

Maine DOE Trainings:
Demographic Information



Supporting Children in Early Childhood Classrooms

Presented by: OSSIE, the Early Learning Team and CDS



Supporting Early Childhood Classrooms

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Agenda

- *Welcome and Introductions*
- *SNOW Chart Activity*
- *Report out*
- *ECSE Transition*
- *Supporting Children in ECE Classrooms*
- *Back to your SNOW Chart*
- *Take-aways and closing*

Who is in the room today?

- How many of you drove more than an hour to get here today?
- How many of you grabbed coffee before this session?
- How many of you are attending with colleagues from your school or district?
- How many of you work in a program that includes both children with and without disabilities?
- How many of you are part of a public Pre-K program?
- How many of you are part of a community partnership with an SAU?



ECSE Transition SNOW Chart Activity

Strengths

Needs

Opportunities

Worries

What

- Using chart paper, create a 2x2 chart
- Label each quadrant using the headings shown in the example
- Each quadrant represents a different type of thinking about the ECSE transition

Why

- Reflect on individual and group perspectives about the ECSE transition
- Identify patterns, common themes, and shared priorities
- Identify ideas that can help guide implementation and support collaboration moving forward

How

- Individually reflect for 2–3 minutes and jot down initial ideas
- As a team, share and discuss your thoughts 8-10 min
- Identify a scribe to capture ideas in the appropriate quadrant
- Look for themes, connections, or emerging solutions.

Report out

- Each team selects two key insights or ideas to share with the larger group
- 1-2 min per group

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

- **Section 619 IDEA**
- **Special education provided to Preschool age children**
- ECSE services are designed to help children with disabilities participate in activities that are typically appropriate for their developmental stage. Children who qualify for ECSE may receive services in a variety of settings, including Pre-kindergarten classrooms, The home, and Community settings like Head Start and pre-school.



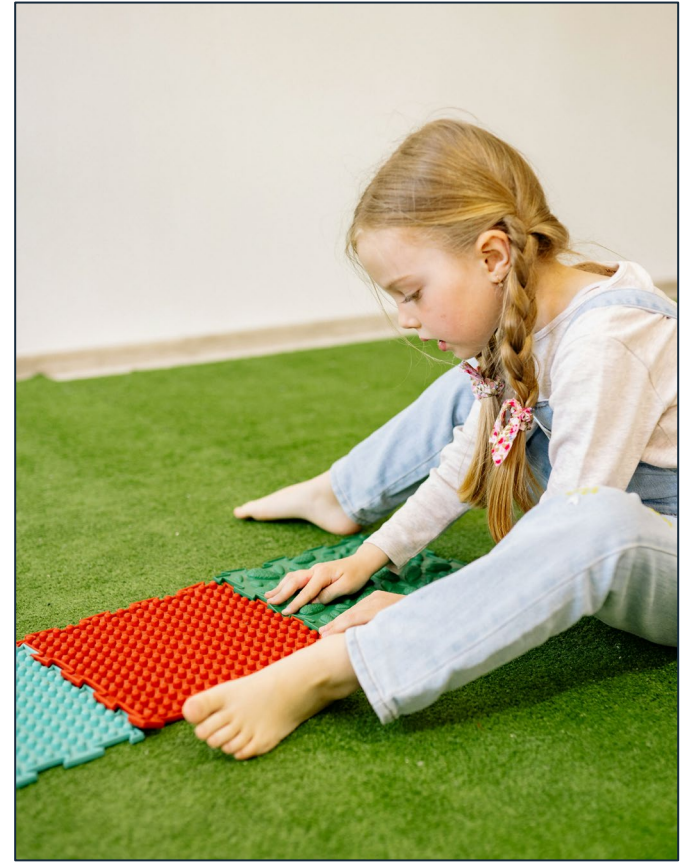
Why?

Transition of child find and FAPE responsibilities to SAUs – Why?

OSEP

Structure of existing system has been problematic:

- CDS responsible, but doesn't operate or oversee preschool programming
- Requires significantly more admin and overhead costs, which drive up cost of serving the children
- Separate early childhood programs for children with disabilities, which contributes to high numbers of placements in special purpose private preschools and more restrictive placements





Legislation

LD 345: *An Act to Transition the Responsibility for Child Find Activities and for Ensuring a Free, Appropriate Public Education for Eligible Children from the Child Development Services to School Administrative Units*

LD 2214: *An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025*

LD 2214 became Public Law 2023, Chapter 643, Part W



Elements of the Law:

- Responsibility for child find and free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for 3-, 4- and 5-year-old pre-K students with IEPs will transition to school administrative units (SAU) by July 1, 2028.
- The CDS System is responsible for due process and for paying 100% of the costs for compensatory services for children who have been underserved through the Child Development Services System.



Things to know!

- Date of assumption of FAPE obligation is on SAU's first student day of school
- Cohort 2 and 3 SAUs can have a 2-year transition, starting with 4-year-old students in year one and assuming the FAPE obligation for 3-year-olds in year two



Free Appropriate Public Education

- For SAU's- FAPE will look different from site to site
 - FAPE looks different because it is individually determined and because each community is different
- General Education Opportunities:
 - Public PreK programs in some SAUs
 - Head Start in some communities
 - Childcare in some communities
 - Kindergarten classrooms
- IEP teams will look at each child's needs, their goals, and services to ensure a FAPE in the mixed delivery system.





Least Restrictive Environment Categories in Early Childhood Special Education

Attending a Regular Early Childhood Program
(more than 50% non-disabled children)

REC10YSVCS

AT LEAST 10 hours per week; receiving majority of special education and related services in REGULAR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

REC09YSVCS

LESS THAN 10 hours per week; receiving majority of special education and related services in REGULAR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

REC10YOTHLOC

REGULAR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM, more than 10 hours per week, services in some other location

REC09YOTHLOC

REGULAR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM, less than 10 hours per week, services in some other location

Attending a Special Education Program Only
(less than 50% non-disabled children)

SC

Children attending a separate class, majority of children in class have a disability, NOT in a Regular Early Childhood Program

SS

Children attending a special education program, NOT in any regular early childhood program; Specifically, in a separate school

RF

Children attending a special education program; Specifically, a residential facility or in-patient hospital

Not Attending a Regular or
Special Education Classroom

SPL

Children are neither attending a regular early childhood program or special education program, majority of hours of special education and related services at the service provider's location

H

Children attending neither a regular early childhood program nor a special education program, and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services at home

LRE Requirements

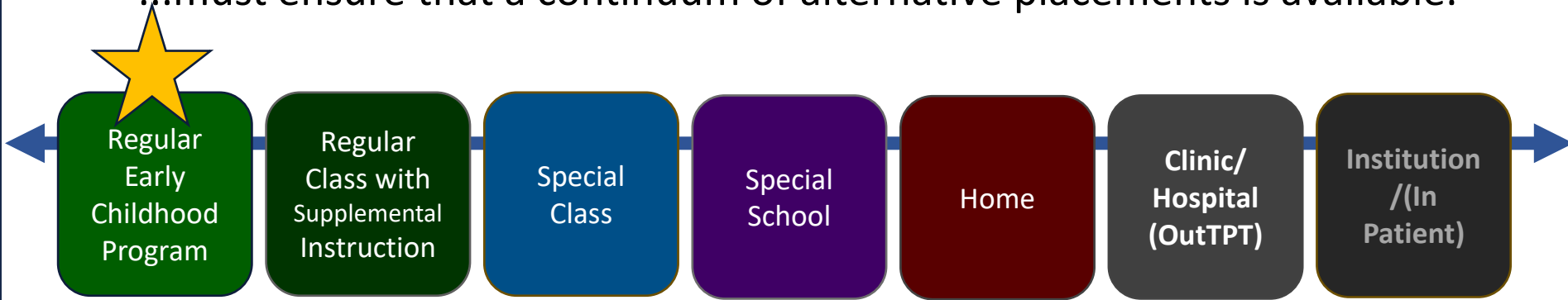
Each public agency must ensure that—

- To the **maximum extent appropriate**, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, **are educated with children who are nondisabled**; and
- Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment **occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability** is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services **cannot be achieved satisfactorily**.

Continuum of Placement Options

Least Restrictive to Most Restrictive

...must ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available.



Questions and Contact Information



ECSE.Team@maine.gov



[Early Childhood Special Education |](#)
[Department of Education](#)

Early Intervention

Early Intervention is specialized services and supports for identified children ages 0-5 who display developmental delays and/or disabilities.

The goal is to identify children with developmental delays **as early as possible** to ensure support for children to gain skills and reach their development and learning milestones.

<https://childrenwithspecialneeds.com>



Children's brain and physical development is the greatest in the first 5 years. Early intervention matters in supporting brain development, improving academic readiness, improving independence in children, growing social skills and boosting confidence and effectively educating parents. Early Intervention matters in fostering positive child outcomes and developmental growth.

Take a look

Mixed Delivery System: Taking Advantage of Existing Programs

In Maine, SAUs, public pre-k programs, child care centers, family child care programs, Head Start programs, and other community-based organizations compose our mixed delivery system for early education and care of young children.

Benefits of working within your communities mixed delivery system include:

- Supporting families, children and programs with continuity of care
- Maintaining enrollment capacity in community-based early care and education programs
- Ensuring that the LRE includes typically developing peers of similar age
- Offering children high quality experiences and opportunities for growth and development in the early years



Where are children currently getting care and education in your community?

www.childcarechoices.me



How to build partnerships



Early Care and Education

Partnering with a Star 3 rated early care and education, or higher level, means the program must meet the following:

- Activities and experiences for children are guided by a general understanding across the developmental domains, are based on children's interests and abilities, and are implemented with MELDS knowledge
- Materials and equipment are developmentally appropriate
- Staff engage in monthly supervision, annual evaluations, and professional development
- Programs complete the Rising Stars for ME Inclusive Practices Checklist annually, implement a continuous quality improvement plan, and accountability and administrative oversight
- Programs complete child assessments for development and learning and support family engagement
- Find the full list at [MRTQ – Rising Up: Achieving a Star Level 3](#)



RISING STARS FOR ME
Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System

**Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) ensures that Rising Stars for ME is a robust quality rating system for our child care programs in Maine. Programs are monitored by MRTQ and must follow child care licensing. FMI contact Amber Taurasi, Early Childhood Education Quality Specialist with DHHS at amber.taurasi@maine.gov

**MRTQ houses the [early care and education career lattice](#) which outlines credentialing; Star level 3 programs must have level 5 employees.

**It is important to note that all Head Start programs in Maine are a Star Level 5, are licensed classrooms and must follow the [Head Start Performance Standards](#).

**Star 2 programs can receive a waiver to work with school systems and have a 2-year window to move to a Star 3 program

What Inclusion Looks Like in a Preschool Classroom

Children with IEP's learn, play and grow alongside their peers

Teacher

- Facilitates learning and supports all children

Child with an IEP

- Participates in classroom routines and activities

Peers

- Learning and playing together

Specialists

- Speech, OT, or other services may occur within the classroom

Visual Supports

- Schedules, picture cues, routines

Play-Based Learning

- Centers, exploration, and interaction



“If a child doesn’t know how to read, *we teach.*
If a child doesn’t know how to swim, *we teach.*
If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, *we teach.*
If a child doesn’t know how to drive, *we teach.*
If a child doesn’t know how to behave,
***we..... ..teach?*punish?**

**Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically
as we do the others?”**



Could we have a volunteer to read this out loud?



The Impact of Trauma

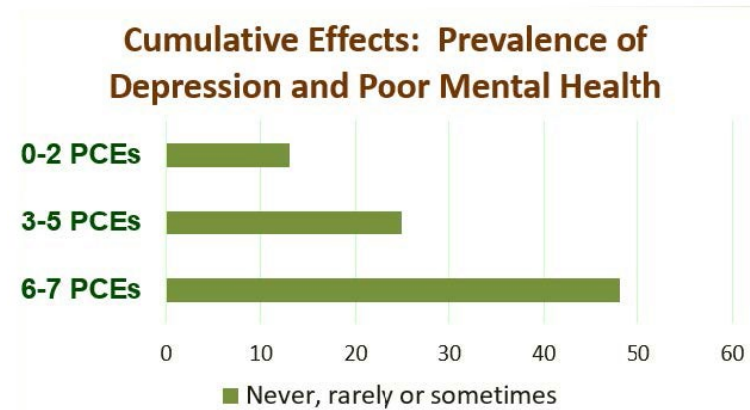


- Maine Children's Alliance reports that in 2020-21 Maine had the 15th highest rate of ACEs for all age groups in the country
- 20.4% of Maine children ages 0-5 had experienced 2 or more ACEs
- The Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey revealed that 21% of high school students experienced 4 or more ACEs

The Power of Positive Childhood Experiences

A 2019 study by Dr. Christina Bethell identified seven Positive Childhood Experiences that can mitigate the impact of ACEs. They include:

- The ability to talk with family about feelings
- The sense that family is supportive during difficult times
- The enjoyment of participation in community traditions
- Feeling a sense of belonging in high school
- Feeling supported by friends
- Having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely cared
- Feeling safe and protected by an adult in the home



“...the more positive experiences that individuals reported the more likely they were to report few or no issues of adult mental health challenges.”

RELATIONSHIPS ARE AT THE HEART OF SEL

- Research supports that nurturing relationships are an essential foundation for learning & development
- Relationships are addressed in the first domain of the CLASS tool, Emotional Support, because we know that children learn best in the context of relationships that make them feel **safe**, **valued**, **capable** and **supported** (even when they make mistakes or have behaviors that challenge us)
- The best way to teach children to be caring, is to be caring towards them



Frame the direction or comment in a way that teaches children what they should be doing (Positive) instead of what they should not be doing (Negative)

Say "Feet on the floor" instead of "No feet on the table"

Try "Hands and feet to yourself" instead of "Do not touch your neighbor."

Try "Keep that closed, that area is not open" instead of "Don't get those toys out of that shelf"

Say "Remember to keep the blocks safely on the floor, instead of "No throwing blocks!"

YOUR WORDS MATTER

INSTEAD OF...

TRY

	Be quiet.	Can you use a softer voice?
	What a mess!	It looks like you had fun! How can we clean up?
	Do you need help?	I'm here to help if you need me.
	I explained how to do this yesterday.	Maybe I can show you another way.
	Do I need to separate you?	Could you use a break?
	Stop crying.	It's okay to cry.
	Do you have any questions?	What questions do you have?
	You're OK.	How are you feeling?
	It's not that hard.	You can do hard things.
	We don't talk like that.	Please use kind words.

A child's behavior is not always what it seems

Behavior is communication

What we see: Behavior

What we don't see:
What's under the surface



 PARENTS
with confidence

Behavior IS Communication

If we want to encourage positive behaviors both at home and in the classroom, it requires us to look beneath the surface.

There is always a deeper need driving a child's behaviors, and when we can effectively meet that need to the best of our ability, we can be the most effective caregivers and educators.

Universal Design involves creating inclusive environments through thoughtful materials, differentiated activities, curriculum choices, teaching strategies, and child assessments. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) recognizes that children learn in diverse ways and emphasizes intentional planning from the outset to support all learners.

- **Multiple Means of Engagement:** use of multiple modalities and methods including hands-on activities, interactive games, reading, singing, etc.
- **Multiple Means of Representation:** incorporating visual aids, real-life materials, etc.
- **Multiple Means of Expression:** giving children open opportunity and different ways of expressing themselves and interacting with materials

Differentiated Access and Adapted Resources:

- Planning begins with the original curriculum
- Educators and service providers work together to determine adaptations and modifications to the curriculum for each child to push services into the classroom

In the Classroom

Universally Designed Learning

Bringing UDL into the ECE classroom

- Ensures that all children have access to materials, activities and learning
- Uses visual tools in the classroom
- Gives appropriate choices, often
- Individualizes for children's learning and participation
- Offers multiple play and learning centers with learning objectives
- Empowers the learning and process of learning, not the product
- Gives careful consideration of potential roadblocks and removal of barriers to children's learning and development

“The layout of the physical environment fosters encounters, communication, learning, and relationships.”

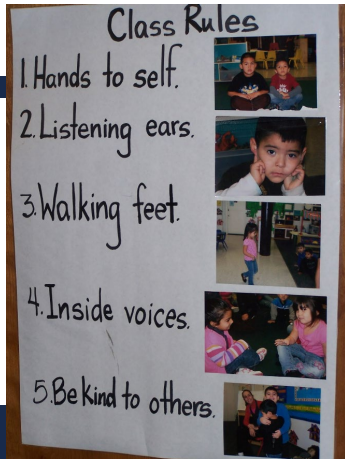
A well-organized preschool classroom:

- Helps all children to utilize the space efficiently
- Allows educators more time to interact with children
- Supports children of **all** abilities in independence, self-direction and self-reliance
- Fosters longer interactions and engagement, which supports longer attention spans and understanding of concepts being learned
- Is purposeful and intentional in its design



How do we do this?

- Clear routines and systems with visual support
- Visual tools that support children's understanding of the day and classroom expectations
- Reflection of children and their families in the classroom
- Materials and activities that are easily accessed by children
- Clearly delineated play and learning centers
- Variable and flexible seating options
- Materials that support communication and language development
- Displays of children's work and dictation
- Space and materials that support social-emotional learning (calming corner, alone space and visual supports)



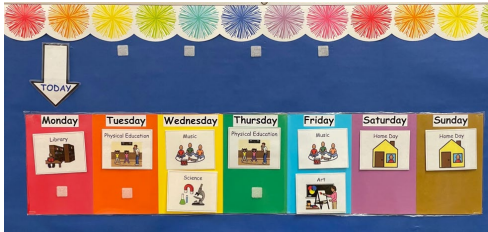
Questions for consideration – a welcoming and accessible place for learning:

Who is this environment for?

What do you want to accomplish in it?

Can all children access all parts equitably?

How will the space support the curriculum?

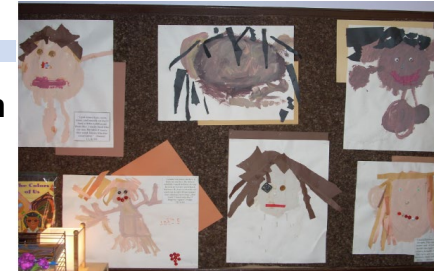


What are your goals for children in the classroom environment?

Is your classroom a place for order, beauty?

Is there a cozy and comfortable space where a child can be alone, yet supervised?

Do you consider nature and living things in your classroom?

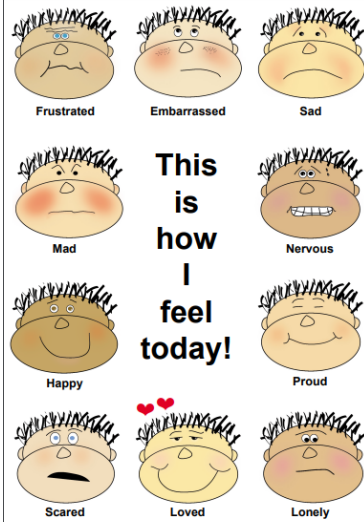




I Can Use My Words



Created by Rochelle Lentini, USF
Adapted 2004



What Do We Do In Circle?



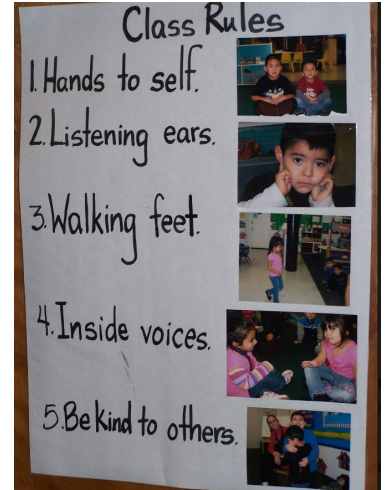
Created by Rochelle Lentini, USF
Adapted 2004

Created using pictures from Microsoft Clipart and Boardmaker®



Visual Tools

- Solution Cards
- Social Stories
- Non-negotiables
- Emotion Cards and images



Strategies That Teach Expectations

Teaching young children routine and expectations...

- Creates a safe and predictable environment
- Supports self-regulation skills
- Promotes positive social interactions
- Builds consistency
- Fosters independence and responsibility
- Prepares children for future school success,
And...
- Supports Positive Behavior in the Classroom by guiding children toward desired behaviors rather than focusing on correcting misbehavior

- Ensure that **all adults** are using the same **consistent language** and **directions**
- **Repetition** of expectations **clearly** and **often**
- Give children **choices** – “I see that your body is being unsafe, would you like to sit at the table or go for a walk to calm it down and be safe?”
- Utilize a **wait strategy** – Take a step back and wait calmly
- **Redirect** and be **Proactive**
- **Avoid a power-struggle** – Ask yourself why you are giving a direction or request. What is the child ready for? Can they be in another space?
- **Be Intentional:**
 - Child placement in certain areas such as mealtime, circle, rest, small groups, lining up
 - Pre-teaching of new toys, items and activities
 - Maximize learning time and offer activities that children are interested in (have a Plan B)
 - Consider the number of materials in each space
 - Give positive reminders and model expectations for children
 - Use tools such as “first, then” language and 1:1 support when needed

In the Multi-Age Classroom

- Intentionally individualizing and following IEP goals; Individualization and understanding scope and sequence of development
- Understanding that transitions may take longer, expectations and routines may take longer to teach
- Focus on children's goals and supports, while working closely with your support staff (SLP, PT, OT, etc.)
- Understanding where all children are on the developmental continuum (MELDS) and remember that the levels could be lower than actual age
- Toileting support and including bathroom breaks in the daily schedule
- Be mindful of the daily schedule
- Consideration of a play-based learning program or curriculum as developmentally appropriate for 3 and 4-year-olds




Creating a mixed-age classroom of 3 and 4-year-old children is not uncommon and can be a very positive learning environment. Children will experience continuity, individualization, and differentiation, within their 2 years in the program, that will grow with their skill and abilities. Children will become “experts” and understand concepts in new and different ways as they development strengthens.

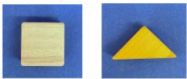
Examples of supporting different stages of development in the classroom

Developmental Stages of Writing


build a house




you need:



step 1



step 2



Step-by-Step Block Visuals- Neighborhood U1


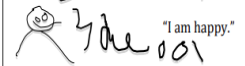
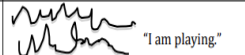

Adapted for Focus on Pre-K | Boston Public Schools Department of Early Childhood P-2





Simple Block Structures- Neighborhood

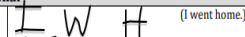

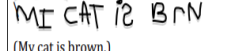
 <p>Zakim Bridge</p>	
 <p>Prudential Building</p>	
 <p>bus stop</p>	

Simple Block Structures- Neighborhood

Adapted for Focus on Pre-K | Boston Public Schools Department of Early Childhood P-2

Pre-Literate	
Stage Description	Sample
Scribble Stage - starting point any place on page, resembles drawing large circular strokes and random marks that do not resemble print or communicate a message	
Symbolic Stage - starting point any place on page, pictures or random strokes/marks with an intended message	
Directional Scribble - scribble left to right direction, linear, intended as writing that communicates a meaningful message/idea	
Symbolic/Mock Letters - letter-like formations, may resemble letters but it isn't intentional, interspersed w/ numbers, spacing rarely present	

Emergent	
Strings of Letters - long strings of various letters in random order, may go left to right, uses letter sequence perhaps from name, usually uses capital letters, may write same letters in many ways	
Groups of letters - groupings of letters with spaces in between to resemble words	
Labeling pictures - matching beginning sounds with the letter to label a picture	
Environmental Print - copies letters/words from environmental/classroom print, reversals common, uses a variety of resources to facilitate writing	

Transitional	
Letter/Word Representation - uses first letter sound of word to represent entire word, uses letter sound relationships	
First/Last Letter Representation - word represented by first and last letter sound	
Medial Letter Sounds - words spelled phonetically using BME sounds, attempts medial vowels, uses some known words, more conventionally spelled words, one letter may represent one syllable, attempts to use word spacing, writing is readable	

This new document is divided into four columns.

The two green columns reference the preschool years and continue to be divided into two columns (2) & (3).

The left-hand green column indicates a mid-preschool "benchmark". The indicators listed in this are not to be taken as absolutes for a child. Children develop in individual domains at different rates over the course of their preschool years.

The right-hand green column contains the standards for the end of preschool/kindergarten entry. This column represents what children should know and be able to do when they leave preschool.

The purple column (4) indicates the end of kindergarten standard of the Maine Learning Results.

The blue column (1) on the far left references the standard for the 18-36 months cited from the 2021 Infant Toddler MELDS.

Indicators: 16-36 months	1			
	2	Indicators: 34-48 months	3	Indicators: 46-60 months End of Preschool Standards
				4

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Preschool Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (Presch

Maine Early Learning and Development Standards: A Snapshot

Goal Topic: 9. Writing

The MELDS are developmental continuum for young children. Curriculum and assessment should be aligned to the tool. Infant and Toddler MELDS are aligned with P-MELDS, which are aligned to the MLR (kindergarten)



Indicators: 16-36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tells others what own scribbles mean.
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Indicators: 34-48 months	<p>b. Process and Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With prompting and support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shares drawing and writing with others recognizes that digital tools are used for communication and, with support and guidance, uses them to convey messages in picture and/or words <p>c. Inquiry to Build and Present Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to participate in shared research and writing projects modeled by adults (e.g., community helpers). With guidance and support from adults, begins to recall some information from experiences or gather information from resources.
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Indicators: 46-60 months End of Preschool Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prints some upper and lowercase letters. Begins to demonstrate the use of standardized English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalizes the first letter in their own name. Begins to recognize punctuation (e.g., ,, , ? , !). Begins to write letters to represent sounds. Begins to spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships. <p>b. Process and Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With prompting and support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborates to plan and develop a message to share with others. Shares drawing and writing with others and is prepared to give and receive feedback with peers. Begins to use digital tools to produce messages
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Maine Learning Results Kindergarten Standards	<p>strengthen writing as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including peer collaboration. <p>Writing: Inquiry to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard W.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate questions by participating in shared research and writing projects. Gather information from provided sources and/or recall information from experiences in order to answer questions with guidance and support from adults.
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Maine Roads to Quality- Professional Development Network (MRTQ-PDN)

MRTQ-PDN is our state's network for early care and education educators and providers. They hold the registry for early educators in Maine and supply a portal to professional development certificates and credentials for educators. MRTQ-PDN also offers a wide variety of online and virtual trainings for ECE professionals at a low cost, including the MELDS online course and I/T MELDS online course.

Trainings can support administrators, educators and support staff in multiple areas of best practice in early care and education.



Upcoming MRTQ trainings and offered multiple times over the year:

[Foundations of Universal Design and Individualizing”](#) (3/04-3/31)

[Collaborating with Others to Support Inclusion](#) (1/28-2/24)

[Creating Inclusive Preschool Settings](#) (04/01-05/12)

Many more that can be found on their training calendar: [ECE Calendar Maine](#)

SNOW Chart Follow up Activity

Review

- Are there ideas that should move to a different quadrant?
- Are there items that no longer apply or can be removed?
- Are there new ideas or insights you want to add?

Update

- Use a different colored marker to make updates.
- Move, cross out, or add ideas based on what you learned today.
- Talk together about what has shifted in your thinking.

Share

- Be ready to share one change or new insight that came from revisiting your chart.

[IRIS Modules](#): Early Intervention and early childhood learning modules
[Maine Early Learning and Development Standards \(I/T and Preschool\)](#)
[Pre-K Classroom Environment Checklist.pdf - Google Drive](#) from Boston Public Schools Focus on 3's program

[Maine DOE Toileting Support Resource](#): Resource for educators and administrators focusing on toileting support for children and families

[Center for Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning](#) (CFSEFEL): this site offers visual tools, social stories and other supports and strategies for classroom teachers and parents

[Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies](#) (University of Maine) offers tip sheets for inclusion, social emotional development in early childhood education and many more tools

[Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies \(University of Maine\) Visual Supports webpages](#) offers information and tools for using visual supports in the classroom

[Maine Roads to Quality- Professional Development Network](#) Early Care and Education (ECE) network for support and professional development offering low-cost virtual professional development and houses the Maine ECE Registry

[National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#) (NCPMI) Social-emotional framework for early care and education that include multiple resources and learning

[Early Childhood Investigations Webinars](#) Free virtual webinars and archived webinars that cover all things early childhood including child development, inclusion, social-emotional foundations, self-regulation and so much more.

[ECE Consultation for ME](#) Early childhood mental health consultation free service in all counties for ages 0-8

Resources

Reach out to for more information:

Dr. Sandy Flacke, Deputy Director of Special Services, Maine DOE
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Maine DOE Trainings:
Demographic Information





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