



# Early Childhood Foundations and Born to Learn Ages Birth to Five

Oregon's *Early Childhood Foundations* are learning guidelines that describe what children should know, understand and be able to do during the first five years of life. The *Foundations* support school readiness by promoting healthy child development, early learning and effective teaching strategies. They inform parents about healthy child development and assists parents in supporting their children. Additionally, the *Early Childhood Foundations* are intended to be used by early childhood providers and teachers working with young children in all settings across the early childhood system. Early childhood settings include child care centers, family child care homes, private preschools, Early Head Start/Head Start and others.

*Born to Learn* is a companion document to the *Early Childhood Foundations*. It is a practical training manual developed to assist early childhood providers, teachers, and parents make the connection between what children are learning and how they can enhance that learning by aligning activities with the *Early Childhood Foundations*. *Born to Learn* is based on best practices for how children learn and describes quality early learning environments and experiences. It discusses how play-based activities and routines support children's development and learning.

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**Oregon Department of Education, Office of Student Learning and Partnerships**

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=146>

**Ready for School Initiative**

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=870>

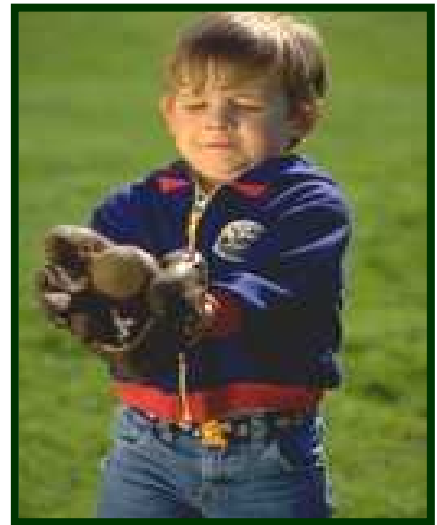
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**Special Acknowledgement to:**

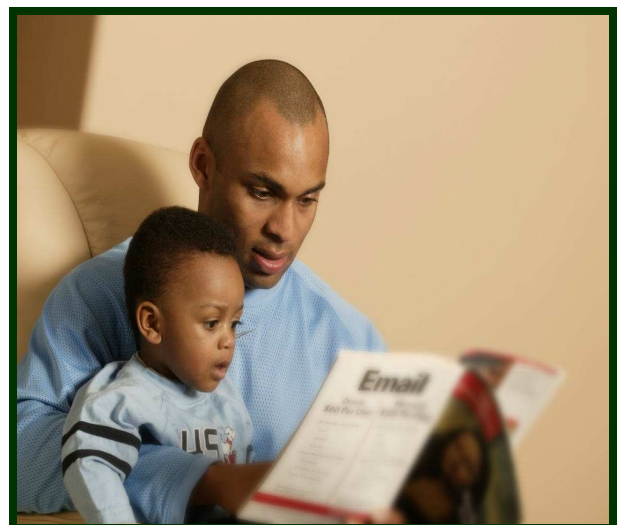
Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Health & Human Services System  
Kentucky Department of Education  
Head Start Child Outcomes Framework

# Early Childhood Foundations

A Companion Document to the Born to Learn



***Building Upon Early  
Childhood Foundations***



# INTRODUCTION

## OREGON EARLY CHILDHOOD FOUNDATIONS Ages Birth to Five

### **Preface**

“Research has established a clear and compelling connection between the quality of children’s learning experiences and later success in school and in life.”  
 (“Starting Early Starting Now,” Education Commission of the States, 2001)

Parents, families, Child-Care, Pre-school and Pre-Kindergarten programs that support the natural development of children and provide effective teaching practices stimulate children’s intellectual and social emotional growth, both critical to their future success in school.

Oregon is committed to a comprehensive early childhood system that ensures the health, education and well being of every child. The whole community must share the responsibility of such a system. Parents, care-givers, teachers, policy makers, schools, state and community agencies must partner to reach Oregon’s goal of each and every child entering school physically and emotionally healthy, eager to learn and prepared for life-long success.

The Oregon Early Childhood Foundations, Ages Birth to Five are “guidelines.” They are intended as a resource to assist parents, family members, early childhood teachers, caregivers and other adults promoting the development and learning of young children. They are designed to help children acquire important skills and concepts across all areas of development.

## **OREGON'S EARLY CHILDHOOD FOUNDATIONS: What They Are and How They Should be Used**

The Oregon Early Childhood Foundations are a new resource providing “guidelines” for all adults working with children ages birth to five. They are designed to assist Parents, Families, Child-Care Providers, Pre-school and Pre-Kindergarten Programs promote learning and healthy development of Oregon’s young children.

Oregon’s Early Childhood Foundations are presented as a framework of building blocks that are important for school success. The Early Childhood Foundations are intended to be inclusive of all children -- English language learners, children with special health care needs, children with disabilities, and children who are typically developing -- recognizing that children may develop on the continuum at different times and in different ways. The Foundations are not an exhaustive list of everything a child should know or be able to do by the end of preschool. The Early Childhood Foundations are a guide, NOT a curriculum or a checklist of what all children can do.

The Early Childhood Foundations **SHOULD** be used to:

- Guide educators in the development of curriculum;
- Guide families and caregivers as they support their child’s development from ages birth to five;
- Focus conversations among families, caregivers, teachers, community members and legislators about the education of young children;
- Provide early childhood leaders direction for development of early childhood professional training programs and staff development;
- Provide a framework for administrators to oversee curricula practices and advocate for resources; and
- Guide the selection of assessment tools that are appropriate for learners from a variety of backgrounds with differing abilities.

**DO NOT USE** The Early Childhood Foundations to:

- Assess the competence of young children;
- Mandate specific teaching practices or materials;
- Determine rewards or penalties for educational personnel;
- Prohibit children from entering kindergarten; or
- Exclude groups of children because of disabilities or home language.

## **Domains of Development**

Each domain area is considered equally important for the healthy development of the child. All domains should be integrated into the daily activities of the child. Some children may go beyond what is listed in the Early Childhood Foundations and some may not demonstrate development in a specific area. Because children develop at their own rate and differently in each domain area it is critical to be aware of, and meet each child's individual needs.

## **Eight Domains of Development**

- Social and Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Physical Education and Health
- Language and Literacy Development
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Science
- The Arts

Each domain area contains multiple key elements relating to the development of the domain.

Each domain is aligned with Oregon K-12 Standards (where State Standards exist), and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework.

Each domain area has information relating to developing skills and knowledge for children ages birth to five.

## **Structure of the Oregon Early Childhood Foundation Document**

### **Domain area and key elements:**

- Each domain area and the key elements within the domain is individually presented

### **Overview:**

- A brief review of the domain.
- Identification of the related Oregon K – 12 Standards and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework

**Layout for Individual Key Elements Within Domain Areas Include Three Sections:**

**A. Early Childhood Foundation:**

- General knowledge and skills children are developing,
- Generalizations about most children's development and learning over time

**B. Indicators: Observable Behaviors**

- **The Child**, observable behaviors that demonstrate a continuum of growth toward the foundation knowledge and skills
- **The Adult**, examples of what adults can do to support children's growing and learning

**D. Supportive Learning Environments:**

- What must be considered when setting up indoor/outdoor space and materials

**Resources:**

- List of books related to each domain area for Parents, Families, Child-Care Providers, Pre-school and Pre-Kindergarten Programs ( all of those working with young children and their families)
- List of books to use with children

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES: How Young Children Grow and Learn**

Knowledge about how children grow and learn informs successful practices for all children and in all settings. The following “Principles” of child development and learning should influence the environment, curriculum and strategies for teaching.

### **Children are Active Learners**

- Children make meaning and learn through daily experiences and interactions with people, places and things. Relationships, play, curiosity, new experiences, and exploring their world provide children the foundations for learning. How children feel about themselves and how they interact with others and ideas impact their view of themselves as learners.

### **Each Child is Unique and Learns on His/Her Developmental Timeline**

- All children are learners and each has unique characteristics that influence learning. Individual children vary in rate of development and learning. Children do not all achieve the same developmental milestones at the same rate or time. (All children do not walk at the same time or cut their teeth at the same time...they do not develop in all learning domains at the same time or rate) Each individual learner is influenced by genetics, the environment, experiences, interests, and motivation for learning. Learning often is uneven and may occur in spurts.

### **Learning That is Integrated Across All Areas of Development is Most Meaningful**

- Children continuously construct knowledge, that is, make meaning, and integrate new ideas and concepts into their existing understandings. They seek connections between past and current experiences and knowledge. Each child’s achievement in language and learning are influenced by the social and emotional experiences during their development. Mathematical and scientific understandings are impacted by the ability to communicate. Domain areas of development and learning are not divided by clear lines but rather cross and intersect enriching the opportunity for each child’s growing understanding of concepts.

### **Learning is Continuous and Sequential**

- Children’s understanding grows from simple to complex (or from concrete to abstract). New knowledge is built upon previous experiences.

### **Development and Learning are Deeply Influenced by Culture and Supported by Family**

The child’s home language, knowledge, traditions and family expectations and experiences are the primary influences on development. Consistent, nurturing relationships within the family and community promote learning and secure, successful children.

## **Special Acknowledgement**

The Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Child Care Division acknowledges and gives special thanks to:

Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Health & Human Services System,

Kentucky Department of Education and

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework

Nebraska's "Early Learning Guidelines," Kentucky's, "Building A Strong Foundation for School Success" and the "Head Start Outcomes Framework" helped guide the development of Oregon's Early Childhood Foundations. Their "pioneer" work as well of those of California, Washington, Idaho, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, and Connecticut is nationally recognized as positive steps towards building a better future for all of America's children.

Oregon is proud to join with the Nation's Early Childhood Leaders to provide guidelines for Oregon in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education. We will be honored if our document is as helpful to others as all of those from whom we borrowed.