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CURRICULUM POLICIES AND GUIDELINES OF THE PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION GRANT PROGRAMS

The Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Program defines a "High-Quality Preschool Program" as an early learning program that includes structural elements that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality, including at a minimum:

- High staff qualifications;

- High-quality professional development;

- Child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1;

- Class size of no more than 20 children;

- Inclusion of children with disabilities;

- *Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry*;

- Individualized accommodations and supports;

- Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K–12 instructional staff;

- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;

- On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development; and

- Evidence-based health and safety standards.

(Federal Register, 2014, pp. 48858-48859)

This brief focuses on one of these key elements, the curriculum. It examines the curricular policies and guidelines of the eighteen states that received a Preschool Development or Expansion Grant; it seeks to answer the question of how these states are addressing the curriculum-related requirements of the PDG grant program. In the course of answering this question, this brief will clarify the PDG requirements, discuss aspects of curriculum, and present a snapshot of the preschool curriculum policies and guidelines of the PDG states.

UNPACKING THE PDG DEFINITION OF HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "curriculum" is the organized framework that delineates the content children are to learn, the processes through which children will use to achieve the identified curricular goals, what teachers will do to help children achieve these goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occur (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995). Essentially, a curriculum identifies the "what" and "how" of the learning experiences children will have.

The PDG definition of high quality preschool curriculum includes several terms and concepts that should guide the selection of which curriculum model to use. The following section seeks to "unpack" these PDG concepts which are generally accepted as indicative of an effective curriculum.

Developmentally appropriate curriculum and practices are based on knowledge from three inter-related sources: (1) what is known about age-related child development and learning; (2) what is known about the strengths, interests, and needs of individual children; and (3) what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children are living (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 9). In order for a curriculum to be considered developmentally appropriate, it needs to be built on a foundation of child development.

The curriculum must align with the state's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS). According to the definition for "early learning and development standards" in the PDG Notice of Invitation to Apply (Federal Register, 2014, p. 48858), a state's ELDS describes what "children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do and their disposition toward learning". A state's ELDS should "cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness" (i.e., approaches towards learning, physical well-being, motor development including adaptive skills, social and emotional development, language, literacy, the arts, cognition, and general knowledge such as early mathematics and science). The ELDS is a set of expectations and developmental milestones that should be developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate for each of the age groups it includes. These also should be accommodating to children with disabilities or developmental delays and dual language learners.

A **"comprehensive curriculum model"** is one that addresses the "whole child" and includes the essential school readiness domains mentioned above. Since PDG programs are directed to use a curriculum model that targets the domains included in the state's ELDS, whatever curriculum model is selected should be comprehensive.

Culturally and linguistically responsive curricula support teachers to be responsive to the child and family's culture and home language. A curriculum that supports teachers to be responsive includes guidance on how to adapt activities for specific ethnic and cultural groups, as well as dual language learners, and may include diverse materials to use when implementing activities (e.g., multi-racial dolls, books reflecting children's cultures).

There are several definitions of **"evidence-based curricula"** but there is agreement that evidence-based means that a curriculum, practice or intervention has been developed based on research and has been found to positively impact child outcomes. The research needs to be "quality" research which connotes that the curriculum has been researched independently from the curriculum publisher, uses an experimental or quasi-experimental design, is replicated multiple times, and results are published in peer-reviewed professional journals (Marder and Fraser, 2012). This type of research on curriculum is generally done within the context of evaluating programs; one example is the study of the long term effects of the Boston Public Schools' universal prekindergarten program (Weiland and Yoshikawa, 2013). An evidence-based curriculum has the capacity to be implemented with a high degree of fidelity, and is suitable for various populations and settings. Most importantly, evidence-based identifies a curriculum that has been shown to impact child outcomes. Given this rigorous standard, few early childhood curricula have been shown to be "evidence-based" (refer to Appendix A).

RESEARCH ON CURRICULUM MODELS

The Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research Initiative (PCER) directly studied the efficacy of early childhood curriculum models to produce positive outcomes. The PCER (Institute of Education Sciences, 2008) was a longitudinal study conducted by a variety of research institutions across the country to examine the efficacy of fourteen early childhood curriculum models. The PCER asked the following questions:

1. What impact do these curriculum models have on preschool children's language and early literacy development, on their mathematical knowledge, and on their social and emotional development as evidenced by their behavior?

2. Is there an impact from the curricula on these same children when they complete kindergarten?

3. What is the impact of these curricula on instructional practices, teacher-child interactions, and overall classroom quality?

The results from this robust and well-designed study indicate that an efficacy evaluation of any curriculum is a complex proposition. Only two of the fourteen curriculum models were found to impact child outcomes during the Pre-K year; however, four of the curricula had an impact on child outcomes at the end of kindergarten, despite three of these curricula not having shown any statistically significant impacts during the Pre-K year in which they were implemented. Eight of the curricula researched impacted classroom quality and instruction, but three of these curricula did not significantly impact child outcomes in either Pre-K or at the end of kindergarten (IES, 2008). The results of the PCER study are perplexing and challenge many of our working assumptions about curriculum.

The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL) recently conducted a review of 14 comprehensive curricula on 13 components identified as being essential to effective curriculum. The selection of which curricula to include in this review was based on whether a curriculum addressed multiple domains in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCDELF), contained sequenced lessons for preschool classrooms, is commercially available, and that it had been used by some Head Start programs in 2010-2012 (NCQTL, 2015, p. 3). The review process involved eight reviewers with advanced degrees and experience in early childhood education or development who received 10 to 15 hours of training on the rating rubric. Each curriculum was independently rated by two reviewers who provided rationales for each of their ratings. A core rater resolved any discrepancies found in the reviewers' ratings.

Of the 13 components of an effective curriculum identified in the NCQTL review, eight of these closely align with the PDG criteria or concepts defined above. The alignment is summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1: Alignment of PDG Criteria and NCQTL Components of Effective Curriculum

PDG CRITERIA	NCQTL COMPONENTS
Developmental Appropriate Curriculum and Practices	Component 1: Grounded in Child Development Principles
	Component 6: Specific Learning Goals
	Component 9: Supports for Individualized Instruction
Comprehensive Curriculum Model	Component 4: Comprehensive Across Learning Domains
	Component 5: Depth for Each Covered Learning Domain
Culturally and Linguistically Responsive	Component 10: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive
Evidence-Based Curriculum	Component 2: Curriculum is Evidence-Based
	Component 3: Curriculum Shows Effects

In determining their ratings of the 14 curricula for each of the 13 NCTQL components, the reviewers used a rating rubric that posed a few questions for each component. A sampling of the questions reviewers used to determine a rating for the NCQTL components included in Table 1, are as follows (NCQTL, 2015, pp. 4-7):

• *Component 1:* Do learning activities progress from simple to more complex?

• *Component 2:* Has the curriculum been investigated using a rigorous design (e.g., quasi-experimental, randomized control trial)?

- *Component 3:* What is the size of effects on child outcomes?
- *Component 4:* Does the curriculum cover the majority of learning domains of school readiness identified by the HSCDELF?
- *Component 5:* Does the curriculum cover almost all domain elements within the learning domain?
- *Component 6:* Are there specific, measurable, child-focused, and developmentally appropriate goals for each learning activity?
- *Component 9:* Are there guidelines for ways to adapt the materials and/or environment to meet different levels of need?
- *Component 10:* Do the materials present diversity in terms of culture, ethnicity, gender, etc.?

The ratings for the 14 curricula reviewed for these components that are aligned with the PDG criteria are presented in Appendix A. It is clear that no curriculum shows solid evidence for all of the components; furthermore, it is clear that each curriculum has areas of strengths but also some weaknesses across this set of components. No curriculum is perfect.

PDG STATES' CURRICULUM POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

There are a multitude of early childhood curricula from which to choose. Some curricula are commercially available replete with teacher guides, materials, and/or resources (e.g., Creative Curriculum, High Scope, Curiosity Corner) while others are fluid and based more on a philosophy or approach (e.g., Emergent Curriculum, Montessori, Reggio Emilia). How do early childhood programs decide which curriculum to use? The first consideration is to choose a curriculum that reflects the program's philosophy. When states provide public funding for Pre-K either through an appropriation from the legislature and/or a grant, states sometimes establish guidelines and criteria that impact or regulate the curriculum a program must use.

To closely examine the PDG states' approach to curriculum, a scan of the PDG applications of all eighteen PDG states was completed. A table compiling that information along with information from other sources was constructed (refer to Appendix B). This table summarizes information about each state's policies or guidelines, approval process (if one exists), any recommended or approved curricula, and assessments used to inform instruction. A review of this table reveals that there are several commonalities across all PDG states. All states explicitly state that a program's curriculum must be comprehensive and aligned with the state's early learning and development standards. Many also require that the curriculum model be research- or evidence-based. Besides these commonalities, there are differences among the states. A few states require the use of state-approved curricula, and a few have specified self-assessment processes or rubrics to be used in selecting a curriculum. However many states do not have a state curriculum approval process nor do they specify a specific curriculum model or approach.

The policies or guidelines of the PDG states can be grouped into two broad categories: those that direct programs to use approved or recommended curriculum, and those that allow programs to select any curriculum as long as it meets specific criteria.

APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA

Of the eighteen PDG states, only three—Arkansas, Maryland, and Tennessee—have policies or guidelines that direct programs to choose curriculum from an approved or recommended list. The state approved preschool curriculum lists are available in Appendix B and/or may be accessed online:

- Arkansas: http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/abc/pdf/currlist.pdf

- Maryland: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/A7EA6261-E4F6-430C-9615-87A712323BC7/25354/StateRecommendedComprehensiveMatrix_r082510.pdf
- Tennessee: https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/prek_approved_curricula.pdf

The lists of approved curriculum models result from rigorous review processes conducted at the state level that typically involve stakeholders and experts. For example, Arkansas convened a Curriculum Review Committee in 2011-2012 to develop a tool for evaluating curricula to determine if the curriculum is appropriate to use with its preschool program, Arkansas Better Chance (ABC). The committee developed the *Arkansas Early Childhood Curriculum Evaluation Tool* to use to review curricula in order to establish its list of approved curricula (refer to Appendix B for more information). States' approved curriculum lists are not static; they are periodically reviewed and amended or edited as developments of new or revised curricula warrant.

CURRICULA SELECTION BASED ON CRITERIA

The other fifteen PDG states do not specify the use of particular curriculum models, but do stipulate that whichever curriculum a PDG program selects, it must meet specific criteria (refer to Appendix B). New Jersey has specific criteria curriculum must meet but no approved list of curricula; however, the *New Jersey Department of Education Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines* http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/guide/impguidelines.pdf (New Jersey Department of Education, 2015) identifies four curricula that meet all of the state's criteria.

A few states support programs to self-assess a curriculum model by providing them with a rubric or additional guidance. For example, Virginia requires programs to select a curriculum using the states *Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric and Planning Tool* http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/early_childhood/preschool_initiative/preschool_rubric.pdf. The state then conducts regular site visits to confirm that the program's curriculum and materials align with the rubric. Alabama requires programs to determine the appropriateness of a curriculum model through a self-assessment by using the *First Class Pre-K Classroom Guidelines* http://children.alabama.gov/uploadedFiles/File/20152016_Classroom_Guidelines.pdf. First Class coaches support programs with curriculum implementation.

Some states assist programs in their selection and implementation of curriculum through their quality improvement or program monitoring systems. For example, Arizona requires that all PDG programs participate in the Arizona Department of Education's Early Childhood Quality Improvement Process (ECQUIP); ECQUIP provides onsite consultation to help programs coordinate and align their curriculum and assessments. Several states review the appropriateness of the preschool curricula programs are using during monitoring visits. For example, *Maine's Public Preschool Program Standards* provide guidance on curriculum; the state's monitoring process evaluates the programs' curriculum implementation and other program practices.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

One of the main purposes for assessment in early childhood education is to provide the teacher with information as to how each child is making progress towards the learning standards or indictors so that the teacher may make "sound decisions about teaching and learning" (NAEYC & NAECS-SDE, 2003, p.3). Information from ongoing assessments based on observation, work samples, and other developmentally appropriate measures are needed to inform the cycle of curriculum planning, implementation, further assessment, and evaluation. It is for this reason that Appendix B includes a column entitled "Assessments to Inform Instruction" that summarizes the assessments states require their PDG programs to use. The overwhelming majority of these assessments are formative and developmentally appropriate.

CONCLUSION

A program's curriculum identifies the "what" and "how" of the learning experiences children have. There are a multitude of curriculum models from which to choose. The PDG has established requirements for curriculum that are generally accepted as reflective of a high-quality and effective program. These required elements, delineated above, include:

- Alignment with the state's early learning and development standards;
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum and practices;
- Culturally and linguistically responsive; and
- Evidence-based and comprehensive.

An analysis of the PDG states' curricular policies and guidelines indicate a few commonalities as well as several unique features. A few states require their PDG programs to select a curriculum model that has state approval, while others only specify criteria for programs to use when selecting a curriculum. The comprehensive nature of a curriculum also would suggest considering the assessment framework used by a program to inform curriculum planning and implementation as these are interrelated.

Research on various curriculum models is helping to clarify which models address the essential elements of an effective curriculum that is more likely to impact outcomes at the child and classroom levels. This information should be considered in developing policies, guidelines, and practices.

The recommendations of the NAEYC and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists-State Departments of Education (NAECS-SDE) Joint Position Statement still ring true:

> *Implement curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children."* (NAEYC and NAECS-SDE, 2003, p.2)

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APPENDIX A: CURRICULUM RATINGS ON PDG CRITERIA AND ALIGNED KEY COMPONENTS[1]

PDG TERMINOLOGY / Aligned Key Components in NCQTL Review	DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE			COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM MODEL		CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE	EVIDENCE-BASED	
	Grounded in Child Development Principles	Specific Learning Goals	Supports for Individualized Instruction	Comprehensive across Learning Domains	Depth for Each Covered Learning Domain	Culturally and Linguistically Responsive	Curriculum is Evidence-Based	Curriculum Shows Effects on Child Outcomes
Curriculum Reviewed:								
Core Knowledge® Preschool Sequence	Some	Minimal	Minimal	Some	Some	Minimal	–	–
The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool	Solid	Some	Some	Solid	Solid	Some	Minimal	–
Curiosity Corner	Some	Minimal	–	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	–
DLM Early Childhood Express®	Some	Some	Some	Some	Some	Some	Minimal	Minimal
Frog Street Pre-K	Solid	Solid	Some	Solid	Solid	Solid	–	–
Galileo Pre-K Online	Solid	Solid	Minimal	Solid	Solid	Some	Minimal	–
Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)®	–	Minimal	Some	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	–	–
HighReach Learning®	Solid	Some	Some	Some	Some	Some	–	–
HighScope®	Solid	Some	Some	Some	Some	Some	Minimal	Minimal
Innovations: The Comprehensive Preschool Curriculum	Some	–	–	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	–	–
The InvestiGator Club®	Solid	Some	Some	Some	Some	Some	–	–
Let's Begin with the Letter People®	Solid	Some	Minimal	Some	Solid	Some	–	–
Opening the World of Learning (OWL)	Solid	Some	Some	Some	Solid	Some	Solid	Solid
PreschoolFirst	Some	Some	Some	Some	Some	Minimal	–	–
Scholastic Big Day for PreK™	Solid	Solid	Some	Solid	Solid	Solid	Minimal	–
Tools of the Mind	Solid	Some	Solid	Some	Some	Some	Some	Some

Adapted from: Preschool Curriculum Consumer Report (2015). National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning.

LEGEND: – No Evidence ● Minimal Evidence ● Some Evidence ● Solid, High-Quality Evidence

[1] The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning review identified 13 components; these eight were found to align most closely with the PDG criteria.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF STATES' PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

STATE	CURRICULAR POLICIES OR GUIDELINES	APPROVAL PROCESS	APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA AND OTHER INFORMATION	ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION
ALABAMA	• Aligned with *Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children* • Developmentally appropriate	No state curriculum approval process in place Programs are to **self-assess** using First Class Pre-K Framework and the Alabama Developmental Standards to devise a plan for implementing curriculum that will improve quality	No specific curricula endorsed; however, the following statement is made: Curriculum must align with the learning standards and TS GOLD assessment. "(C)urriculum similar to The Creative Curriculum and the HighScope approach can support a teacher in developing strategies to assist children in mastering skills to meet Office of School Readiness standards and cover the dimensions of the GOLD assessment to ensure school readiness."	Teaching Strategies GOLD
ARIZONA	• Aligned with the *Arizona Early Learning Standards and the Program Guidelines for High-quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten* (PGHQ) • Comprehensive curriculum • Integrate children's language, culture, and identity • Broad and open-ended to address children's varying abilities	No state curriculum approval process in place Use the *Early Childhood Quality Improvement Process* (ECQUIP) to coordinate and align curriculum and assessment	No specific curricula or curricular approaches are endorsed or suggested	Teaching Strategies GOLD

STATE	CURRICULAR POLICIES OR GUIDELINES	APPROVAL PROCESS	APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA AND OTHER INFORMATION	ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION
ARKANSAS	• Programs must use a state-approved curriculum that aligns to the *Arkansas Early Learning and Development Standards* • Developmentally appropriate • Culturally appropriate • Comprehensive, focusing on all domains of child development	Programs need to use the *Arkansas Early Childhood Curriculum Evaluation Tool* Part 1 of review: All domains included (i.e., social emotional, physical development, language, creative/aesthetics, cognitive/intellectual) Part 2 of review: Focuses on 25 indicators of developmentally appropriate practice (e.g., Does the curriculum promote interactive learning and encourage the child's construction of knowledge?) (See Appendix B.4.3 of PDG application on p. 317 for tool http://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/applications/arapplicationpdg2015.pdf)	Arkansas' list of State-Approved Curriculum: • Adventures in Learning • Comprehensive Preschool Program (Abrahms; must use all components) • Core Knowledge • Creative Curriculum • Curiosity Corner • DLM Early Childhood Express • Harcourt Preschool Programs (must use all components) • High Reach ("fun page" packet may not be used) • HighScope • Houghton Mifflin Pre-K • The InvestiGator Club • Montessori • Opening the World of Learning • Pebble Soup • Preschool First • Project Approach • Reggio Emilia • Scholastic Early Childhood Curriculum	Work Sampling System
CONNECTICUT	• "Standards-driven evidence-based curricula" • Curriculum must align with the *Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards* (CT ELDS) • Use developmentally appropriate practices • Responsive to cultural and linguistic differences	No state curriculum approval process in place	No specific curricula or curricular approaches are endorsed or suggested	Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework

STATE	CURRICULAR POLICIES OR GUIDELINES	APPROVAL PROCESS	APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA AND OTHER INFORMATION	ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION
HAWAII	• Curriculum must be aligned with the *Hawaii Early Learning and Development Standards* (HELDS) • Horizontal and vertical alignment between Pre-K and K curriculum and assessment in the charter schools	No state curriculum approval process in place	Promoting the use of the evidence-based curriculum from the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Also promotes the use of the Second Step curriculum to teach social skills and violence prevention No other curricula or curricular approaches for other domains are endorsed or suggested	Teaching Strategies GOLD
ILLINOIS	• A research-based curriculum that is aligned with the *Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards* (IELDS), the World-class Instructional Development and Design (WIDA) English Language Development Standards, and the Early Spanish Language Development Standards • PDG programs must align curriculum with the local kindergarten program their children will transition to	No state curriculum approval process in place	No specific curricula or curricular approaches besides "evidence-based" are endorsed or suggested	Programs are required to select a formative assessment that is valid, reliable and aligned with IELDS and the program's progress over time

STATE	CURRICULAR POLICIES OR GUIDELINES	APPROVAL PROCESS	APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA AND OTHER INFORMATION	ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION
LOUISIANA	• Curriculum must be research-based and aligned with the *Louisiana Early Learning and Development Standards* (ELDS) • Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) will review selected curricula to ensure alignment with ELDS and kindergarten readiness.	No state curriculum approval process in place	No specific curricula are endorsed or suggested Requirements for Curriculum are as follows (excerpt from program guide): Opportunities for activities and routines, curriculum, and planning that are developmentally-appropriate, and support interrelated development and address the *Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards* in the following domains: Approaches to Learning, Cognitive Development and General Knowledge (Creative Thinking and Expression, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies), Health and Physical Well Being and Motor Development, Language and Literacy Development, and Social and Emotional Development (pursuant to BESE Bulletin 136).	Teaching Strategies GOLD
MAINE	• Programs are to use *Maine's Early Learning Development Standards* to guide choice of curriculum and assessment • Curriculum must be research-based • Instructional strategies also must be evidence-based	No state curriculum approval process in place Curriculum is part of the Public Preschool Program Standards that are used for ongoing monitoring and support	No specific curricula or curricular approaches besides "research-based" are endorsed or suggested All public Pre-K/PDG programs have chosen to adopt Opening the World of Learning (OWL)	Teaching Strategies GOLD, High Scope Child Observation Record (COR), or locally-designed and approved formative assessments

STATE	CURRICULAR POLICIES OR GUIDELINES	APPROVAL PROCESS	APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA AND OTHER INFORMATION	ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION
MARYLAND	• Prekindergarten (Pre-K) curriculum must align with the State's prekindergarten and kindergarten curricular frameworks, also known as the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS). • Programs select either state recommended curricula, the local school district's Pre-K curriculum, or historically recognized curriculum (i.e., Montessori, Waldorf, High Scope) depending upon the type of program (i.e., all Pre-K in schools must implement the local school district curriculum, and all Pre-K in community-based programs must adopt a preschool curriculum from the State-recommended list)	Maryland's curriculum review process for determining State-recommended commercial preschool curricula include criteria for English learners. "We have established a very rigorous review process to determine the soundness of the curricular resources with regard to the state's expectations of what young children should know and be able to do," said Dr. Rolf Grafwallner, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Early Childhood Development. "	Maryland's State Recommended list: • Frog Street Pre-K (4) • McGraw-Hill - DLM EC Express (3 & 4) • MacMillan/McGraw Hill - Little Treasures (4) • Robert-Leslie - InvestiGator Club (3, 4, & 5) • Curiosity Corner (4) • Teaching Strategies – Creative Curriculum Preschool (3,4) Maryland's list of "historically recognized" curricula are: • Montessori • Waldorf/Steiner • High Scope	Ready For Kindergarten (R4K): Early Learning Assessment

MASSACHUSETTS	• Provide developmentally appropriate program that utilizes:
	  » The Early Childhood Program Standards for Three and Four Year Olds,
	  » The Massachusetts Frameworks for Math and Literacy Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences
	  » Formative assessment
		No state curriculum approval process in place
		
		In addition to using standards to guide curriculum, the materials selected must reflect the language and culture of the children
			No specific curriculum or curricular approach is endorsed or suggested	Pre-K programs must select one of the three Early Education and Care (ECC)-approved
				
				formative assessment tools:
				• Work Sampling System
				• High Scope COR
				• Teaching Strategies GOLD

STATE	CURRICULAR POLICIES OR GUIDELINES	APPROVAL PROCESS	APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA AND OTHER INFORMATION	ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION
MONTANA	• Developmentally appropriate curriculum that aligns with what children will learn in kindergarten • Aligned with the *Montana Early Learning Standards* (MELS) • Curriculum is one of the components in Montana's Continuous Improvement Cycle (along with assessment, instruction, family engagement and 4 other components). The Cycle is a data-driven monitoring and continuous improvement system.	No state curriculum approval process in place	No specific curriculum or curricular approach is endorsed or suggested Does recommend using children's home language in the early childhood curriculum as well as promoting language development in both English and the home language	Developing list of approved tools Most Pre-K programs now use: • Our World of Learning (OWL) • Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS Pre-K), or • Teaching Strategies GOLD
NEVADA	• All Pre-K programs are required to implement the *Nevada Early Learning and Development Standards* (ELDS) through appropriate curriculum and aligned assessments • Teachers use the Nevada Pre-K Standards as a "guiding framework for their curriculum by integrating these standards into their daily center activities"	No state curriculum approval process in place	No specific curriculum or curricular approach is endorsed or suggested All Washoe County School District Pre-K programs use strategies and curriculum from the Technical Assistance Center for Social Emotional Interventions (TACSEI) Some Head Start and school programs use Creative Curriculum	No state required formative assessment at this time; some programs use Teaching Strategies GOLD

STATE	CURRICULAR POLICIES OR GUIDELINES	APPROVAL PROCESS	APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA AND OTHER INFORMATION	ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION
NEW JERSEY	• DOE Administrative Code for Preschool: 6A:13A Elements of High Quality Preschool Program stipulates requirements for all state Pre-K programs: » Aligned with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards » Developmentally appropriate » Evidence-based curriculum and assessments » Culturally and linguistically relevant » Comprehensive curricula	Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards delineate effective teaching practices linked to developmentally appropriate learning outcomes. This is the framework for planning and adopting curricula for preschool classrooms. Specify the criteria for effective curricula: • Aligned with the Standards; • Provide methods for inclusion of students with disabilities; • Have clear, research-based content and teaching strategies; • Include significant content taught with focus and integration; • Focus on maximizing child initiation and engagement; • Are developmentally appropriate; • Show evidence of benefits.	The four curriculum models identified as meeting all criteria are: • Creative Curriculum, • HighScope • Tools of the Mind • Curiosity Corner	Pre-K programs must select one of the following: • Work Sampling System • High Scope COR • Teaching Strategies GOLD

STATE	CURRICULAR POLICIES OR GUIDELINES	APPROVAL PROCESS	APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA AND OTHER INFORMATION	ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION
NEW YORK	• Aligned with the *Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core* (which also aligns with the Early Learning Guidelines) • Developmentally appropriate, evidenced-based curriculum • Comprehensive: addresses the key domains of development and emphasizes "language, emergent literacy, early mathematics skills, social and emotional development, physical abilities, and structured and unstructured play"	No state curriculum approval process in place	No specific curriculum or curricular approach is endorsed or suggested The Yonkers City School District (YCSD), a PDG sub-grantee, has adopted a comprehensive, integrated early learning curriculum called Splash into Pre-K in all 31 of its elementary schools	Pre-K programs use one of the following: • Work Sampling System • High Scope COR • Teaching Strategies GOLD
RHODE ISLAND	• Comprehensive, integrated curriculum aligned with the *RI Early Learning and Development Standards*	No state curriculum approval process in place	No specific curriculum or curricular approach is endorsed or suggested Flexibility in design and delivery of curriculum; encourage Pre-K teachers to incorporate various learning theories, research-based instructional tools and recommended teaching practices	Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) TSG trainings focus on using TSG to inform instruction
TENNESSEE	• Curriculum must align with the *Tennessee Early Learning Development Standards* (TN-ELDS) • Working towards creating a coordinated and cohesive Pre-K through grade 2 continuum that aligns curriculum, instruction, assessments, family engagement, and professional development	Yes, has state curriculum approval process in place	Has a List of Approved Curriculum which is divided into two sections: Comprehensive/integrated Curriculum and Supplemental Curriculum. The list can be found at: https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/prek_approved_curricula.pdf Metro Nashville Public Schools adopting universal curriculum in Pre-K: Creative Curriculum for Preschool Implementing the Pyramid Model for social and emotional development	List of assessments to choose from: • Woodcock Johnson • Peabody Picture Vocabulary • Cooper Farran Behavioral Rating Scale • ISIP Reading Assessment

STATE	CURRICULAR POLICIES OR GUIDELINES	APPROVAL PROCESS	APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED CURRICULA AND OTHER INFORMATION	ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION
VERMONT	• Curriculum must be aligned with the new Birth-Grade 3 *Vermont Early Learning Standards* (VELS) • Developmentally appropriate, evidence-based curriculum that is culturally and linguistically responsive	No state curriculum approval process in place	No specific curriculum or curricular approach is endorsed or suggested	Teaching Strategies GOLD

VIRGINIA	• Curriculum must be aligned with Virginia's *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds*.
	
	• Virginia's Foundation Blocks are aligned with Virginia's Kindergarten Standards of Learning (SOL) and the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)
	
	• Meet the criteria set forth in Virginia's *Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric and Planning Tool*. Some of the criteria are:
	  » Developmentally appropriate
	  » Comprehensive, address all developmental domains
	  » Research-based
		Program staff review curricula and materials being considered by using the Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric and Planning Tool. This tool "helps early childhood educators identify and choose curricula that are based on scientific research and that align with *Virginia's Foundation Blocks*."
		
		The tool further states "a program's curriculum may include one or more commercial curricula, locally-developed curriculum, and other instructional materials. Therefore, this rubric is meant to complement the *Foundation Blocks* by helping early childhood educators review their existing curricula and products they are considering using to determine whether they will fulfill the standards and learning expectations set forth in the *Foundation Blocks*."
			No specific curriculum or curricular approach is endorsed or suggested; however, programs select curricula that have passed a review using the Rubric http://www.doe.virginia.gov/ instruction/early_childhood/ preschool_initiative/preschool_rubric. pdf
			
			Basic criteria for acceptable curricula include:
			
			• The age group for which the curriculum is appropriate and intended is stated.
			
			• The curriculum goals are clear – both the knowledge to be attained and the skills to be learned.
			
			• The curriculum is comprehensive and addresses all developmental domains (cognitive, physical, personal, and social).
			
			• The curriculum has a detailed scope and sequence of instruction.
			
			• The curriculum content is learned through focused intentional teaching, investigation, and play.
			
			• The curriculum includes adaptations for children with special needs or disabilities, children of varying abilities, and English language learners.
			
			• There is proof of the research upon which the curriculum is based.
			
			Annual site visits used to confirm curriculum and materials selected align with *Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric*
				List of assessments to choose from:
				
				• Teaching Strategies GOLD
				
				• Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)