 3, the students practice building and writing the letters *C, O, Q, G, S,* and *J* using dough. Each student receives a letter card to use on a tray and dough to form the letter. The teacher models how to make the curves and lines of the letter with the letter card underneath. Students remove the card and make their letter on a blank tray. The teacher observes the students and checks to see if they made the letter right-side-up, using their letter card's image. For support/English Learner guidance, the materials suggest helping students to use flat hands to roll the dough back and forth. For "Enrichment" guidance, the materials suggest having students trace letters in sand, shaving cream, pudding, or finger paint. The materials include opportunities for movement and dance that are integrated across the instructional materials; resources offer a selection with a variety of songs and music. Although there are multiple mediums provided to explore fine art, the materials focus on the product and do not emphasize students' engagement in the artistic process of creating.

In Unit 6, a paintbrush symbol denotes when "Creative Arts" (or "Fine Arts") activities are included in the lesson plan. When it is explicitly listed, the objectives include "use art as a form of creative expression" and "participate in imaginary and dramatic play." Although arts are included in the unit, there is no explicit fine arts objective listed every day. The most common activity that is labeled as Fine Arts or Creative Arts is during Readiness and Writing lessons: "After practicing tracing the uppercase and lowercase letter, children color the picture on the page in their 'My First Lowercase Book.'" Materials also guide teachers to encourage creative drawing on the page.

"Line It Up Story Cards" sometimes replace read-alouds during the instruction. These five cards summarize a story using three images and some minor reading. Fine arts activities often accompany them. For example, the "Miss Muffet" story card includes an activity where students picture what happens in the nursery rhyme and then use their imagination to draw what happened. Here the focus is on recalling the events of the story instead of exploring the process of fine art. In the story card "Isabel's Birthday," students conclude the activity with a music connection. Students listen to the song "Counting Candles" and sing along.

Spanish Evidence 8.3

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

8.4 Materials & Score	8.4 Rationale
8.4 English IM Meets 4/4	The materials link technology applications into the classroom experience at appropriate points throughout the year. While technology may not be utilized every week, the instruction allows students to explore and use various digital tools. Included teacher guidance ensures that this technology enhances student learning instead of distracting from it.
8.4 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report cannot be verified in full within the Spanish materials.

English Evidence 8.4

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide multiple opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience. The teacher website associated with the materials contains the “Teacher’s Guides,” student activity books, the *Mat Man* books, assessments, resources, student apps, and support. The teacher website contains access to the user guide for each of the online applications used during instruction. For example, one of the user guides explains how the program is a keyboarding curriculum that teaches digital literacy, digital citizenship, and correct typing technique and fluency. It also provides links to lesson plans for the teacher to help students become digital citizens and have correct typing technique and fluency. The “Dashboard for Digital Teaching” allows teachers to grant access to the apps to appropriately support student use. The three applications included with the materials are age-appropriate and allow children to use various digital tools. One of the apps includes an activity where children record themselves, which is an opportunity to use a different digital tool. There are also opportunities for listening, writing, and learning through using these digital applications. Additionally, the teacher website includes digital versions of the manipulatives that match what students use during in-person activities.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The “Wet-Dry-Try” app starts by modeling how to write a capital letter, number, or lowercase letter using interactive chalk on a blackboard slate background. The students trace the letter or number using an interactive “wet sponge,” then with an interactive “paper towel,” and finally with interactive “chalk.” After every stroke, the interactive tool moves to where the next stroke begins. Once all the letter or number practice is complete, the student receives a star. The letters in the app are locked; to move on to the next letter, the child must complete the previous ones. The materials provide opportunities for children to engage with technology in a similar way that they do in the classroom during “Readiness and Writing” and “Numbers and Math.” The student app supports and aligns with Readiness and Writing and Numbers and Math lessons. Although there is no specific guidance provided to the teachers on using the apps to support appropriate learning, the apps allow the teacher to control access and minimize distraction. Some lessons also include a “click away” section that links to additional technology pieces. These are self-explanatory and usually integrate videos about letters or numbers of the week.

The “Sound Around Letters” app starts by displaying a capital letter card that flips over to show the corresponding lowercase letter. Next, the app displays the letter with one to two objects that begin with the letter sound; students interact with the app by making a puzzle piece or making sounds. Then, the app models the sound of the letter. The student has two opportunities to record themselves making the sound of the letter to hear how they sound. Once all the practice for the letter is complete, the student receives a star. The materials provide opportunities for children to engage with technology in a similar way that students do in the classroom during “Language and Literacy.” The student app uses digital flip cards with sounds and a computer microphone to record student voices to learn letter sounds. The materials provide tools that are age-appropriate to hear and practice letter sounds. The student app supports and aligns with the lessons in Language and Literacy. The pacing is based on student progress; the child must complete the previous task to progress.

The “Touch and Flip Numbers” app starts by displaying a card with a number that the student touches to flip to show the number of objects that correlates to the number. For example, the number 3 card flips to show three cows. Next, a new card displays the number, and the students need to touch the squares to make three squares. The app then displays the number as a word with new objects, which also correlate to the number. The student needs to touch the objects to color them. Finally, the app models how to write a number with a crayon. The materials provide opportunities for children to engage with technology in a similar way that students do in the classroom during Numbers and Math. The materials provide age-appropriate tools to model number identification and number writing. The student app supports and aligns with Numbers and Math lessons. As with the other apps, the pacing is locked until students complete one number.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Spanish Evidence 8.4

The evidence from the English materials in this report cannot be verified in full within the Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

9.1 Materials & Score	9.1 Rationale
9.1 English IM Partially Meets 1/2	The material includes developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools and guidance for teachers to monitor progress. Materials provide guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration of diagnostic tools for formal and informal assessments. However, materials do not include tools for students to track their own progress and growth. Materials include diagnostic tools to measure three domains outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG), but not all areas outlined in the TPG include an appropriate diagnostic tool; for example, current tools do not assess “Health and Wellness.”
9.1 Spanish IM Partially Meets 1/2	The materials include a variety of developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools while also providing guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration. There are limited opportunities for students to track their own progress and growth. The diagnostic tools measure some of the content and process skills for prekindergarten, and there is no guidance for administrators to monitor progress.

English Evidence 9.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, the materials state that assessments for young children should be “observational and holistic.” There are detailed assessment instructions in the digital resources on the materials’ website. Also, on the website, there are a variety of assessments, some observational and informal and some more formal measures. The assessments include formal benchmark assessments to be used at the beginning, middle, and end of the year for

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

“Readiness and Writing,” “Language and Literacy,” and “Numbers and Math.” These assessments are all created for children in the four- to five-year-old age range. The materials also include “Classroom Observation Checklists” for the same three domains to be used weekly for progress monitoring. Finally, there is a “Check for Understanding” included in every lesson, to be used each day to see if children understood a lesson in real-time. The materials also include a two-page document on creating “Portfolios” for children. Portfolios are a holistic way to document a child’s progress over the year. A portfolio can include observations, work samples, videos, audio recordings, and photos. Portfolios are used to show a child’s growth and can be shared with parents and future teachers.

The materials include a formal assessment of Readiness and Writing. The assessment begins by showing children six images and asking them, “What is this?” Children are then asked to name the six basic colors and color two pictures to see if they can fill in and stay within the lines of the picture. The assessment then has children name and trace shapes and then copy the shapes independently. Following that, the children draw a person, and the teacher looks for a head, eyes, nose, mouth, ears or hair, body, arms, hands, legs, feet, and any extras. The teacher then shows the child 10 letters and 10 numbers and asks the student to name them. Lastly, the child tries to write their name.

The materials include a formal assessment for Language and Literacy. The first part of the assessment is naming capital letters and then naming lowercase letters. The next portion of the assessment has children describe and compare an illustration of an elephant and a bird. The children are then assessed on rhymes by repeating nursery rhymes, determining if two words rhyme or not, and then finding a matching rhyming pair. Following that, children are assessed on vocabulary by naming four illustrations and answering questions about them. The last portion has children create compound words from two word parts.

The materials include a formal assessment for Numbers and Math. This assessment has children name shapes, identify numerals 1 to 10, count and compare objects, name the position of items using positional words and ordinal numbers, describe the size of items, extend a pattern, and measure.

There is also a checklist for each of the three domains for which the materials provide a formal assessment: Readiness and Writing, Language and Literacy, and Numbers and Math. The Readiness and Writing checklist has teachers look for if children participate in different songs, fingerplays, and activities; demonstrate self-care skills; play cooperatively with others; follow directions; can say the alphabet; can count to 10; use correct names for colors and shapes; establish a hand preference; use correct writing tool grip; hold a paper with their helping hand; trace and copy shapes, letters, and numbers; draw generally recognizable pictures; write their name from left to right; and use letter-like forms or scribbles while writing. The Language and Literacy checklist has teachers look for if children listen and respond to directions or questions, engage in conversations, use words to express themselves, understand signs around the room,

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

recognize parts of a book, imitate reading books by turning pages, recognize their own name and names of others who are familiar to them, can predict what will happen next in a story, can retell a familiar story, can share the steps of a simple activity, self-select books based on their interests, and use pictures and play writing to express themselves. The Numbers and Math checklist has teachers look for if children build with different materials in the classroom, complete puzzles, use position words and time-of-day/sequence words, sort objects by attributes, share items equally with others, compare objects, count objects, create a set of objects, take away objects and count how many are left, and can write numbers using correct formation strategies. All of these checklists have spaces for the child's name and date of observation, so teachers can track progress over long periods by looking back at the observations they have made.

Checks for Understanding are included in every lesson every day. These are informal assessments to gauge if children understood the teacher's specific lesson at that time. For example, in Unit 2, after learning that people speak different languages and making a graph of the languages spoken in the classroom, the Check for Understanding guides the teacher to observe as the children repeat greetings in different languages. The materials ask the teacher to see if the children can say the greetings. In this example, the Check for Understanding does relate to the lesson's topic, but it is checking to see if children are pronouncing words correctly rather than understanding the social studies concept being taught. In Unit 4, after learning how to write the number 10 during a Numbers and Math lesson, the Check for Understanding guides the teacher to observe as children trace on the "Wet-Dry-Try" slates. The materials ask the teacher if children are writing the numbers 1 and 0 to form 10 correctly. This Check for Understanding is a good indicator if children have grasped the content of the lesson, as it directly relates to the objective. In Unit 6, children think of a topic and write about it during a Language and Literacy lesson. Children are asked to draw what they want to be when they grow up. The Check for Understanding has teachers observe as the children draw and ask them to explain their choices and why they made them. This Check for Understanding is on using language and staying on topic, which correlates to the skill being taught in the lesson.

Although there are Checks for Understanding with each assessment, there is no support for students to track their own progress or check for understanding. For example, there is no student tracking tool or information about how students may track their own progress with formal assessments. There is no student tracking tool or information on how students may track their own progress with the classroom observation checklists. While teachers can include the student in their portfolio or connect their personal activity books to growth and progress, using these resources as a progress monitoring tool is not defined in the materials. The provided lessons and scripts do not ensure students track their own progress throughout the year.

In addition, the materials contain formal and informal diagnostic tools to measure Language and Literacy ("Emergent Literacy: Reading, Language, and Communication"); Numbers and Math ("Mathematics"); and Readiness and Writing ("Emergent Literacy: Writing, Language").

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Materials do not contain diagnostic tools to measure “Health and Wellness” and some other domains in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Health and Wellness topics are addressed at points in the curriculum and sometimes have their own Checks for Understanding. While Checks for Understanding are useful in addition to the benchmark assessments and observation checklists, they do not provide enough feedback for teachers in themselves.

Spanish Evidence 9.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include developmentally appropriate formal and informal diagnostic tools. For example, the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder” includes an evaluation section with instructions to use and access to the assessments. This section also includes a how-to guide for using the benchmark assessments and observation checklists. It provides teachers with an overview of effectively administering formative and summative assessments. This overview includes using timeframes, preparing and reviewing materials for students to complete tasks, watching a tutorial video, preparing the setting and schedule, administering the assessments, and reviewing the results. The timelines for assessments are between 10 and 15 minutes, which is developmentally appropriate for 4- to 5-year-old children.

The diagnostic tools measure some of the content and process skills outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten domains. The assessment section domains are: “Numbers and Math,” “Language and Literacy,” and “Readiness and Writing.” The materials do not include any diagnostic tools related to science, social studies, fine arts, physical development, social-emotional skills, or technology.

The formal assessment tool gives an overview of the assessments in addition to step-by-step guidance and teacher scripts for administering each measure. During the “Spanish Readiness Check,” the teacher asks questions about pictures (“¿Qué es esto?”), questions about color (“¿De qué color es esta crayola?”), and questions about letters (“¿Qué letra es esta?”). The teacher script ensures accuracy and consistency during the administration of diagnostic tools because each student is asked the same questions in the same format. Another example is located in one of the “Lenguaje y alfabetización” assessments. The teacher states, “Dime el nombre de estas letras. (Apunta a la E, A, etc.)” If the child cannot name the letters, the teacher can ask the student to simply identify specific letters. The teacher asks, “¿Cuál es la R? ¿Cuál es la A?” This action allows the teacher to at least check for letter recognition since the child could not name the letter. This information ensures consistent and accurate administration of formal assessments for each of the areas included in the materials by providing the teacher with scripts and instructions to adapt the assessment based on student responses.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The formal assessments in the curriculum are summative tests that take place three times per year (beginning, middle, and end). These benchmarks test the same areas as the observation checklists: Lenguaje y alfabetización, “Números y matemáticas,” and “Preparación para la escritura.” The assessment results help teachers know what their students’ present level of performance is to guide instruction and address grade-level skills. In the Readiness and Writing benchmark, students name pictures, color pictures, show their crayon grip, trace shapes, name letters, write their names, and more. This formal diagnostic tool provides teachers with an accurate report of what each student knows and what areas of reinforcement they might need based on the results.

One of the observational diagnostic tools consists of questions in the “Comprueba el entendimiento” section of each daily lesson. These questions provide guidance to quickly evaluate if the students understand the lesson. Based on student answers, the teacher can go back and reteach if needed. An example of this is in Unit 3 during a “Science” lesson. The objective is for students to experiment with the size, weight, and speed of balls. The teacher observes the students “mientras experimentan con las bolas.” The teacher observes to see if students understand the concepts of *fast/slow* and *heavy/light*. Using this observational assessment, the teacher can monitor student progress at the end of each lesson and plan to support the students who need extra help or who would benefit from additional clarification.

The materials provide opportunities for students to track their own progress and growth by allowing them to select work for their portfolios. For example, in the Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder, there is a “Portfolio” section with information for teachers to create opportunities for children to select work for their own portfolios. The materials state, “Consider having the child help choose work for the portfolio so that he or she feels a sense of ownership and pride in the process.” This opportunity allows students to reflect on their work quality and select the samples they are most proud of. Although it is developmentally appropriate, this is the only reference to students helping track their own progress and growth.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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 (Spanish only).

9.2 Materials & Score	9.2 Rationale
9.2 English IM Partially Meets 1/2	The materials include guidance and direction for teachers to respond to individual student’s needs, but they do not contain guidance for all domains or explanations on measures of student progress appropriate to the developmental level. Diagnostic tools are included and provide some meaningful information for teachers to use when planning instruction and differentiation. The materials do provide a variety of resources and teacher guidance on how to leverage different activities to respond to student data, but they do not provide guidance specifically for administrators to support teachers in analyzing and responding to data.
9.2 Spanish IM Partially Meets 1/2	The materials support teachers with guidance and direction to respond to individual students’ needs in some domains. Although this guidance is developmentally appropriate, it is not primarily based on measures of student progress. The diagnostic tools yield meaningful information and a variety of resources for teachers to use when planning instruction and differentiation; however, these are not connected for the teacher. There is very little guidance for administrators to support teachers in data analysis or subsequent planning.

English Evidence 9.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The online assessment guide refers the teacher to the “Teacher's Guide,” Volume 1, to differentiate instruction. The Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1, provides teacher guidance for centers used all year long for all students. “Language and Literary” has 10 pages with resources, suggestions for breaking down instruction during the week, tips for the teacher to have in mind when teaching, and teacher-led activities for the teacher to use in the center. “Readiness and Writing” has 27 pages of resources, different types of grips, tips for the teacher to have in mind when teaching, teacher-led activities for the teacher to use in the center, and student-led activities for these centers. “Numbers and Math” has nine pages with resources, teacher-led activities for the teacher to use in the centers, and student-led activities for these centers. “Oral Language” has two pages with resources, suggestions for breaking down instruction during the week, tips for the teacher to have in mind when teaching, and teacher-led activities for the teacher to use in the center. The materials include various recommendations to support teachers to adjust instruction to meet child needs, but they do not explain how to choose which activity to use based on data from the assessments across a variety of domains.

The online assessment guide provides a timeframe, resources, an explanation of how to set up for “Benchmark Assessments” and the “Observation Checklist,” and the Benchmark Assessments script. The Benchmark Assessments are easy to read. The teacher checks off the skills the student answered correctly, so the blank areas are where the student still needs support. The Observation Checklist has several students on each page; the teacher writes the date and a minus sign if it is an “early/emerging” skill, a check if it is a “growing” skill, and a check plus if the student already meets the expectation of the skill. Each page of the Observation Checklist contains up to 10 weeks of data for up to 10 children. The Observation Checklist may be more complicated to read and track students’ strengths and weaknesses due to the volume of data on each paper assessment. The materials do not include guidance to support teachers in understanding the results of assessments or creating instructional plans for each student. Specifically, there is no guidance on selecting activities that specifically respond to child data. Teachers have a wide variety to choose from, but nothing connecting assessment results to these activities. The administrator experience would be the same as the teacher experience. While these resources are available and useful for administrators, the materials do not include specific resources, tools, or guidance specifically for administrators.

Spanish Evidence 9.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include diagnostic assessments in the domains of “Language and Communication,” “Emergent Literacy: Reading,” “Emergent Literacy: Writing,” and “Mathematics,” but there is a lack of additional guidance or information on how to use the data to plan instruction and differentiation. The information gathered from the diagnostic tools in Volume 1 of the “Teacher’s Guide” could help teachers in the planning stages. The materials

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

guide the teacher to use “las listas de verificación de observaciones para monitorear el progreso de cada estudiante entre las evaluaciones de estándares.” This section provides the teacher with specific lists to gather anecdotal notes during the evaluations. The teacher color codes “las áreas identificadas como necesarias con los nombres de los estudiantes,” which helps make groups based on the color-coding system. The materials then suggest that the teacher use the data from the “listas de verificación de observaciones para identificar la instrucción identificada y proveer práctica durante el trabajo de la mañana, centros de trabajo, etc.” This data guides the teacher to adjust instruction based on the results and provide additional practice. What is missing is teacher support in effectively adjusting instruction. Referring back to those center activities is a good start, but teachers need explicit guidance to ensure they are providing the most effective interventions possible to reinforce the concepts. For example, suppose a student is not recognizing the name of many letters. In that case, the following activities need to be part of the students’ extra practice during centers: “Letter Bingo,” “I Spy” (letters), and “Memory Game,” matching capital letters with the lowercase letters where they have to say the name of the letter each time they flip a card. Such clear connections between data and the specific intervention would provide the level of support teachers need to ensure they are responding in the most efficient way possible to individual student needs.

Not all domains are included in the assessments: “Social-Emotional, Physical Development, Technology, Social Studies, Science, Fine Arts” are missing, which does not allow for the teacher to respond to individual students’ needs in these domains. Since there are no measures of student progress in these areas, the instructional materials do not support progress monitoring in all domains.

The materials include observational and anecdotal checklists, but there is limited guidance to support teachers in understanding these diagnostic tools’ results. The materials include diagnostic assessments in the domains of language and communication, emergent literacy reading, emergent literacy writing, and mathematics, but there is no evidence of additional guidance or information in understanding results.

Additional activities are found in the “Apoyo” and “Enriquecimiento” sections of the lessons. Each of these sections includes strategies that can be used to support children who demonstrate a need for more support or extensions. The strategies are specific to the lesson and the skills being taught. Although these sections provide opportunities for differentiation in response to student needs for that particular lesson, there is no further guidance based on student data from diagnostic tools.

There is no evidence that the materials provide guidance for administrators to support teachers in identifying specific areas of need. The assessment data available in the instructional materials could be used by administrators to identify specific areas of need for program improvement. However, the benchmarks do not provide an overall scoring sheet that can be used to analyze individual classes or the entire prekindergarten team as a whole. Because the scoring

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

documents focus on each child separately, it is difficult for administrators to support teachers when planning their instruction in response to data.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

9.3 Materials include frequent, embedded opportunities for monitoring progress.

- 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.

9.3 Materials & Score	9.3 Rationale
9.3 English IM Meets 2/2	The materials provide information to support routine and systematic progress monitoring opportunities that accurately measure and track student progress. The materials also include schedules for assessments at an appropriate frequency for the age and content area.
9.3 Spanish IM Partially Meets 1/2	The materials include routine and systematic progress monitoring opportunities in some domains. The frequency of progress monitoring is sometimes unclear. Progress monitoring is appropriate for the age but limited to certain content skills.

English Evidence 9.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include three ways to track student progress to support a systematic and routine approach to progress monitoring. Student progress is assessed through formal “Benchmark Assessments” at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The benchmark is administered three times to document progress across the school year. The Benchmark Assessments’ time limit is 10 to 15 minutes per assessment. The benchmarks assess students in “Language and Literacy,” “Readiness and Writing, and “Numbers and Math.”

There are two types of informal assessments: the “Observation Checklist” and the “Check for Understanding.” The Observation Checklist should be done at least once a week. It also assesses students in Language and Literacy, Readiness and Writing, and Numbers and Math. The materials also provide a daily Check for Understanding, which assesses students in each taught area: Language and Literacy, Readiness and Writing, Numbers and Math, “Oral Language Development,” and “Science and Social Studies.” For example, in Unit 1, in the Numbers and Math lesson “Learn Position Words,” students identify the position or location of an object. The teacher checks for understanding by observing if students correctly pass the “Tag Bag” with the given directions. In Unit 3, in the “Find Words in a Sentence” lesson, students learn how to break sentences into words. The teacher checks for understanding by observing if students can

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

independently identify how many words are in the sentence without pointing. In Unit 5, the teacher checks for understanding by observing students building roads with blocks during the “Learn About a Simple Machine” lesson. All assessments are aligned to standards for four-year-olds to support appropriate monitoring for the age.

Spanish Evidence 9.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include routine and systematic progress monitoring opportunities in some domains to measure and track student progress accurately. The domains included in the progress monitoring are “Numbers and Math,” “Language and Literacy,” and “Readiness and Writing.” The following domains are not included: “Physical Development, Social Studies, Science, Social-Emotional, Technology, Fine Arts.” The lack of progress monitoring opportunities in these domains makes it more difficult for teachers to track student progress in these content areas.

The materials recommend routine and systematic observations embedded in everyday activities and interactions. The “Preschool Assessments and Tests” section contains observational checklists and directions for use. For example, the Numbers and Math checklist includes directions for the student name, date, and notes for teacher observations. The teacher observes students to see if they can use time of day and sequencing words or compare two objects. This checklist provides a system for documentation in an age-appropriate way where students do not feel examined or tested. The observational checklists are strategically embedded during times when the students are working. These areas can be measured to track student progress; however, the checklists do not specify progress monitoring frequency. There is no guidance for teachers to determine how frequently to assess a student’s progress.

The materials provide opportunities to track students’ progress and growth by including information about selecting student work to build portfolios. The “Portfolios” section of the assessment materials provides information about collecting individual student work over time and how to use them to “plan future learning experiences.” “Reviewing this information will help you understand how children’s knowledge develops.” This information gives teachers a guide for tracking student progress throughout the year.

The materials include an appropriate frequency of formal assessments: three times per year, at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. The assessments are administered in 10 to 15 minutes, which is developmentally appropriate for children ages four to five. The formal assessments include recommendations for teachers to identify progress and support areas. These benchmarks reflect accurate methods for assessing young children. They are aligned with early learning standards and program goals, with specific emphasis on certain content areas. For

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

example, the “Lenguaje y alfabetización” benchmark specifically assesses “letras mayúsculas, letras minúsculas, describe y compara, rimas infantiles y hacer rimas, palabras compuestas, sílabas, palabras.”

The materials include daily informal assessments after every activity and lesson for each content area for the day. For example, directly after a “Números y matemáticas” lesson from Unidad 4, the teacher observes students to see if they can “explicar por qué hicieron esa elección usando ‘es probable’ y ‘es improbable.’” The “Check for Understanding” after each lesson allows teachers to monitor student progress frequently.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

10.1 Materials & Score	10.1 Rationale
10.1 English IM Partially Meets 1/2	The materials provide some recommended targeted instruction and activities for students who struggle to master the content; materials have limited support for students demonstrating mastery. Enrichment activities are provided, but there is no clear guidance for teachers on implementing or providing recommended targeted instruction for individual students.
10.1 Spanish IM Meets 2/2	The materials provide recommended targeted instruction and activities for students who have and have not already mastered the content. There are also enrichment activities throughout the materials for all levels of learners. Overall, there are many examples of teacher guidance, student scaffolds, supports, and extensions to maximize student learning potential.

English Evidence 10.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide” provides an introduction to the materials and lays out the developmental milestones across several domains. The materials give teachers guidance on setting up both teacher-led and student-led centers to ensure that children who need more teacher-focused instruction have access to content in that way. The materials across all units provide scaffolding prompts for children with difficulty answering questions. For example, during a read-aloud, a child may have trouble with vocabulary, and the materials instruct the teacher to prompt children to point at pictures to answer a question instead.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

In Unit 3, the teachers support students as they repeat the names of items being removed from the “Sound Around Box”; when items are removed, the teacher emphasizes the first letter of the word, and children repeat. Scaffolding instruction is also provided through modeling and checking for understanding. For example, the teacher models the letter O’s shape with wood pieces. The teacher also shows children how to roll a big curve using dough. Teachers check for understanding by observing as children listen or do activities. The materials include printable activities and online activities that target specific skills and provide guidance for implementing differentiated lessons. The materials do not include specific support for other accessibility needs. The materials do not provide guidance to identify precursor skills or provide opportunities to support growth for children needing foundational skills in a specific area. In both the Teacher’s Guide and daily lesson plans, there are no specific lessons or activities that guide teachers in supporting students who have not yet developed these skills. The lack of material to support targeted instruction for specific learning needs limits the ability to support learners who struggle to master content.

The materials partially provide recommended targeted instruction and activities for students who have mastered the content. The materials include teacher-led and child-led activities side by side in “Book 1, An Introduction to the Curriculum.” Across all units, the materials give teachers guidance on setting up free play or exploration centers for children who have mastered content or have a deeper understanding. The materials include “Checks for Understanding” for each domain each day in the lesson plans. The knowledge checks provide the teachers with guidance to determine which students have mastered the content. Some differentiated instruction extends and explores new learning in small groups or centers. In Unit 3, the teacher reviews and works with the number 7 with the students. The “Enrichment” activity is “Have children review numbers 1–7,” instead of upward scaffolded or differentiated guided instruction for teachers to deepen their students’ learning. The materials lack specific guidelines and materials to extend learning for students who have mastered content within a specific unit.

Enrichment content is evident in the “Oral Language” section, identified throughout units, including discussions about different cultures and connections. The instructional material provides one enrichment suggestion per lesson; it includes guiding resources but lacks guidance on implementation. Materials include some guidance supporting understanding learning trajectories through “Numbers and Math” but do not specifically cite research-based guidelines. Materials include some recommendations, but they do not include differentiated writing activities. The lessons do not consistently target students who have mastered the content or include recommendations for upward scaffolds or deeper extensions of the material.

The materials partially provide additional enrichment activities for all levels of learners. The materials include enrichment activities for each domain across each day in the lesson plans. The enrichment activities include prompts such as “discuss,” “guess,” and “find objects that begin with a specific letter.” For example, in Unit 1, the enrichment activities include children tracing numbers in sand or shaving cream, and the teacher asking students to name more letters after

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

they have determined the first letter in their name. Unit 4 enrichment activities include children searching for items in the classroom that begin with a specific letter, with the teacher encouraging further discussion of the Oral Language lesson and children pointing to the beginning letter of words on word cards. Many of the enrichment activities repeat throughout different units. In the Unit 5 student discussion about machines, children are introduced to the vocabulary words *shovel* and *haul*. Students then explore dirt in the schoolyard and discuss different construction machines. Enrichment activities directly connected to the theme are embedded in lessons. For instance, to support the identification of resources, musical icons indicate lessons where a song is a part of the lesson. There is also a list of compiled books to use in each section's index, with specific titles and guidance on incorporating the books into activities. These resources are found across all units to support enrichment for learners.

The materials also include several different teacher-led and child-led activities for each domain. The materials include some enrichment activities that answer one specific question or give an example for exploration. The materials do not promote learning in a variety of ways consistently or promote project-based exploration. Learning materials follow a logical sequence to allow for in-depth focus or sustained time to explore beyond a specified timeframe. Although there are numerous extension activities, the activities are not differentiated for all levels of learners.

Spanish Evidence 10.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide guidance for teachers to maximize student learning potential in the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder.” The section for setting up “centros dirigidos por los niños” helps teachers create additional opportunities to extend and explore new learning in student-directed centers. For example, the materials state: “Los centros dirigidos por los niños...se diseñaron para que los niños exploren e interactúen con los compañeros a medida que descubren y aprenden nuevos conceptos a través del juego.” The guide includes recommendations both for children who have mastered and who have not yet mastered the content.

This resource generally references how the curriculum supports students with special needs. While there is no specific guidance describing how to adapt materials for these students, the materials provide targeted support for students through the “Apoyo” section in every subject area lesson. Although not tailored for Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) or Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), this section can be useful for all levels of learners.

In Unidad 1, the teacher facilitates a lesson about position words and provides opportunities for students to practice identifying the position of objects. During the Apoyo section, the teacher encourages students to say the position words every time they pass the items. Guidance on

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

using the materials, prompting, and additional practice for students allows teachers to differentiate support for children who need extra help to master the content.

The lessons have an “Enriquecimiento” section which provides new ways to explore and learn. In a “Preparación y escritura” lesson from Unidad 2, “los niños aprendan a trazar la letra l.” In order to maximize students’ learning potential with the letter *l*, the Enriquecimiento section includes a musical activity where the teacher and students sing “La mosca, la abeja, y la hormiga” while imitating how insects fly.

The materials follow a logical sequence that allows students to make connections with themes and maximize their learning potential. In Unidad 4, the theme is “La Tierra.” The students discuss where animals live during an Enriquecimiento activity in this unit. The teacher states: “En los ríos viven muchos seres vivos. ¿Qué animales viven en el río? ¿Dónde más viven los animales?” This activity directly connects to the “Earth” theme, allowing students more opportunities to spend time exploring related concepts. The curriculum provides activities for every lesson to support targeted instruction. In a math lesson, children explore the concept of area by covering a specific shape with squares. The Apoyo section guides the teacher to “cuenta en voz alta a medida que se coloca cada cuadrado. Di: uno, dos, tres, cuatro.” This one-to-one correspondence reinforcement takes place within a small group. These additional activities ensure struggling students understand the concept, using manipulatives in a more scripted manner with teacher guidance and support.

The materials also include guidance for targeted instruction and activities for children who have mastered the content. In a “Números y matemáticas” lesson from Unidad 5, the students practice counting using manipulatives. The lesson prompts the teacher to challenge the students, stating, “Si los niños cuentan bien la misma cantidad, agregan más fichas.” This lesson is an example of upward scaffolds that deepen grade-appropriate learning.

Another activity for students who have mastered the content can be found in Unit 6.32. During a “Lenguaje oral” lesson, students discuss what types of animals live on grasslands. Next, the students roam around the classroom like a lion in the grassland. Then the teacher asks, “¿Qué más puede hacer un león?” This question is an upwards scaffold that allows students to expand their knowledge of what lions do in their natural habitat. When students act out the lion’s actions, they make connections with what they are learning through this engaging activity. In the Enriquecimiento section, students debate about what types of animals live on grasslands. This lesson provides enriching activities for all levels of learners through higher-level questioning, debate, and interactive movement.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

10.2 Materials & Score	10.2 Rationale
10.2 English IM Meets 2/2	The materials include a variety of instructional approaches and methods that appeal to a variety of learning needs. Also, materials support flexible grouping and support multiple types of practices. These instructional strategies are appropriate and provide guidance and structures to achieve effective implementation.
10.2 Spanish IM Meets 2/2	The materials include a variety of instructional methods and approaches to engage students in mastery of the content. The lessons include a variety of multimodal strategies to meet the needs of students with different learning styles. The use of flexible grouping and a gradual release method supports multiple types of practices to achieve effective implementation.

English Evidence 10.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, “Introduction,” the materials state that this program is “a research-based approach that addresses different learning styles.” These various learning styles are addressed through a multisensory approach, as detailed in the Teacher’s Guide, Volume 2, “Multisensory Lessons.” The variety of instructional approaches included in the materials incorporate music and movement, hands-on manipulatives, and listening and speaking activities. All materials emphasize multisensory learning to engage learners in different ways. The Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1, contains a section that lists 2- to 5-year-old children’s

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

developmental stages and another section that gives guidance on how to use developmentally appropriate teaching strategies.

The Multisensory Lessons in Volume 2 of the Teacher's Guide list the daily lessons for each learning domain. Before the lesson instructions, the materials provide grouping suggestions, supporting flexible groupings throughout the day. Groupings for activities are specified across the themes. For example, Unit 1 includes a whole group math lesson, "Count to Five"; Unit 2 includes a literacy lesson, "Verbs: Kick/March"; and Unit 3 includes the lesson "Find words in a sentence." Small group lessons include Unit 4: "Learn Using Wet-Dry-Try on the Slate"; Unit 5: "Divide Onset and Rime"; and Unit 6: "Rhyming Words." The Teacher's Guide also has a section on "Language and Literacy" multisensory activities, which lists materials and gives illustrations for whole groups or small groups. Reading and writing multisensory activities also include songs and suggested activities that go along with the songs.

In Unit 1, the materials include activities designed specifically for direct and indirect instruction to support content mastery. For example, students sing and dance to "It's Pre-K!" while other students toss and count "Tag Bags." Students use "A-B-C Touch and Flip Cards," which are textured on one side, to trace letters with their fingers. Students also make numerals using modeling clay. These activities support multiple types of practices and provide guidance and structures to achieve effective implementation in a developmentally appropriate way. Also, in Unit 1, students sing the "Hello Song," which teaches how to say hello and shake hands with your right hand. The teacher models how to shake hands by shaking each child's right hand. Then, the teacher "models and asks children to raise their right hand and say, 'This is my right hand. I shake with my right hand.'" Afterward, children take turns greeting each other and shaking hands to practice the skill. This activity supports flexible grouping and can be implemented with both large and small groups.

In Unit 2, the materials include activities designed for daily large group instruction that support developmentally appropriate strategies for a specific age group. For example, large group activities include read-alouds, music, and movement. There are large group activities that are also designed for small group instruction. Direct small group instruction opportunities are included with activities such as "Show Me," in which the teacher demonstrates and children imitate a specific skill. Another example is the activity "Name and Say," where the teacher shows an object and the children identify it. The materials for direct instruction include hands-on movement (e.g., finger-play, modeling clay, singing songs) and applications beyond worksheets. Child-led activities are also provided and include activities such as "It's in the Book," where children explore books to find letters, and "Play and Create," where children create independently. These activities provide multiple practice types and include guidance and structures to support teachers in effective implementation.

In Unit 4, a vocabulary lesson includes movement and music to engage the children. For example, when discussing airplanes and clouds, the teacher introduces a new song called

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

“Puffy, Fluffy.” Then the teacher introduces new vocabulary. Students stretch out their arms and pretend to be airplanes. This lesson includes various methods of instruction (song, movement) to teach a concept. Throughout the units, materials utilize a variety of teaching resources to meet children's needs, including magnetic letters, modeling clay, wooden letters, little readers, books, and apps for technology use. The materials guide teachers in selecting appropriate teaching strategies with information on the development order of skills. The materials begin with age-appropriate skills for each domain at age two and go up to age five. This information supports teachers in understanding how and when to use developmentally appropriate teaching strategies. For example, teachers are given guidance on using a “Sound Around Box” in different ways. Teachers “place a familiar object in the box” and “have one child speak in sentences to describe the object without showing it to the other children”; children guess what the object is. The Teacher's Guide supports the units, providing guidance on effective grouping.

In Unit 6, children explore and discuss animal habitats and then create animal art using watercolors. Later in the unit, children engage in animal walks to support mastery of content through multiple types of practice. Each unit also provides “At a Glance” suggestions, structure, and guidance for effective implementation. In some activities, the teacher models think-aloud questions scripted in the lesson. The “Sort Information” activity guides the teacher to ask students to get into groups and discuss a question. For example: “Have children put dinosaurs in groups by what they eat. How do we know which dinosaurs eat meat and which ones eat plants?” The instructional materials also contain several specific manipulatives and materials for activities that encourage various instructional approaches and support developmentally appropriate instruction.

Spanish Evidence 10.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials support flexible grouping for delivering instruction. The grouping types are clear as the schedule indicates when whole group, small group, teacher-led activities, and free play take place. In addition, most activities start out as whole group and then students move to small groups where they can practice and further explore. In the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder,” the materials state that “las actividades multisensoriales atraviesan todo el currículo...las siguientes páginas incluyen información adicional sobre cada actividad y sugerencias para centros dirigidos por los maestros y los niños.” The “Teacher’s Guide” includes information about the centers for each of the subjects and lessons throughout the curriculum. This provides information for teachers that support the use of flexible groupings and lesson settings.

The Teacher's Guide also includes a variety of instructional approaches for teachers to engage students. For example, the “Tarjetas de palabras” section explains how to use the word cards as

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

an instructional strategy. The materials state: “Las tarjetas de palabras tienen letras que son fácilmente visibles desde la distancia y pueden ser usadas para reforzar el seguimiento visual.” Not only can the students easily see the vocabulary word, it is also supported by a picture. This section provides information to use developmentally appropriate teaching strategies and scaffolds to support visual learning styles.

The materials incorporate a variety of multimodal instructional approaches in order to meet the variety of learning needs for each student. For example, in the “Lenguaje y alfabetización” part of a lesson from Unidad 1, students identify letters in their own name. The materials guide the teacher to create a visual: “Escribe el alfabeto en la pizarra de tiza o de limpieza en seco.” The teacher tells the students whose letter she is holding. The students pass the letter to one another and repeat the name of the letter as they pass it. For example, “Este es la L de Lucy.” Then the teacher “ayuda a los niños a decir la letra mientras la pasan.” This lesson supports visual, kinesthetic, verbal, and auditory learners.

Each lesson has a materials section that lists the concrete materials and/or visuals to support the learning. More specifically, a lesson in Unidad 3, like all the lessons, has a “Materiales” section. In this lesson the materials needed are “Objetos/juguetes que empiezan con la letra O (por ejemplo, ovalo, oca, ojos, oso, oveja, ostra, opera, ocelote, ola).” This provides a list of materials to support developmentally appropriate multimodal strategies.

The materials support flexible grouping at the beginning of every lesson, by stating if it is meant for whole group, small group, or pairs. Although most lessons include a combination of all three. During small group and paired activities, the teacher facilitates and supports students’ learning by scaffolding as needed. For example, in Unidad 4, the teacher checks for understanding in a math lesson when students predict the probability of an outcome. The teacher asks, “¿Pueden explicar por qué hicieron esa elección usando ‘es probable’ y ‘es improbable’?” If students need more help, the teacher meets with them individually or in a small group to discuss real life examples the students can relate to.

The materials allow students to practice developing new skills independently, in pairs. For example, in a “Números y matemáticas” lesson from Unidad 4, students study sound and movement patterns. After the small group lesson and practice with the teacher, students create their own patterns in pairs using paper or manipulatives. The materials state: “Coloca a los niños en pares en los que cada uno haga un patrón con bloques o con formas o coloreando un papel. Luego, deben cambiar de lugar e intentar copiar el patrón de su compañero”. The flexible grouping in this lesson allows students to develop new skills independently while also working with a partner.

Students engage through indirect learning in a “Social Studies” lesson from Unidad 5. The students learn about “el trabajo de un conductor de tren.” The teacher explains and models the conductor’s job, then students take turns acting out the conductor’s job. The lesson guides the

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

teacher to check for understanding. The lesson states: “Observa a los niños mientras hacen la dramatización. ¿Demuestran comprensión de la función de un cobrador?” This lesson supports another type of instructional approach to engage students in mastery of content through dramatic play.

Another important component of the curriculum that supports visual, tactile, and kinesthetic strategies is the implementation of “Mat Man” during math lessons. In Unidad 5, the lesson objective is for students to identify different shapes. After playing the game “Simón dice,” students have the opportunity to put Mat Man together. In doing so, they demonstrate their understanding of the shapes by arranging the shapes to make his body. The exploration with concrete materials, in this case Mat Man, supports the implementation of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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 (English only).
- 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) (English only).
- Materials encourage strategic use of students’ primary language as a means to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in the target language (e.g., to enhance vocabulary development (Spanish only).

10.3 Materials & Score	10.3 Rationale
10.3 English IM Partially Meets 1/2	The materials include some specific supports to help English Learners (ELs) meet grade-level expectations; however, these accommodations are not commensurate with various English language proficiency levels. Scaffolds are present for ELs, and some even encourage the strategic use of students’ first language to develop English.
10.3 Spanish IM Partially Meets 1/2	The materials provide some support English Learners (ELs), especially those with various levels of English language proficiency. The accommodations for linguistics are not scaffolded or sequenced. There is minimal support for students to use their primary language to develop the target language skills.

English Evidence 10.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, includes some information and scaffolding meant to support ELs. The “Scaffolding through Engaging Multimodal Instruction” section explains that using various teaching modalities and hands-on activities help teachers bypass language differences. There is also a section on “Multimodal Scaffolded Instruction.” Here, the materials list several general strategies that can be used during lessons in the Teacher’s Guide, Volume 2. These general strategies include using graphic organizers like Venn diagrams and word maps, using a

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

word wall to display new vocabulary words, labeling drawing and pictures, and using visual prompts. This resource material references lessons that already include graphic organizers and mentions the hands-on materials that support these strategies (such as the “Word Time Word Cards” and the “Sound Around Box” color and picture tiles). This resource also includes some information on how to use students’ first language to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in English. Teachers use Spanish cognates and say vocabulary words in a child’s home language before saying them in English. While these supports are helpful, there is not enough point-of-lesson scaffolding and accommodations to fully ensure ELs meet grade-level learning expectations. Additionally, the provided accommodations in Teacher’s Guide and daily lessons are not commensurate with various English language proficiency levels.

In one Unit 1 activity, students recognize and sort objects by color. The teacher collects classroom objects in a pile and asks students, “What color do you see?” The EL accommodation for this lesson is to “begin activity with just two different colors.” Although this provides an EL scaffold for the activity, the scaffold does not strategically use the child’s first language to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills. Additionally, there is no teacher’s guideline detailing how to support the student depending on whether they are a beginning language learner or a more experienced language learner. Instead, the EL support is paired with more general support, titled “Support/ELL.”

In Unit 2, children learn to break a sentence into words and count the number of words using “Frog Hops.” Five children sit in a line in front of the class. The teacher says, “I’m going to say a sentence. When I point at you, please stand up.” As the teacher repeats the sentence and points at the children, they stand and hop. The support for students is for the teacher to use a familiar sentence for the child. This support does not specify using the students’ first language to develop content knowledge or practice the skill.

In Unit 3, in “Math,” students learn to take objects away from a set and count how many are left. The teacher passes out five crackers to each child and says, “I have 5 crackers. I take away 1 cracker.” The teacher eats the cracker while the students repeat the words and imitate the teacher. The teacher asks the students, “How many are left?” Students count the remaining crackers and respond. The EL accommodation is: “Start with three crackers. Take away one at a time. Count how many are left each time.” The materials provide an accommodation to use in small groups but lack instructional scaffolding that supports ELs or small group instruction that focuses primarily on language development. In another activity in Unit 3, students listen to the song “Starting Sound Shuffle”; then the teacher chants words beginning with the /s/ sound, such as *sailboat, snake, soup, salad, show, slipper, sing, song*. The EL support is to repeat each word before children say it. Scaffolding is provided in the lesson but not in the child’s primary language. In addition, no support is provided in the lesson to support EL students’ linguistic development.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

In Unit 4, materials integrate learning the letter *D* and introducing compound words. The teacher takes two “Compound Word Picture Cards” of a dog and a piece of wood. The teacher says, “Look! One word turned into two. Dogwood became dog and wood.” The suggested support for this lesson, labeled as “Support/ELL,” is to use props, when possible, for the small words and the compound word. This support is the only accommodation for any student who is not mastering content. It is not specific to students who are learning English. There is no scaffolding or various strategies presented to support children at varying English language proficiency levels. Each lesson follows a similar pattern, with one strategy to support struggling students, including those who are labeled as EL. These strategies can help provide some accommodations for students with various English language proficiency levels, but the strategies are not specifically targeted to those students’ needs and do not address linguistic development.

Spanish Evidence 10.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder,” the materials provide general information about the lessons’ different features and the supports included; as it stands, the materials do not include accommodations for linguistics commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency. While the lessons provide follow-up questions to check for understanding, they are not available at different proficiency levels. For example, in Unidad 3, the questions “¿Qué es una abuela?” “¿A dónde vas con tu abuela?” and “¿Qué me puedes contar sobre un pariente?” focus on the two vocabulary words for that “Oral Language” lesson: *abuela* and *pariente*. However, there are no accommodations for ELs at different levels. The materials include very few supports for ELs to become competent in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the English language.

Each lesson has an “Apoyo” and “Enriquecimiento” section which is intended to support different student levels. The built-in Apoyo section of the lessons provide the teacher strategies to meet the needs of struggling students in Spanish. The Enriquecimiento section provides built-in teacher guidance for lesson enrichment in Spanish. The Apoyo section in all the lessons would be an appropriate location to provide guidance to support ELs at various levels of language proficiency. In a “Lenguaje oral” lesson from Unidad 6, the teacher asks students, “¿Alguna vez viste estos cuerpos de agua?”, referring to oceans, lakes, and ponds. For students with different proficiency levels, the question could be framed differently, or students could be given leveled sentence stems to differentiate their language levels. This framing is essential to successfully answer the question and determine if students understand the vocabulary words. Offering only one question, at one proficiency level, does not accommodate ELs. The language support needed to reinforce the target language, either Spanish or English, are not addressed in each lesson.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The curriculum has minimal examples of using students' first language as the foundation for developing skills in the target language, except in the "La Pre-enseñanza de vocabulario" section in the "Apoyó a estudiantes aprendices de inglés como segunda lengua (ELL)" that provides teachers with guidance for introducing vocabulary. According to the guide, the teacher should use students' home language first and then use the English word to reinforce prior knowledge skills and make the connection between the words. This strategy encourages students' primary language as a means to develop linguistic and academic skills in the target language. The guide also includes some instruction for the teacher on scaffolding strategies to support language acquisition. The only example found in the lessons of how to use a student's first language as the foundation for developing skills in the target language can be found in an activity for "Habilidades de preparación y escritura" from Unidad 4. In this lesson, students learn how to form the letter *D*, and part of the activity includes reviewing the name and sound of this letter. The teacher introduces English words that start with *D* and allows students to make connections between the English and Spanish words. The teacher facilitates this thought process by asking, "¿Con qué letra empieza la palabra delfín? ¡La letra D! ¡Muy bien! Y qué tal la palabra dolphin. ¿Qué es delfín en Inglés? ¡También con la letra D! ¡Fabuloso!" At this time, the relationship between the two cognates helps students start making connections that support language acquisition.

Separate from the EL guide, the materials include very few translations or supporting information about another language. In the "Teacher's Guide," there is a note about strengthening the learning at home, encouraging families to play games, read books together, and sing children's songs in the home language. However, encouraging the use of the home language with parents does not represent a guide for teachers specific to supporting ELs to meet grade-level learning expectations.

In each unit, there are four subject areas studied: "Lenguaje y alfabetización, Números y matemáticas, Habilidades de preparación y escritura, y Lenguaje Oral." These lessons are all presented in Spanish and guide the teacher in developing skills only in the primary language, which is Spanish. There is no reference to the use of Spanish to improve the children's English. For example, in a Preparación para la escritura section from Unidad 2, the teacher guides students to trace the letter *E*. Students are given a worksheet to trace the letter, including the word *elefante* with a picture. The materials could have added a connection to the English language because *elefante* is a cognate of *elephant*. There are hardly any references to cognates in the materials, which would provide an effective way to develop students' linguistic skills.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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

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

11.1 Materials & Score	11.1 Rationale
11.1 English IM Partially Meets 1/2	Materials include a year-long plan to build students’ concept development, but there are few resources or guidance on how to vertically align instruction that builds year to year. Additionally, materials provide consistent review and practice of knowledge and skills across most domains throughout the curriculum.
11.1 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 11.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, includes a “Scope and Sequence” that details the overarching skill being taught in each academic content area each day to support concept development. The Scope and Sequence goes week by week and day by day to give teachers a big-picture overview of what the year will look like and what skills will be taught throughout the curriculum. The weeks are organized into six-week units that have an overarching theme, such as “My Body,” “Earth,” and “Animals.” However, the theme is not always present in the lessons described in the Scope and Sequence. For example, during a week in Unit 2, “My Body,” the only lessons related to or tied back to the theme are the “Oral Language” lessons that teach children vocabulary words such as *elbow*, *arm*, *bend*, and *reach*. The materials also do not include ties to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines or the TEKS for grades K–2 for any vertical alignment. They only include a list of developmental skills children should reach by each age, from ages two to five, so teachers can make informed decisions based on their students’ development. While the materials do include a year-long plan for instruction, there is no evidence of vertical alignment in the plan.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The materials provide review and practice of knowledge and skills in math and language art domains and curriculum across the units. The materials follow a research-based sequence of teaching letters, which has teachers working on one letter a week. Letters are reviewed at different points in the curriculum. For example, at the end of Unit 2, the materials guide the teacher to spend a day reviewing *L, F, E, H, T, I,* and *U*, the letters taught so far. Again, in Unit 4, the materials guide the teacher to spend a day reviewing *C, O, Q, G, S, J, D,* and *P*. After introducing all of the letters, the materials go back and review them throughout Unit 6. A similar process is followed to teach and review the numerals 1 to 10. Another “Numbers and Math” skill taught in pre-K is learning to identify, extend, and create patterns. Patterns are introduced in Unit 1, with lessons that teach children how to identify things that are the same and different and sort by color. These are prerequisite skills to patterning. In Unit 2, children have the opportunity to duplicate a simple pattern and go on a pattern walk. In Unit 3, children practice patterns in a “Repeat After Me” activity and also have opportunities to explore patterns in the real world. In Unit 4, children review duplicating a simple pattern and grow or extend patterns. In Unit 6, children have opportunities to create patterns. This sequence allows children to have multiple opportunities to practice and build on their pattern skills. Other math concepts have a similar scope and sequence. Although math and language arts are addressed across the units, oral language, social studies, and science lessons are not reviewed throughout the materials in the same manner to support practice throughout the curriculum. Students are exposed to oral language, science, and social studies topics once most of the time.

Spanish Evidence 11.1

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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 years’ worth of prekindergarten instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines.

11.2 Materials & Score	11.2 Rationale
11.2 English IM Partially Meets 1/2	The materials include some implementation support for teachers and administrators. There is an included scope and sequence that outlines the year’s knowledge and skills. However, this resource does not outline how the knowledge and skills relate to specific Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG) or how knowledge and skills build and connect across the year and into Kindergarten. The materials support teacher implementation of the activities as intended, but there is little support for administrators to help teachers in implementing the intended activities. The materials provide a school year’s worth of prekindergarten instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines to support teachers across the units.
11.2 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 11.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials’ scope and sequence supports knowledge and skills across the units. The “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, includes a “Scope and Sequence” with the essential knowledge and skills taught every day. The Scope and Sequence includes 36 weeks of organized charts broken down into six units. It provides an overview of what is taught each day. For example,

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

during one week, in Unit 2, “My Body,” in “Numbers and Math,” the lessons are all centered around the number 3. One day, the class reviews 3 and compares using the words *long* and *short*. The following day, they review 3 using the “I Know My Numbers” booklet. The lessons outlined in the Scope and Sequence all match the overarching skill listed at the beginning of the week. This outline allows teachers to quickly see what skills are taught in the curriculum and when skills repeat or review. In this example, while the number 3 is taught in Unit 2, the materials also include “Math Review” in Unit 5, where a day is spent reviewing numbers 1 through 5. In the Unit 3 weekly objectives for Week 1, the focus for “Language and Literacy” is on the sound and activities for the letter C; for “Readiness and Writing,” it is on letter building and tracing for letter C; for Numbers and Math it is on the number 5; and for “Oral Language/Science/Social Studies,” it is pretend play and jobs with the word *costumes*. All the units are written in the same order and follow the same protocol. While the materials contain a well-organized scope and sequence across all units, it does not reference the TPG. The activity titles are listed for each day of the week with no identification of their associated knowledge and skill or how these knowledge and skills build and connect over time.

Prior to each week’s worth of daily lesson plans, there is an additional “Week at a Glance” that defines the skills being taught each day. The knowledge or skill is listed here, but there is no direct connection to the TPG. Instead, each knowledge or skill is accompanied by a symbol representing the associated domain: “Approaches to Learning/Social-Emotional Learning, Language/Communication, Emergent Literacy, Emergent Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Creative Arts, Physical Development.” Teachers can see which skills are taught and when they are presented, but this document does not explain how the skills build and connect across the year or into kindergarten.

Additionally, teachers can download a Texas correlations chart from the general Learning Without Tears website: “Correlations to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.” Although not a scope and sequence, this document does list pages, resources, teacher tools, and manipulatives that align to each standard in the TPG. While the listed pages are specific, the other references remain general. This resource is useful to see which parts of the materials connect to specific parts of the TPG, but it does not list the order in which the skills are presented or how they build and connect over time.

Materials include supports to help teachers implement the materials as intended to support learning. The Teacher's Guide, Volume 1, provides an introduction to the instructional materials, activities for the teacher to use in small groups and centers, information about the classroom setup, and guidance on the resources. It also explains the importance of organization for the teacher and the students. It states that materials need to be easy for the students to access and locate. There is a guide on setting up for the content areas of Language and Literacy, Readiness and Writing, Numbers and Math, and Oral Language. The teachers are guided through the implementation of materials for each area and the activities. For example, the Language and Literacy area has five resources that can be used and six activities. In the Teacher’s Guide,

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Volume 2, the teacher can find all of the multisensory lessons, listed in order, from Week 1 to Week 36. The lesson plans included scripted lessons, with a list of materials for each activity to prepare teachers prior to beginning their lesson. The materials include most of the items that are required for each lesson. With each set of manipulatives included in the materials, there is a small guide on using them and examples for activities. For example, “Mix and Make Shapes” are manipulatives included with the materials. The guide that comes with them details what these manipulatives can be used for, what explicit skills are tied to them, and 10 activities with scripted lessons to use with them. There are many supports throughout the materials to ensure teachers can implement them as intended. Although the materials provide support for the teacher on implementing the materials as intended, there is no guidance specifically to help administrators support teachers.

One specific resource for teachers is the “Learning Without Tears PD Hub.” Found on the Learning Without Tears general website, this yearly online membership provides videos, optional webinars, and the potential for virtual coaching. Five videos provide an overview of the materials and support for assessment implementation; these videos range from five minutes to 15 minutes. In the “Live Webinars” section, there are recordings of four previously recorded webinars that focus on building writers, developing fine motor skills, comparing direct instruction and play-based instruction, and teaching students how to fix pencil grips. There are no scheduled chats currently available for “Virtual Coaching”; however, one can schedule customized virtual coaching sessions for the school or district by contacting the program’s professional development team. This resource helps teachers implement materials as intended but does not differentiate support specifically for administrators.

The material includes support for a school year’s worth of pre-k instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines. The Teacher’s Guide, Volume 1, provides a Scope and Sequence and a full-day schedule to follow for a full school year. The Teacher’s Guide, Volume 2, contains all the lessons for a full year of instruction. The lessons can be implemented within the time constraints of a school year. The progression of Language and Literacy, Readiness and Writing, and Numbers and Math lessons follow realistic pacing that includes ample practice and review.

Spanish Evidence 11.2

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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 allows LEAs the ability to incorporate the curriculum into district, campus, and teacher programmatic design and scheduling considerations.

11.3 Materials & Score	11.3 Rationale
11.3 English IM Meets 2/2	The materials provide some implementation guidance to meet variability in programmatic design and scheduling considerations. The materials also provide guidance for implementation to ensure content is taught, addressed, and learned in an order that follows a developmental progression for young children. The materials are designed to support LEAs’ ability to incorporate the curriculum into district, campus, and teacher programmatic design and scheduling considerations.
11.3 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadapted and translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 11.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide guidance to support the developmental progression of learning, following a strategic plan for implementation. The “Teacher’s Guide,” Volume 1, discusses how the materials are aligned to child development research. The instructional material is structured by research published by Gessell, A., H.M. Halverson, H. Thomson, F.L. Ilg, B.M. Castner, L.B. Ames, and C.S. Amatruda in *The First Year of Life: A Guide to the Study of the Pre-School Child*. The material explains that it starts with vertical and horizontal letters, then moves on to letters that curve, and finally progresses to letters with diagonals. The material states that research says writing development is significant to academic performance and has a negative impact if overlooked. This research explains the sequence of “Language and Literacy” and “Readiness and Writing” lessons in the instructional materials and why they must be taught in a specific order.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

Additionally, the Teacher's Guide, Volume 1, also includes suggestions to make the materials work in a variety of classrooms. There is guidance on what to do for a 3-days-per-week program and guidance for preschool programs with fewer than 36 weeks in the school year. There are also example schedules for half-day and full-day programs.

The materials provide support for LEAs to incorporate the curriculum into the school. The Teacher's Guide, Volume 1, includes a full-day schedule and a "Scope and Sequence" with the essential knowledge and skills taught each day. The Scope and Sequence includes 36 weeks of organized charts broken down into six units. The unit charts contain six weeks with five lessons for Language and Literacy, Readiness and Writing, "Numbers and Math," and "Oral Language/Science/Social Studies." Materials are designed for easy implementation for a district, campus, and teacher to use, but they do not provide support for different programs to customize.

Spanish Evidence 11.3

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the transadapted and translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

11.4 Materials & Score	11.4 Rationale
11.4 English IM Meets 2/2	The materials provide guidance on fostering connections between home and school. The materials support the development of strong relationships between teachers and families. They include activities for use at home to support students’ learning and development.
11.4 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 11.4

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide information about “School-to-Home Connections” in the introduction “Teacher’s Guide” to support relationships between teachers and families. The guide provides 11 ways to make strong connections between school and home. Some of the suggestions are utilizing planned events such as teacher-parent conferences and school visits; communicating through letters, emails, and podcasts; encouraging reading to children as much as possible; sharing the curriculum with families; and sharing assessment information to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement. The materials also provide a “Welcome” parent letter, which teachers can print from the online portal. The letter provides information on the program’s curriculum and its use in the classroom. The letter also provides a “Letter and Number Formation” chart. There are also additional parent letters teachers can print from the online portal. Also on the online portal, there is a “Fine Motor and Letter Practice” home sheet, which suggests activities to do at home. Some of the activities include finger-plays, stringing popcorn, and building objects with clay.

To support learning and development at home, the materials suggest teachers share the publisher’s website for parents to explore the resources. Some provided at-home activities parents can use to assist students who need extra assistance are in “I Know My Numbers” and

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

the Fine Motor and Letter Practice home sheet. The materials are available in English and Spanish to support the home language. Materials also suggest the teacher share specific classroom songs with the families for them to sing at home; families are encouraged to share fun songs they may sing at home as well. Materials provide resources for families to use at home that support the curriculum being used at school and to support students' learning and development.

Spanish Evidence 11.4

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

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.

11.5 Materials & Score	11.5 Rationale
11.5 English IM Meets 2/2	The visual design of student and teacher materials (whether print or digital) is neither distracting nor chaotic. Materials are visually appealing and contain adequate illustrations and amounts of white space.
11.5 Spanish IM Verified	The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

English Evidence 11.5

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Both the online materials and physical materials are easy to find because they are clearly labeled. Lessons contain a list of materials needed, objectives, vocabulary words, and step-by-step directions for the teacher to follow, including questions to ask students. Text is bolded to indicate what the teacher says within a lesson. The resources are student-friendly, have specific purposes, and support fine motor skills. For example, students use sturdy wood pieces to build letters with their hands. Materials are designed to support student learning and are not distracting.

The materials include student resources with illustrations in black and white and in color, depending on the resource. The “Word Time” vocabulary cards have colorful illustrations; they are meant to teach children new vocabulary words. The illustrations support student learning. The “ABC” and “1-2-3 Touch and Flip” cards have black-and-white illustrations that correspond to the number or letter being taught. There are no authentic or real-life photographs or pictures, but the illustrations are clear and easily identifiable. The student consumables also include black-and-white illustrations, which are meant to be colored in, so they support student learning and fine motor development.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The materials also provide *Mat Man* books, which contain illustrations that help children understand what is going on in the story. The “Story Cards” contain colorful illustrations and are large enough to be seen during whole group instruction. Other materials that are meant to be used in the whole group are large enough to see during lessons as well.

The digital resources mimic what the resources look like in person. This similarity makes them easy to navigate for children and supports their learning rather than distracting them.

Spanish Evidence 11.5

The evidence from the English materials in this report can be verified in full within the translated Spanish materials.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

12.1 Materials provide clear guidance specific to bilingual program model.

- Materials include guidance or recommendations on how they could be applied within a particular bilingual program model.
- Materials cite current, relevant research on Spanish literacy development and second language development and acquisition.

12.1 Materials & Score	12.1 Rationale
12.1 English IM N/A	Spanish Only
12.1 Spanish IM Not Scored	The materials do not include guidance or recommendations on how they could be applied within a particular bilingual program model. The materials cite very limited research on Spanish literacy development and second language development and acquisition.

Spanish Evidence 12.1

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

There is no evidence that the materials provide guidance or recommendations to implement the lessons within a bilingual program model. In the “Ejemplo de horario y horarios alternativos” section of the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder,” the materials provide guidance for both full- and half-day schedules and for preschool programs that meet three days a week or less than 36 weeks in the school year. Unfortunately, the schedule information does not include recommendations or guidance for implementing lessons within any approved bilingual program model. Nor do the materials reference any of the approved bilingual models in Texas (early exit transitional, late exit transitional, one-way dual language, and two-way dual language) or any other bilingual program model in their suggested daily schedule or lessons. In addition, the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder: Introducción al círculo” and “Lecciones y aprendizaje multisensorial” do not provide recommendations or guidance for any language program models, even though the materials are fully available in Spanish and English.

Furthermore, there is no information about the language of instruction allocation for different subject areas or schedules. The absence of guidance regarding the implementation of a

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

language allocation plan, subject language assignment, or language of the day hinders teaching students literacy and content in two languages. Guidance on how these programs authentically incorporate meaningful, culturally relevant content, with experiences in all areas, is not part of the curriculum.

The materials include a reference list that cites the research of the curriculum but does not include resources relevant to Spanish literacy or the development of Spanish foundational literacy skills.

There is one citation in the “Referencias” section of the *Introducción al currículo* regarding second language acquisition. The materials list the resource “A Brief Overview of Individual Differences in Second Language Learning” from 2003. This reference may be relevant, but it is not current. Furthermore, it is not referenced anywhere in the “Teacher’s Guide” other than in the bibliography, making it difficult to find where they included information from this source in the instructional materials.

The materials cite some additional research on second language development and acquisition in the “Research Review.” The reference lists in the *Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder* include research on language acquisition such as “The Cross-Linguistic Transfer of Early Literacy Skills: The Role of Initial L1 and L2 Skills and Language of Instruction” (Cárdenas-Hagan, 2007) and “Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth” (August and Shanahan, 2006). Although the two references are relevant to second language development and acquisition, other researchers and more current work are not part of the work cited in the materials. Some examples of more current research that they should have included are “Language and Literacy Development Among English Language Learners” (Cárdenas-Hagan, 2018), “Understanding Language: Language, Literacy, and Content Learning” (Brisk and Proctor, 2012), “Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective” (Garcia, 2009), and “Biliteracy from the Start: Literacy Squared in Action” (Escamilla et al., 2014).

According to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, “children who are ELLs in a prekindergarten classroom should receive instruction at their English proficiency level and in a manner they can understand.” However, the materials do not cite resources that support this practice. Additionally, the coordination and transfer of language skills between the two are missing. The materials leave out using Spanish literacy development to support second language development. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and how each supports the learner’s understanding of the second language is missing from the instructional materials. There is no research on how to promote the use of BICS and CALP during instructional time, transitional times, or recess. Therefore, the materials do not support implementing any of the Texas-approved bilingual program models: early exit transitional, late exit transitional, one-way dual language, and two-way dual language.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

12.2 Materials support teachers in understanding the connection between content presented in each language and provide guidance on how to help students understand this connection.

- Materials highlight opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections.
- Materials allow for equitable instruction in both languages, in terms of quality and quantity of materials.
- Materials support teacher and student understanding and application of the connection between the languages, (ie. skills that transfer).

12.2 Materials & Score	12.2 Rationale
12.2 English IM N/A	Spanish Only
12.2 Spanish IM Not Scored	The materials do not highlight opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections nor allow equitable instruction in both languages in terms of quality and quantity of materials. The materials provide limited support in developing teacher and student understanding and application of the connection between the languages.

Spanish Evidence 12.2

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The lessons do not include teacher guidance defining and explaining the benefit of the cross-linguistic connection opportunities and how they support bilingual students’ academic, linguistic, and affective needs and achievement. Nor do the materials explain the benefit of the cross-linguistic opportunities and their connection to the lesson’s focus.

The materials do not embed opportunities for cross-linguistic connections in isolation or in-context as an integral part of the lessons. For example, in the “Estudios sociales” lesson in Unidad 1, the activity involves creating a Venn diagram about similarities and differences (*similitudes y diferencias*). The two words, *similitudes y diferencias*, have English cognates. The lesson could have provided a cognate note to allow students to make the cross-linguistic connection. Unfortunately, the materials did not highlight the opportunity for students to make cross-linguistic connections.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The student app “Get Set for School” has three sections: “Wet-Dry-Try,” “Sound Around Letters,” and “Touch and Flip Numbers.” The activities are engaging because they are interactive and provide immediate feedback. The illustrations are meaningful and fun, which keeps students motivated. This app allows teachers to implement technology in a purposeful way to support student learning and engagement. Although this app has many benefits, the one setback is that the only section available in Spanish is Touch and Flip Numbers. This lack of Spanish is a disadvantage for Spanish speakers as they do not get to reinforce important literacy skills in their native language. Therefore, some of the materials do not allow for equitable instruction in both languages in terms of quantity of materials.

Another component lacking in Spanish quality compared to the English materials is the *Álbum de música Sing, Sound, and Count With Me*. The songs included in the Spanish curriculum are mostly instrumental versions and do not actually include the lyrics in Spanish. The English songs all include the lyrics with the music. This lack creates another inequity in the quality of materials in both languages.

Activities that provide opportunities for translanguaging are not included in the lessons to support student understanding and application of the connection between the languages. The availability of instructional materials in both languages does not automatically support making connections between them. Through targeted conversations and discussions, students could make connections and transfer skills accordingly. When the teacher introduces new vocabulary words in context with the ones that students are already using, it encourages them to use their background knowledge to make connections when acquiring a new language. However, such practices are not in the instructional materials. The materials lack guidance for the teacher to explain the benefit of utilizing students’ full linguistic repertoire to understand new information. Therefore, the materials do not support teacher and student understanding and application of the connection between the languages.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

12.3 Materials in Spanish are authentic and culturally relevant.

- Both teacher and student materials are presented in authentic and academic Spanish or are quality transadaptations or translations, as appropriate for the purpose and context of the activity.
- Materials support the development of socio-cultural competence.
- Materials represent the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Spanish language and Hispanic culture.

12.3 Materials & Score	12.3 Rationale
12.3 English IM N/A	Spanish Only
12.3 Spanish IM Not Scored	The materials for both the teacher and student are presented in authentic and academic Spanish or are quality transadaptations or translations, as appropriate for the activity’s purpose and context. However, they are limited in supporting the development of sociocultural competence. The materials include some representations of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Spanish language and Hispanic culture.

Spanish Evidence 12.3

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include some representations of Hispanic culture. For example, one of the books listed in the “Biblioteca de Get Set for School,” *Maria tenía una llamita* by Mexican American author Angela Dominguez, adapts the nursery rhyme “Mary Had a Little Lamb” to the setting of rural Peru. The story talks about cultural aspects of rural life and the Peruvian culture. Although texts such as this are included in the classroom library, the actual lessons and activities do not include teacher guidance to reinforce Spanish culture or diversity in the classroom. It cannot be assumed that teachers know about various Hispanic cultures and each one’s specifics. With no guidance to explain some of the differences, the material loses its effect as teachers cannot fully support this practice. Additionally, the book mentioned above is not part of the lessons. It is included in the instructional materials; however, it is not specifically incorporated into a particular lesson, activity, or unit theme.

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

The materials use high-quality Spanish texts and provide guidance on additional resources that reflect Hispanic traditions. The “Conexiones con libros” section of the resource guide includes books such as *¿Todos a comer? A Mexican Food Alphabet Book bilingual edition* by Dr. Ma. Alma González Pérez, *The birthday book/Las Mañanitas* by Susie Jaramillo, and *La Llorona: Counting Down Bilingual edition* by Patty Rodríguez. The materials recommend reading these books about Hispanic culture elements and traditions to students.

In reviewing the Spanish materials, the translations and transadaptions are age-appropriate for children’s learning and appropriate for the activity’s purpose and context. For example, the story “La Oruga muy hambrienta” is included in the “Biblioteca de Get Set for School.” The Spanish version of this book is a transadaptation that does not deviate from the story’s meaning and maintains age-appropriate vocabulary.

The materials use high-quality and age-appropriate academic Spanish in their transadaptions or translations. For example, in a lesson from Unidad 1, the materials include teacher scripts with age-appropriate vocabulary and correct Spanish orthography such as “¿Cuántos dedos hay?” and “¿Qué sonidos escucharon? ¿De dónde venían esos sonidos?” This script supports the teacher in delivering instruction using authentic and academic Spanish.

According to “Introducción al currículo” section of the “Get Set for School Guía para maestros de prekínder,” the “Social Studies” domain offers exploratory activities through discovery play that focus on *Mi familia y yo* where students have opportunities to share and learn “sobre las familias de cada uno y las celebraciones culturales.” Although this information is included, it is not consistently present throughout the curriculum, which affects the implementation of authentic sociocultural opportunities. For example, a lesson from Unidad 2 involves students identifying similarities and differences between families. However, this lesson mainly implements math concepts since students participate by sharing how many members they have in their family. Additionally, the “Comprueba el entendimiento” section suggests the teacher check if students can count how many people there are in their drawings of their families. The lesson is not socioculturally relevant because the lack of discussion and collaboration does not broaden children’s perspectives and does not encourage appreciation of diversity.

The materials are limited in how they support the development of sociocultural competence. For example, the materials do not include cultural objectives aligned to each of the unit goals that communicate and bridge cultural values that foster a bicultural identity. A Social Studies lesson in Unidad 3 focuses on students learning about celebrations. However, there are no opportunities for students to share or learn about different cultural events or celebrations. The materials do not integrate opportunities for students to talk about their cultural experiences and how they relate to each other during class discussions. When the teacher says, “Todos tenemos diferentes tipos de celebraciones que disfrutamos con la familia,” it is a good opportunity to encourage students to share their own experiences, but materials do not provide that guidance. Next, the teacher says, “Planifiquemos una fiesta de agradecimiento para el

Learning Without Tears

English and Spanish Prekindergarten Program Summary

personal de oficina, seguridad y de cafetería de la escuela.” Although planning an appreciation party for school staff is a great way to implement a hands-on activity that targets the lesson’s objective, it does not focus on sociocultural competence. This lesson does not specifically target diversity or how students fit into their communities because it lacks discussion opportunities where students can make these connections. Therefore, materials do not fully support the development of sociocultural competence.