

The background of the slide features dark blue silhouettes of children sitting and reading books. A thin white horizontal line is positioned above the title, and two thicker light blue horizontal lines are positioned on either side of the title.

# Supporting Children in Early Childhood Classrooms

Presented by: The Maine DOE Early Learning Team



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Meet Our Maine Team

# Meet Your Presenters

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# 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 comprise 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](http://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](mailto: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](#).



*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 for each child to push services into the classroom

In the Classroom

# Universally Designed Learning

## Achieving UDL in the ECE classroom

- Ensure that all children have access to materials, activities and learning
- Use of visual tools in the classroom
- Give choices often
- Individualize for children's learning and participation
- Offer multiple play and learning centers with learning objectives
- Remember it is the learning and process, not the product
- Give careful consideration of potential roadblocks and removal of barriers to children's learning and development

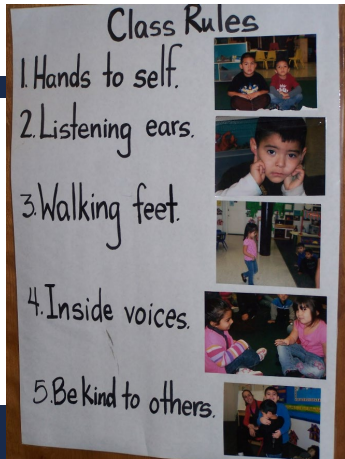
# “The layout of the physical environment fosters encounters, communication, learning, and relationships.”

- **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)



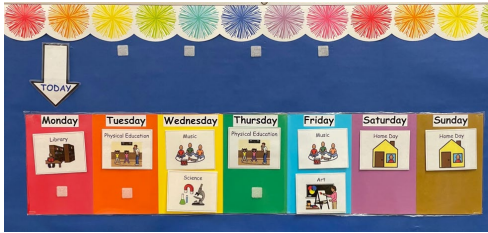
## Questions for consideration – a welcoming and accessible place for learning:

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 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?**

# In the 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


**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


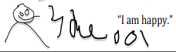
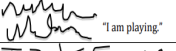
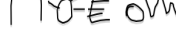






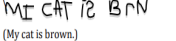
Simple Block Structures- Neighborhood

 <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

Developmental Stages of Writing

Pre-Literate	
<b>Stage Description</b>	Sample
<b>Scribble Stage</b> - starting point any place on page, resembles drawing large circular strokes and random marks that do not resemble print or communicate a message	
<b>Symbolic Stage</b> - starting point any place on page, pictures or random strokes/marks with an intended message	
<b>Directional Scribble</b> - scribble left to right direction, linear, intended as writing that communicates a meaningful message/idea	
<b>Symbolic/Mock Letters</b> - letter-like formations, may resemble letters but it isn't intentional, interspersed w/ numbers, spacing rarely present	
Emergent	
<b>Strings of Letters</b> - 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	
<b>Groups of letters</b> - groupings of letters with spaces in between to resemble words	
<b>Labeling pictures</b> - matching beginning sounds with the letter to label a picture	
<b>Environmental Print</b> - copies letters/words from environmental/classroom print, reversals common, uses a variety of resources to facilitate writing	
Transitional	
<b>Letter/Word Representation</b> -uses first letter sound of word to represent entire word, uses letter sound relationships	
<b>First/Last Letter Representation</b> -word represented by first and last letter sound	
<b>Medial Letter Sounds</b> - 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	

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.

**Maine Learning Results Kindergarten Standards**

4

**Indicators: 46-60 months  
End of Preschool Standards**

3

**Indicators: 34-48 months**

2

**Indicators: 16-36 months**

1

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

# 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**

- › tells others what own scribbles mean.

**Indicators: 34-48 months**

**b. Process and Production**

- › With prompting and support:
  - 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

**c. Inquiry to Build and Present Knowledge**

- › 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.

**Indicators: 46-60 months  
End of Preschool Standards**

- › Prints some upper and lowercase letters.
- › Begins to demonstrate the use of standardized English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing:
  - 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.

**b. Process and Production**

- › With prompting and support:
  - 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

**Maine Learning Results Kindergarten Standards**

strengthen writing as needed. With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including peer collaboration.

Writing: Inquiry to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard W.1

- › 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.

# Maine Roads to Quality- Professional Development Network (MRTQ-PDN)

**MRTQ-PDN** is our state's network for early care and education educators. 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:

[\*\*“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](#)

# Resources

[IRIS Modules](#): Early Intervention and early childhood learning modules

[Maine Roads to Quality – Rising Up: Achieving a Star Level 3](#)

[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

MRTQ houses the [early care and education career lattice](#)

[Head Start Performance Standards](#)

[www.childcarechoices.me](http://www.childcarechoices.me)

## Reach out to the Early Learning Team:

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