



Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System:

Practical Ideas for Evaluating Early Childhood Educators

Developed by:

The Colorado Department of Education and Early Childhood Practitioners

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To provide feedback, please email: Educator_Effectiveness@cde.state.co.us



Foreword

****PLEASE NOTE: The purpose of this document is to highlight possible approaches for districts and BOCES to consider when constructing their approach to evaluating early childhood educators. CDE will be collecting on-going feedback to improve this guidance. To submit your feedback, email Educator_Effectiveness@cde.state.co.us.***

Following the passage of Senate Bill 10-191, the principal/assistant principal and teacher evaluation act, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) began creating the state’s evaluation system and requirements for all educators whose positions require them to hold a state license. During the first two years of development of the new system (2010 to 2012), CDE staff members focused on the processes and materials for evaluating teachers and principals. Those processes and materials were pilot tested during the 2012-13 school year, and a validation study was conducted during the 2013-14 school year.

Throughout the development, pilot testing, and validation study activities, CDE heard from groups of teachers and their evaluators whose positions require them to fulfill unique roles and responsibilities who expressed concerns that the teacher materials do not provide adequate guidance evaluating staff members in such positions. They have requested additional guidance regarding evidence/artifacts that may be used by such specialized teachers. In addition, they have asked about specific practices to “look-for” to guide their classroom observations and help ensure that all licensed teachers receive fair, valid, and reliable evaluations.

In response to such requests, CDE initiated the development of a set of implementation briefs written by practitioners for practitioners. They are intended to provide informal advice to teachers and their evaluators to help them understand the evaluation process within their specific context. Unless otherwise noted, the contents of this brief are not policy requirements but merely ideas to help educators make the best use of the state model system for all teachers. Implementation briefs are currently under development for the following groups:

- Early Childhood Education Teachers
- Special Education Teachers
- Teacher Librarians
- Teachers of English Language Learners/Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education Specialists
- Teachers of the Arts (Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts)

It is CDE’s hope that these briefs will help everyone involved have a better understanding of how the teachers’ rubric and evaluation process may be fairly used to ensure that all teachers, including those in the groups listed above, are evaluated in a manner that is fair, rigorous, transparent and valid.





Acknowledgements

The many contributions of the early childhood educators who contributed to this work are gratefully acknowledged. This group of educators generously gave their time and expertise to write this implementation brief as a service to their colleagues. It is their hope that the brief will be used as an informal set of suggestions and ideas to help early childhood teachers and their evaluators better understand the Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System and how it applies to them. Colorado Department of Education staff members who contributed to the development of this document include:

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Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System: Practitioner Ideas for Evaluating Early Childhood Educators

Introduction

Colorado's S. B. 10-191 requires schools, school districts, and the Colorado Department of Education to evaluate all licensed educators with state approved quality and performance standards at least annually. This requirement applies to evaluating the performance of principals, assistant principals, teachers and specialized service professionals. Early childhood general and special educators (early childhood educators) whose positions require a Colorado Department of Education license should be evaluated using the same processes and materials used for all classroom teachers in their district.

Because the roles and responsibilities of early childhood educators are different from those of most classroom teachers, the teacher evaluation materials may not capture all facets of the early childhood educator's work. This has led early childhood educators to express concerns about the applicability of the new evaluation system for educators such as themselves. This guide is intended to help early childhood educators and their evaluators maximize the flexibility options built into the new system to ensure a fair, valid, transparent and rigorous evaluation of all early childhood educators.

As a recipient of funds provided by the federal government's Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), Colorado has an unprecedented opportunity to focus on its early learning and development system and build a unified approach to supporting young children and their families. The overarching goal of the Early Learning Challenge is to make sure that more children, especially those with high needs, enter kindergarten ready to succeed. In accepting these funds, Colorado agreed to deliver better coordination, clearer learning standards, and meaningful education and training for early educators. The strategies to support and strengthen Colorado's Early Care and Education System are manifesting themselves through a set of aligned elements, each designed to stand alone while also supporting and aligning with other system elements. These elements are:

- Early Learning Development Guidelines (ELDG), which were adopted by the Early Childhood Leadership Commission in January 2013 (www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/Early%20Learning%20Guidelines.pdf).
- Colorado Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators (www.cde.state.co.us/early/eceducatorandadministratorcompetencies).
- School Readiness Assessment and individual readiness plans for children in publicly funded preschool and kindergarten classrooms (S. B. 08-212: www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/schoolreadiness/download/pdf/cap4kbill.pdf).
- Colorado Shines, the next generation of Colorado's Quality Rating and Improvement System (<http://coloradoshines.force.com/ColoradoShines>).

While the implementation of strategies such as those listed above is critical to the success of reforming and elevating Colorado's early learning program, it is equally



important to note that Colorado has played a major role on the national stage for nearly 20 years. One of the reasons for this is that early learning program leaders from across all Colorado state agencies have collaborated to ensure that every effort has been made to incorporate evidence based best practices into early learning programs across the state. One of the state’s most important strategies is to emphasize the Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Professionals. These principles are not new to Colorado’s early learning workforce, but their alignment with the Teacher Quality Standards outlined in Senate Bill 10-191 is. As Exhibit 1 illustrates, the Guiding principles easily align with the Teacher Quality Standards and may be used to help form the foundation for ensuring that every child in Colorado has equitable access to a highly effective teacher.

Exhibit 1. Comparison of Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Education Professionals to Colorado’s Teacher Quality Standards

Quality Standards	Guiding Principles For Early Childhood Education Professionals
<p>QUALITY STANDARD I Teachers demonstrate a mastery of pedagogical expertise in the content they teach. The elementary teacher is an expert in literacy and mathematics and is knowledgeable in all other content that he/she teaches. The secondary teacher has knowledge of literacy and mathematics and is an expert in his/her content endorsement area(s).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood educators demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in both the content and developmental aspects of early childhood education, including the 12 principles of child development (See Exhibit 2) (NAEYC, 2009). • Early childhood pedagogy addresses the three (3) core considerations of developmentally appropriate practice: what is known about child development and learning, what is known about each child as an individual and what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live. • The early childhood teacher is an expert in early foundations of each content area as well as approaches to learning, executive function and social competence.
<p>QUALITY STANDARD II Teachers establish a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive and trusting relationships with responsive and consistent adults are crucial for early development, learning and school readiness. • Respectful learning environments for young children include collaborative partnerships with families and incorporate direct cultural connections for each child.
<p>QUALITY STANDARD III Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction and create an environment that facilitates learning for their students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood educators plan meaningful learning experiences that include ample opportunities for open-ended play and self-directed learning; teachers provide intentional interactions during these times to maximize children’s learning. • Early childhood educators plan for learning experiences that effectively implement a comprehensive curriculum so that each child attains key goals across the domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and across the disciplines (language, literacy, including English acquisition, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education and health (NAETC, 2009). • Authentic assessment is a critical component of early childhood education. Assessment is ongoing, strategic and purposeful. The results of assessment are used to inform the planning and implementing of experiences, to communicate with the child’s family and to evaluate and improve teachers’ and program’s effectiveness (NAEYC, 2009).
<p>QUALITY STANDARD IV Teachers reflect on their practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood educators observe children closely and reflect on the child’s experience, learning and development. • Early childhood educators reflect with their teaching team and with families.



12 Principles of Child Development and Learning

1. All areas of development and learning are important.
2. Learning and development follow sequences.
3. Development and learning proceed at varying rates.
4. Development and learning result from an interaction of maturation and experience.
5. Early experiences have profound effects on development and learning.
6. Development proceeds toward greater complexity, self-regulation, and symbolic or representational capacities.
7. Children develop best when they have secure relationships.
8. Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.
9. Children learn in a variety of ways.
10. Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation and promoting language, cognition, and social competence.
11. Development and learning advance when children are challenged.
12. Children’s experiences shape their motivation and approaches to learning.

NAEYC Position Statement "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8"

<p>QUALITY STANDARD V Teachers demonstrate leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood educators advocate for the needs of each child and family. • Early childhood educators promote the science of early childhood and developmentally appropriate practice. • Early childhood educators utilize the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment.
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In addition to the Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Professionals, Colorado’s early learning leadership recommends the application of the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC) 12 Principles of Child Development and Learning throughout all early learning programs. The combination of the NAEYC Principles, Colorado’s Guiding Principles, and the critical elements of Colorado’s Early Care and Learning System provides a strong foundation for the development and implementation of evidence-based early learning programs that will serve the state’s population of young children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, well.

Aligned with the critical program components describe above, Colorado’s State Model Educator Evaluation System will help districts and schools ensure that the early learning workforce meets the approved Teacher Quality Standards. The evaluation system, in combination with the reinvented early learning system has the potential to impact the ability of every child to receive a sound education delivered through a cadre of highly effective teachers.

The Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System



The new evaluation system is being planned, developed and implemented with a focus on continuously improving educator performance and results for children. S.B. 10-191 guides the state and school districts in the transformation of current evaluation processes from a focus primarily on compliance to more rigorous and supportive processes that provide for continuous professional learning and improvement. To support school districts in implementing the new evaluation requirements, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) developed a model system that provides consistent, fair, rigorous and transparent educator evaluations, saves district resources and enables them to focus on improving teaching, learning and leading.

The basic purposes of this system are to ensure that all licensed educators:

- Are evaluated using multiple, fair, transparent, timely, rigorous and valid methods.
- Are assessed through two main avenues: measuring academic growth of children (50%) and evaluating teacher professional practices (50%).
- Receive adequate feedback and professional development support to provide them a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness.
- Are provided the means to share effective practices with other educators throughout the state.
- Receive meaningful feedback to inform their professional growth and continuous improvement.

Successful implementation of the Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System is dependent upon attending to the following priorities, or guiding principles for the evaluation system:

1. Data should inform decisions, but human judgment is critical.
2. The implementation of the system must embody continuous improvement.
3. The purpose of the system is to provide meaningful and credible feedback that improves performance.
4. The development and implementation of educator evaluation systems must continue to involve all stakeholders in a collaborative process.
5. Educator evaluations must take place within a larger system that is aligned and supportive.

The Colorado State Model Evaluation System uses a meaningful process for educator evaluation. The year-long cycle includes regular conversations between the evaluator and person being evaluated; it is not a one-time event or observation, but rather a process that focuses on continuous improvement of the skills, knowledge and child outcomes of the person being evaluated. S. B. 10-191 requires that at least one observation be conducted annually for non-probationary teachers and at least two for probationary teachers. Districts may choose to conduct additional observations in order to provide high quality feedback and/or to confirm the accuracy of final professional practices ratings prior to finalizing them. The State Model System evaluation cycle includes, but is not limited to:

- Training
- Annual orientation to the system/tools
- Educator self-assessment
- Review of annual goals and performance plan
- A mid-year review
- An evaluator assessment based on observation(s) and review of artifacts
- An end-of-year review
- A final rating
- Goal-setting and performance planning for the next school year



Who Should Use This Brief: Applying S.B. 10-191 in Early Childhood Classrooms

Early childhood educators will be rated on both professional practices and measures of child learning. Different categories of early childhood educators have different evaluation requirements because of differences in requirements for professional educator licensing. The determination of whether S.B. 10-191 applies to an early childhood educator is contextual in nature. All early childhood educators whose positions require a CDE license are required to be evaluated under S. B. 10-191. This includes teachers in kindergarten through third grade as well as early childhood special education teachers. S. B. 10-191 requirements may be applied to infant/toddler (birth to age 2) care providers, preschool (educators of 2 ½ to 6 year-olds), Head Start/Early Head Start teachers and early childhood coordinators if their districts determine that to be the appropriate course of action. Exhibit 2, CDE’s Fact Sheet on Supporting Early Childhood Educator Evaluations¹ articulates the groups of early childhood educators to whom S. B. 10-191 does and does not apply.

Exhibit 2. Applying S. B. 10-191 in Early Childhood Education

Role/Teacher Assignment	CDE License Required? Required to Adhere to S. B. 10-191?
Early childhood coordinators	No. May be required by district or BOCES policy
Preschool (2 ½ to 6 year-olds) educator	No. May be required by district or BOCES policy
Early Childhood special educator (lead teacher or itinerant) (2 ½ to 6 year-olds)	Yes.
Head Start/Early Head Start educators	No. May be required by district if district is a Head Start grantee
Kindergarten educators	Yes.
1st- 3rd grade educators	Yes.

This document is intended for use by those involved in evaluating early childhood educators whose positions require a CDE license and whose districts require that they be evaluated using the Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System.

Considerations for Evaluating Early Childhood Educators

Early childhood educators should be evaluated from a perspective that recognizes the unique aspects of working with young children (birth through age 8). Teachers of these children provide a range of specialized instruction and support for children. Their roles and titles will vary according to the age of their children and the context in which they teach. The advice included in this document is intended to support the use of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers (the rubric) in the context of the role of an individual early childhood educators.

To help educators involved in the evaluation of early childhood educators (teachers of children from birth to age 8), CDE’s team of early childhood professionals developed a statement about the critical issues to be considered when evaluating early childhood educators. This document (Appendix A) not only cites cutting edge and well-

¹ www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/ecefactsheet



respected research from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, but it also provides deeper explanations of the aligned system elements mentioned above.

Two Examples of How to Appropriately Interpret Rubric Components for Early Childhood Educators

The teacher rubric is structured such that a rating of accomplished or exemplary is based on behaviors exhibited by the children. How young children demonstrate these behaviors may look different than how older children would do so. Evaluators should take this into consideration when deciding whether an early childhood educator has adequately demonstrated accomplished and exemplary professional practices. The examples below describe approaches to teaching that address some of the professional practices that educators have stated will be difficult for young children to demonstrate. The examples below illustrate how early childhood educators may demonstrate that their children are practicing the skills and using the knowledge they have been taught:

Example 1: Students Discuss their Strengths and Next Steps

Standard I. Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach.

Element A. Teachers make instruction and content relevant to students and take action to connect students' background and contextual knowledge with new information being taught.

Exemplary. Students discuss strengths and next steps regarding their learning with their teacher(s).

Gale, a recent early childhood education graduate of the teacher preparation program at the local university, has been assigned to teach kindergarten in a public school in a Denver suburb. Because her disciplinary focus in college was language arts, she was most worried about teaching math. She was concerned that she would not be able to accurately assess her children's learning in order to keep pace with the Colorado Academic Standards while avoiding the introduction of more difficult content before the children are ready.

She needn't have worried. Now that Gale and her children have developed a strong relationship, they feel comfortable talking with her about what they are doing in class and where they need help. For example, Gale has been teaching a unit on measurement and she is concerned that her children understand the difference between measuring distance, weight and volume. As the children finished selecting their centers for the day, Jonathan, assigned to the blocks center, asked Gale for the special tape measures they had used in a previous math lesson. He told Gale that he wanted to measure how big their castle would be when they finished and to see if they could make it bigger today. Jonathan told Gale they wanted to use the blocks to make their castle taller rather than longer and were going to measure the height with the tape measures.

Gale quizzed Jonathan about why he wanted to use the tape measure rather than one of the other measuring tools they had studied. As Jonathan talked with her, she discovered that he has a good grasp of the concept of length and how it is measured, but that he still needs some work on understanding the difference between volume and weight. As soon as she could, Gale modified her lesson plans to re-teach those concepts before concluding the unit.



Gale shared ideas with Jonathan’s family about how they might be able to practice measuring at home and apply the concepts in various situations to reinforce his new learning. She encouraged Jonathan and his family to share what they were doing at home with the class.

Example 2. Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Standard II. Teachers establish a safe and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students (children).

Carolyn has been teaching early childhood special education for the past 20 years. She is well experienced and comfortable with her role as an itinerant teacher serving children in many of her school’s classrooms. In the past, she has been one of the most highly rated teachers in the school, and she is hopeful that she be able to continue that trend with Colorado’s new teacher evaluation system. Carolyn is concerned about meeting the requirements of Standard II regarding the establishment of a safe and respectful learning environment because her children’s learning environments are their classrooms, which are not under her control.

In an effort to learn exactly what is expected of her under the new Teacher Quality Standards, Carolyn decided to study the standards themselves. The standards and elements seemed to her to be pretty flexible. As she studied, she underlined the things she thought she could control. It didn’t take Carolyn long to determine that she could meet the requirements of this standard in a variety of ways even if she couldn’t control the entire classroom environment. She drew a simple chart for herself and started a list of the things she normally does when she works with her children. As Exhibit 3 indicates, she already uses quite a few tools and strategies that will help her meet this standard.



Exhibit 3. Carolyn’s Chart About How She Can Meet Standards

What I Can Control	How I Can Meet the Standard
<p>Element A. Teachers foster a <u>predictable learning environment</u> in the classroom in which each child has a <u>positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults</u> and peers.</p>	<p><u>Predictable Learning Environment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a time for each child and don’t change the appointment time unless absolutely necessary. • Develop and use routines at the beginning of each class to set the stage and the tone for the lessons. • Meet in exactly the same location each time. (In inclusive practices, the same location each time should always be the child’s classroom). • Develop and use instructional materials that are similar in look and format to establish predictability and consistency with the teaching format. • Collaborate with classroom teachers to create consistency for the children. • Establish routines and rituals that are consistent from day to day. • Share routines and rituals with families so they can reinforce and practice at home. <p><u>Positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the needs of the whole child rather than solely on the academic goals. • Encourage children to reach higher levels of learning without engaging in punitive measures for poor performance. Maybe phrase this from the positive—rather than negative, so “by engaging in positive behavioral strategies”. • Provide adequate time for children to respond to questions. • Discuss content at developmentally appropriate level of each child.
<p>Element B. Teachers demonstrate a <u>commitment to and respect for diversity</u>, while working toward common goals as a community and as a country.</p>	<p><u>Commitment to and respect for diversity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with and provide supports to child in an inclusive setting, using the principles of inclusion. • Treat all children respectfully. • Include materials representing the learning approaches, ethnicity, gender, age and other characteristics of individual children. • Use diversity to expand and enhance learning. • Always view diversity as a plus and something that supports learning in a variety of ways. • Reach out to families to establish two-way communication. Encourage families to visit the classroom to share cultures and experiences.

Continued on next page.



What I Can Control	How I Can Meet the Standard
<p>Element C. Teachers <u>engage students as individuals</u> with unique interests and strengths.</p>	<p><u>Engage children as individuals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all children are engaged in lessons. • Utilize children’s interests when planning and implementing learning experiences. • Accept, whenever possible, children’s ideas for activities and materials. • Use results of individual assessments to design lessons that make accommodations for children’s individual needs. • Focus on all developmental needs of the child in addition to academic goals. • Encourage children to reach higher levels of learning without engaging in punitive measures for poor performance. Same as above...phrase from the positive rather than negative, so “by engaging in positive behavioral strategies” • Provide adequate time for children to respond to questions. • Discuss content at developmentally appropriate level of each child. • Ask families to share information about their child’s strengths, challenges, and interests.
<p>Element D. Teachers <u>adapt their teaching for the benefit of all students</u>, including those with special needs across a range of ability levels.</p>	<p><u>Adapt teaching for the benefit of all children:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in purposeful and intentional instructional planning that is inclusive of all learners. • Support strategies included in children’s IEPs and other student plans to ensure that each child meets individual goals, partnering with families to coordinate the supports between home and school. • Make real- real-time adaptations to lessons should children lose interest.
<p>Element E. Teachers <u>provide proactive, clear and constructive feedback to families about student progress and work collaboratively with the families</u> and significant adults in the lives of their students.</p>	<p><u>Provide proactive, clear and constructive feedback to families:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly notes home (translated into their native language as needed) and requests for weekly communication/sharing from home. • Family conferences scheduled at times convenient for families. • Phone calls to families • Honest and appropriate feedback to share information about children, asking for input and observations from home and other learning situations. • Collaborate with parents families in individual child planning, coordinating learning between home and school. <p><u>Work collaboratively with families:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite significant adults to share information about their children and use such information in planning learning experiences. • Send emails with ideas for how families can help their children. • Office hours when I’m available to receive calls on a regular basis. • Proactively contact family members to inform them of children’s progress. • Ask families what they need to support learning at home.

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What I Can Control	How I Can Meet the Standard
<p>Element F. Teachers create a learning environment characterized by <u>acceptable student behavior</u>, <u>efficient use of time</u> and <u>appropriate intervention strategies</u>.</p>	<p><u>Acceptable child behavior:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach children classroom rules and use consistent, positive behavioral support strategies to help children follow them. • Share rules and positive support strategies with families and other caregivers so is practice and reinforcement in various learning environments. <p><u>Efficient use of time:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish lesson and or/classroom routines that help children to make smooth and efficient transitions. • Prepare materials well in advance and organize them for easy access during the lesson. <p><u>Appropriate intervention strategies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay abreast of current research findings and apply them to instructional strategies when appropriate. • Consistently monitor children’s progress and make adaptations to lesson as necessary. • Apply the research-based strategies of supporting learning “anywhere, anytime” with families and other caregivers to expand coordinated opportunities to all learning environments.

When she finished her chart, Carolyn decided she could complete her self-assessment with more confidence than she had before. She also decided to share her chart with her principal during the goal-setting conference, coming up in about a week, because she wants to be sure he agrees with her analysis and examples. Further, Carolyn decided that partnering with families and other professionals is an area in which she should try to grow this year. She put collaboration on here list of things to talk about during next week’s discussion, along with her ideas of specific changes she thinks she can make if her principal is supportive of the idea.

Examples of Artifacts/Evidence and “Look-Fors” for Early Childhood Educators

School districts and BOCES are required to collect teacher performance data related to professional practice using observations and at least one of the following measures:

1. Child perception measures (e.g., surveys), where appropriate and feasible;
2. Peer feedback;
3. Feedback from families; or
4. Review of teacher lesson plans or children’s work samples.

The performance data should be discussed during the final evaluation conference along with self-assessment information and the evaluator’s assessment of the early childhood educator. The teacher and/or evaluator may bring additional artifacts or evidence to the final evaluation conference to support their professional practices ratings. While such additional artifacts are not a required component of the Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System, they have proven to be a valuable catalyst for meaningful discussions and lend a degree of objectivity to performance feedback. In many cases, the artifacts and/or additional evidence form the basis for setting reasonable goals and help the evaluator ground feedback in real-world data and specific relevant



examples. The chart below provides options for artifacts that are closely aligned to the teacher’s roles and responsibilities. It is important to note that the artifacts and types of evidence mentioned in Exhibit 4 are ideas and should not be considered requirements or an all-inclusive list that every teacher should provide. Instead, Exhibit 4 is intended to serve as a catalyst for identifying specific evidence that may or may not be included in Exhibit 3, to illustrate the teacher’s performance throughout the year.

It is possible to complete an evaluation without using any additional evidence or artifacts. If the teacher and evaluator agree on all final ratings during the final evaluation conference, they do not need to review artifacts or additional evidence.

Exhibit 4: Observations, Required Measures and Other Evidence/Artifacts

This exhibit includes information about requirements for observations and multiple measures as described in S. B. 10-191. In addition, examples of artifacts and other evidence that may be used to support final evaluation ratings or to demonstrate proficiency on proficiency on professional practices are provided. It should be noted that artifacts and other evidence are not required by S. B. 10-191, but are suggested by the Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System as a way to confirm that final ratings are fair and accurate.

S.B. 10-191 REQUIRES MULTIPLE MEASURES OF EDUCATOR PERFORMANCE MEASURED ON MULTIPLE OCCASIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. For teacher librarians, this requirement is defined as observations, required measures and optional additional measures (evidence/artifacts). While the teacher rubric serves as the data collection tool for observations, districts and BOCES must determine the method for collecting data regarding required measures and additional evidence/artifacts. This chart serves as a reminder of the required measures that must be discussed annually and evidence/artifacts that may be discussed at the end of the evaluation cycle to confirm the accuracy of ratings.

OBSERVATIONS REQUIRED BY S.B. 10-191:

- **Probationary teachers** – At least two documented observations and at least one evaluation that results in a written evaluation report each year.
- **Non-probationary teachers** – At least one documented observation every year and one evaluation that results in a written evaluation report including fair and reliable measures of performance against Quality Standards.

The frequency and duration of the evaluations shall be on a regular basis and of such frequency and duration as to ensure the collection of a sufficient amount of data from which reliable conclusions and findings may be drawn. Written evaluation reports shall be based on performance standards and provided to the teacher at least two weeks before the last class day of the school year.

REQUIRED MEASURES FOR TEACHERS:

Include at least one of the following measures as a part of the annual evaluation process.

- Student perception measures, where appropriate and feasible;
- Peer feedback;
- Feedback from parents or guardians;
- Review of teacher lesson plans or student worksamples.

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ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE/ARTIFACTS:

Evaluation of professional practice may include additional measures such as those listed below. These are provided as examples of evidence the evaluator and/or educator being evaluated may share with each other to provide evidence of performance in addition to observations and evaluator ratings collected on the rubric.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual learning plans for children. • Documentation of collaboration with families to coordinate learning between home and school gather child information for use in promoting learning. • Professional growth plan in place and adhered to. • Core Competency Professional Development and Leadership, reflective and continuous professional development. <p>Lesson Plans reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a variety of engagement strategies to be used throughout lessons. • Differentiation based on data. • Knowledge of the developmental progression in which children learn. • Adjustments made as a result of formative assessment and other information about the child’s abilities. • Intentional and appropriate use of technology • Evidence of guided practice and independent practice • Alignment with READ Act approved interim and diagnostic data (K – 3 only). • Knowledge and skills learned through professional development. • Suggestions for reinforcement and practice of concepts in multiple learning environments such as home, day care, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of parent family contacts made throughout the school year. • Participation in the multi-disciplinary/transdisciplinary , which include families, team to develop, plan for, and integrate strategies to meet outcomes/goals in individual child plans. • Documentation of collaboration with other adults in their setting, such as assistants, special service providers. • Engagement in partnerships with community organizations. • Ongoing, authentic assessment information is collected and can be shared. • Informal, child generated writing samples. • Child created art and books are displayed and which children are excited to show others. • Extension activities from content or new stories are evident in centers or choice time. • Drawing or writing about the new content appropriate activities within the school setting. |
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ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE/ARTIFACTS:

Evaluation of professional practice may include additional measures such as those listed below. These are provided as examples of evidence the evaluator and/or educator being evaluated may share with each other to provide evidence of performance in addition to observations and evaluator ratings collected on the rubric.

Materials Prominently Posted in Classroom

- “Who’s here today” chart with child and adult pictures.
- Visual picture schedule of daily events with movable sections that can be rearranged when necessary.
- Mini schedules for different routines.
- Individual visual schedules or 1st then charts.
- Behavioral modification charts for individual children.
- Daily choice time in schedule.
- Classroom helper chart.
- Displays of children work.
- Standards.
- Visual and/or written classroom rules.
- Visual cues for children to reference, such as the scientific method of inquiry stated in child level language with picture cues.
- Planning documents that demonstrate the essential element of linking domain areas in activities throughout the school day.
- Environmental print representing diverse languages.
- Materials brought from home to connect with content are highlighted in activities or displayed in the room.

- Copies of child portfolios.

- Photos, videos or observation notes of authentic activities are used to adjust upcoming instruction for individual children or groups of children.

Materials Jointly Developed with Families:

- Learning plans for children that have been developed with families
- IEP and dual language learner plans also
- Copies of lesson plans that demonstrate evidence of planning that is directed toward the Early Learning Development Guidelines/Colorado Academic Standards (ELD/CAS)

Books, Toys, Music, Art:

- Representing diverse backgrounds.
- Of various genres, themes, levels of difficulty.
- Books are abundant in a library center as well as throughout the classroom such as at the science area or the quiet area.

In addition to artifacts and other evidence, early childhood educators and their evaluators need to understand the guiding principles for early childhood educators and developmentally appropriate practices that should be evident in their classrooms. Exhibit 3 provides clear and concise guiding principles for early childhood professionals, arranged by Teacher Quality Standards. Exhibit 5 is a rich source of ideas for “look fors,” or examples of practices that may be evident in early childhood classrooms. The charts are presented by Teacher Quality Standards and their associated elements to align specific behaviors/practices to the approved standards.

Exhibit 5: Teacher Quality Standards and Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations

This exhibit provides information about behaviors evaluators may observe in early childhood classrooms. The behaviors illustrate that the professional practices included in the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers are appropriate for evaluating early childhood educators. They are articulated here to provide specific information about how effective early childhood teaching practices not only meet Colorado’s Teacher Quality Standards but also how they meet the educational needs of very young children who represent a wide range of ages and developmental levels. The items in this exhibit have already been indexed to Colorado’s Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators. This list of practices is not exhaustive of all possibilities for practices



that may be observed in the early childhood classroom, nor are they required to be evident during all observations.

QUALITY STANDARD I	
<p>Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach. The elementary teacher is an expert in literacy and mathematics and is knowledgeable in all other content that he/she teaches. The secondary teacher has knowledge of literacy and mathematics and is an expert in his/her content endorsement area(s).</p>	
<p>Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Professionals Associated with This Standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in both the content and developmental aspects of early childhood education, including the 12 principles of child development (NAEYC, 2009) • Early childhood pedagogy addresses the three (3) core considerations of developmentally appropriate practice: what is known about child development and learning, what is known about each child as an individual and what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live. • The early childhood teacher is an expert in early foundations of each content area as well as approaches to learning, executive function and social competence. 	
Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
<p>A. Teachers provide instruction that is aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards; their District’s organized plan of instruction; and the individual needs of their students.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display ELDG/CAS standard being addressed in classroom. • Address standard in the lesson, talking with children about what they are learning in child level language. • Differentiate instruction in the classroom, ex. small groups, free choice time, children working at their own appropriate level, etc. • Use an appropriate balance of teacher-directed and child-directed activities based on children’s needs and aligned to the ELDG/CAS. • Customize activities to support each child’s strengths and needs based on environmental and cultural influences

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QUALITY STANDARD I

Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach. The elementary teacher is an expert in literacy and mathematics and is knowledgeable in all other content that he/she teaches. The secondary teacher has knowledge of literacy and mathematics and is an expert in his/her content endorsement area(s).

Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Professionals Associated with This Standard:

- Early childhood teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in both the content and developmental aspects of early childhood education, including the 12 principles of child development (NAEYC, 2009)
- Early childhood pedagogy addresses the three (3) core considerations of developmentally appropriate practice: what is known about child development and learning, what is known about each child as an individual and what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live.
- The early childhood teacher is an expert in early foundations of each content area as well as approaches to learning, executive function and social competence.

Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
<p>B. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of student literacy development in reading, writing, speaking and listening.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the development of reading, writing, listening and speaking through children’s work. • Use activities address learning early literacy skills in a developmentally appropriate manner, such as use of songs, rhythms, chants, whole body movement activities that match phonological and phonemic awareness skills. • Encourage adults engage in dialogic reading with children at various times during the day, asking questions, allowing children to talk about their knowledge of the topic and fostering children to talk to each other about the story line. Conventions of print are emphasized as a story is read. • Provide instruction in whole group, small groups and independently. • Provide instruction at the appropriate level for the child based on data.

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QUALITY STANDARD I

Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach. The elementary teacher is an expert in literacy and mathematics and is knowledgeable in all other content that he/she teaches. The secondary teacher has knowledge of literacy and mathematics and is an expert in his/her content endorsement area(s).

Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Professionals Associated with This Standard:

- Early childhood teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in both the content and developmental aspects of early childhood education, including the 12 principles of child development (NAEYC, 2009)
- Early childhood pedagogy addresses the three (3) core considerations of developmentally appropriate practice: what is known about child development and learning, what is known about each child as an individual and what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live.
- The early childhood teacher is an expert in early foundations of each content area as well as approaches to learning, executive function and social competence.

Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
<p>C. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of mathematics and understand how to promote student development in numbers and operations, algebra, geometry and measurement, and data analysis and probability.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain children’s development of math concepts. • Monitor children’s mathematical thinking, using diagnostic strategies that reveal students’ emerging conceptions of number and measurement. • Scaffold student’s development of number through enacting iconic and abstract representations such as counting objects, drawing a number of objects, and writing numerals. • Make mathematical connections throughout the day such as comparing the number of students in attendance vs. number of chairs in the classroom. • Ask students to describe the typical sequence of the day to make connections to time. <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use socio-dramatic play in play area to create pretend situations and places. • Gather materials from a neighboring area to compare/contrast items.
<p>D. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of the content, central concepts, tools of inquiry, appropriate evidence-based instructional practices and specialized character of the disciplines being taught.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask open-ended questions. • Use wait time for children’s responses appropriate to individual children. • Model I do (direct instruction), you do (independent), we do (collaborative) scaffolded learning. • Maximize transitions and daily routines for purposeful learning.
<p>E. Teachers develop lessons that reflect the interconnectedness of content areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interconnectedness of content areas happens all day long and is apparent through/during observations of children actively participating in activities.



QUALITY STANDARD I

Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach. The elementary teacher is an expert in literacy and mathematics and is knowledgeable in all other content that he/she teaches. The secondary teacher has knowledge of literacy and mathematics and is an expert in his/her content endorsement area(s).

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- Early childhood pedagogy addresses the three (3) core considerations of developmentally appropriate practice: what is known about child development and learning, what is known about each child as an individual and what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live.
- The early childhood teacher is an expert in early foundations of each content area as well as approaches to learning, executive function and social competence.

Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
<p>F. Teachers make instruction and content relevant to students and take actions to connect students' background and contextual knowledge with new information being taught.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposefully teach of lessons in playful activities with much repetition. • Connect new content to prior knowledge and children's life experiences. • Connect learner goals/objectives to students' family, community, school, etc. whenever possible. • Invite students to share their life experiences, something that connects with them in a lesson, and/or draw/describe what the ideas in a lesson means to them. • Provide opportunities for students to discuss how to share their learning with significant adults at home • Include families in the classroom learning community by inviting them to visit and participate, sharing in the learning experiences

*The practices included in these tables are examples only and should not be considered requirements or an all-inclusive list. They are provided to help the evaluator and teacher understand how Teacher Quality Standards may be met by early childhood educators.



QUALITY STANDARD II

Teachers establish a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students.

Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Education Professionals Associated with the Standard:

- Positive and trusting relationships with responsive and consistent adults are crucial for early development, learning and school readiness.
- Respectful learning environments for young children include collaborative partnerships with families and incorporate direct cultural connections for each child.

Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers foster a predictable learning environment in the classroom in which each student has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults and peers. 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet children and families by name. • Provide children with peer/buddy activities. • Teach friendship skills. • Apply knowledge of healthy attachment theory and its cultural variations to support child growth, development, learning, and healthy relationships with adults and peers (e.g., separations, changes in staffing patterns, having staff who speak the child’s home language, continuity of care, caregiving routines, changes in classrooms or educational settings). • Create an environment in which all children and families are individually valued.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers demonstrate a commitment to and respect for diversity. 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow time for children to participate in conversations at various parts of the day, encouraging them to share what they are interested in, and are welcoming of new or unique ideas that children present. • Apply, in collaboration with families, learning experiences for children’s individual needs by providing materials and activities that affirm and respect diversity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers engage students as individuals with unique interests and strengths. 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use choice (in activities, materials, etc) as a motivator. • Differentiate instruction based on children’s needs. • Uses a variety of techniques (instructional and behavioral) to support children’s particular needs. • Balance opportunities for children to independently explore, play, and learn with partner, small group, and whole group instruction. • Try new strategies with individual children as appropriate. • Monitor children’s progress. • Adjust instruction as needed within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of all students, including those with special needs, across a range of ability levels. 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize the classroom, materials, and instruction for individual needs, strengths and interests.



QUALITY STANDARD II

Teachers establish a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students.

Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Education Professionals Associated with the Standard:

- Positive and trusting relationships with responsive and consistent adults are crucial for early development, learning and school readiness.
- Respectful learning environments for young children include collaborative partnerships with families and incorporate direct cultural connections for each child.

Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers provide proactive, clear and constructive feedback to families about student progress and work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of their students. 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide positive feedback to families. • Individualized student learning plans have input from and are jointly implemented by families and significant adults in multiple learning environments. • Address problem areas with families as soon as they manifest themselves. • Use multiple channels of communication to ensure that families and significant adults are able to access feedback and to respond to such feedback.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers create a learning environment characterized by acceptable student behavior, efficient use of time, and appropriate intervention strategies. 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for and effectively manage transitions throughout the day. • Provide opportunities for children to be engaged consistently throughout the day. • Teach classroom rules and share with families and significant adults so can reinforce and practice consistently throughout multiple settings. • Support children’s independent learning choices. • Design the classroom environment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Maximize individual and small group learning. ➢ Promote positive social interaction. ➢ Minimize disruption or behavioral challenges.

*The practices included in these tables are examples only and should not be considered requirements or an all-inclusive list. They are provided to help the evaluator and teacher understand how Teacher Quality Standards may be met by early childhood educators.



QUALITY STANDARD III

Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction and create an environment that facilitates learning for their students.

Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Education Professionals Associated with This Standard:

- Early childhood educators plan meaningful learning experiences that include ample opportunities for open-ended play and self-directed learning; teachers provide intentional interactions during these times to maximize children’s learning.
- Early childhood educators plan for learning experiences that effectively implement a comprehensive curriculum so that each child attains key goals across the domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and across the disciplines (language, literacy, including English acquisition, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education and health. (NAETC, 2009)
- Authentic assessment is a critical component of early childhood education. Assessment is ongoing, strategic and purposeful. The results of assessment are used to inform the planning and implementing of experiences, to communicate with the child’s family and to evaluate and improve teachers’ and program’s effectiveness. (NAEYC, 2009)

Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
<p>A. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of current developmental science, the ways in which learning takes place, and the appropriate levels of intellectual, social, and emotional development of their students.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for children to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Play. ➤ Engage in individual, small group and large group activities. ➤ Use a variety of materials that engage the children at different multi-sensory levels. ➤ Engage in hands-on activities. ➤ Have choices in the activities in which they engage. ➤ Take breaks (recess) in order to engage in large-muscle activities. ➤ Interact with adults. ➤ Participate in learning activities ranging from the simple to the complex. • Promote intellectual, social and emotional learning. • Ensure that learning experiences reflect approved learning programs.
<p>B. Teachers plan and consistently deliver instruction that draws on results of student assessments, is aligned to academic standards, and advances students’ level of content knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word walls/environmental print of key language goals • Differentiated manipulatives and instruction. • Visual aids (such as classroom behavior expectations, colors, numbers, letters). • Clearly posted daily objectives.



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- Early childhood educators plan for learning experiences that effectively implement a comprehensive curriculum so that each child attains key goals across the domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and across the disciplines (language, literacy, including English acquisition, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education and health. (NAETC, 2009)
- Authentic assessment is a critical component of early childhood education. Assessment is ongoing, strategic and purposeful. The results of assessment are used to inform the planning and implementing of experiences, to communicate with the child’s family and to evaluate and improve teachers’ and program’s effectiveness. (NAEYC, 2009)

Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
<p>C. Teachers demonstrate a rich knowledge of current research on effective instructional practices to meet the developmental and academic needs of their students.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate varied use of engagement techniques based on children’s needs. • Instructs students using a variety of pedagogical strategies such as: Inquiry-Based, “CER” (Claims/Evidence/Reasoning) at a developmentally appropriate level, and/or Madeline Hunter’s ITIP model (Introduce, Check for Understanding, Guided Practice, Independent Practice). • Use a variety of strategies in learning experiences. • Partners with families and significant adults in specifically sharing how coordinated learning can be expanded and supported for the students.
<p>D. Teachers thoughtfully integrate and utilize appropriate available technology in their instruction to maximize student learning.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate available technology. • Use appropriate available technology to communicate two-way and in an ongoing way with families and significant adults, ensuring each family can access and use such technology.
<p>E. Teachers establish and communicate high expectations for all students and plan instruction that helps students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin lessons with an explicit goal/objective that is presented in child-friendly language to help children understand expectations. • Posts and discusses classroom rules and expectations with children using appropriate language and visual cues and share with families and caregivers so can experience consistency in and out of school.



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- Early childhood educators plan for learning experiences that effectively implement a comprehensive curriculum so that each child attains key goals across the domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and across the disciplines (language, literacy, including English acquisition, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education and health. (NAETC, 2009)
- Authentic assessment is a critical component of early childhood education. Assessment is ongoing, strategic and purposeful. The results of assessment are used to inform the planning and implementing of experiences, to communicate with the child’s family and to evaluate and improve teachers’ and program’s effectiveness. (NAEYC, 2009)

Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
<p>F. Teachers provide students with opportunities to work in teams and develop leadership qualities.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of partnering and group strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assigning pairs or small groups of children to work on a project or play experience. ➤ Changing group compositions depending on the individual child or group ideas. ➤ Encouraging children move from one activity to another as appropriate for their tasks and their developmental level.
<p>G. Teachers communicate effectively, making learning objectives clear and providing appropriate models of language.</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the objective/goal of the lesson and expected outcome in child-friendly language. • Use child-level language. • Use specific vocabulary for the content of the activity. • Direction and/or guiding questions are repeated as needed for children to cognitively connect with the content material or purpose of the activity. • Model and extend children’s language to encourage more complex levels of sentence structure and vocabulary. • Use appropriate and child-friendly spoken and written communications with children. • Communicate clearly and meaningfully with every family and /or significant adult, asking for feedback and questions.



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Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction and create an environment that facilitates learning for their students.

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- Early childhood educators plan for learning experiences that effectively implement a comprehensive curriculum so that each child attains key goals across the domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and across the disciplines (language, literacy, including English acquisition, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education and health. (NAETC, 2009)
- Authentic assessment is a critical component of early childhood education. Assessment is ongoing, strategic and purposeful. The results of assessment are used to inform the planning and implementing of experiences, to communicate with the child’s family and to evaluate and improve teachers’ and program’s effectiveness. (NAEYC, 2009)

Elements	Examples of Practices that May be Evident During Classroom Observations*
H. Teachers use appropriate methods to assess what each student has learned, including formal and informal assessments, and use results to plan further instruction.	Teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect informal/anecdotal data that may be used in the child’s portfolio. • Encourage and help children to reflect on their learning.

*The practices included in these tables are examples only and should not be considered requirements or an all-inclusive list. They are provided to help the evaluator and teacher understand how teacher quality standards may be met by early childhood educators.

Note: Many of the practices described in this exhibit are derived from Colorado’s Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators (www.cde.state.co.us/early/eceducatorandadministratorcompetencies).

Teacher Quality Standards IV and V are not included in Exhibit 4 because their professional practices are not easily observable during classroom observations. These two standards are well-represented in Exhibit 4, which provides ideas for evidence/artifacts.

Conclusion

The evaluation of early childhood educators presents unique challenges for both evaluators and the educators who are being evaluated. The most common concern regarding such evaluations is that the full range of early childhood educator responsibilities are not reflected in the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers.

This guide addresses the first concern by explaining how early childhood educators and their evaluators can take advantage of the flexibility built into the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers to address the unique responsibilities of early childhood educators. The exhibits in this guide are particularly helpful in understanding how evaluation requirements may look for early childhood educators.

It is CDE’s hope that this guide will prove helpful to early childhood educators and their evaluators by providing them with real-life examples of evidence/artifacts, observation look-fors, and ways in which early childhood educators may discuss their performance with their evaluators.



Resources

- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011) *Executive function: skills for life and learning*; Boston, MA: Author. Retrieved from http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/videos/inbrief_series/inbrief_executive_function/.
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- Colorado Senate Bill 08-212 concerning alignment of preschool to postsecondary education, and making an appropriation in connection therewith. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/schoolreadiness/download/pdf/cap4kbill.pdf>
- Colorado's Early Childhood Professional Development Advisory Group (2013). *Early educator and administrator competencies*: Retrieved from <http://www.cde.state.co.us/early/ecprofessionalcompetencies>.
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- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSDAP.pdf>.

Appendix A: Critical Considerations for Evaluating Early Childhood Education Professionals



Early childhood education spans the years of birth to age 8, viewed nationally as a “p – 3 continuum.” It is best not only to support children at this age, but also to support families, schools and the community at large. “The vision for PreK-3rd grade approaches is to improve the quality and coherence of children’s learning opportunities, from the experiences children have before they enter the K – 12 system and extending through elementary school. Ultimately, comprehensive Pre-kindergarten (PreK) – 3rd grade approaches hold the potential to improve child outcomes and to prevent or close achievement gaps.” K. Kauerz, University of Washington. (Framework for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches, March 2013. Kristie Kauerz, University of Washington; Julia Coffman, Center for Evaluation Innovation)

The focus of P – 3 in a ready school encompasses taking a look at teacher effectiveness and the instructional tools used, as well as the learning environment. Looking at these areas in an early childhood environment we know that teacher effectiveness in curriculum and instruction with young children should support all children’s language/reading, math, social and emotional development with a focus on differentiating instruction based on the variety of ages and developmental levels in any given early childhood classroom as well as to individual child specific needs. Research evidence on the predictors of successful outcomes for children suggests a number of learning goals and experiences that should be incorporated across Prek – 3rd grade settings. These include, for example:

- Robust curriculum content
- Careful attention to known learning sequences (in literacy, mathematics, science, physical education and other domains).
- Emphasizing children’s self-regulation, engagement and focused attention.
- Relationship-based teaching and learning.
- Partnering with families.
- Adapting teaching to reflect children’s developmental levels, backgrounds, and learning issues.
- Active, meaningful and connected learning experiences.
- Teaching to standards.
- Setting and communicating high expectations for children’s growth.
- Using balanced and intentional curricula.
- Using a wide array of formative and summative assessments in an authentic context.
- Culturally responsive learning environment.
- Promotion of positive interactions.
- Using inclusive of resources to support a wide range of development, abilities and interests.

In its highly respected and widely used position statement, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommends that early childhood education programs focus on the principles of child development and learning that inform practice, including but not limited to the following:

- All of the domains of development and learning – physical, social and emotional, and cognitive are important and they are closely interrelated. Children’s development and learning in one domain influence and are influenced by what takes place in other domains.
- Many aspects of children’s learning and development follow well-documented sequences, with later abilities, skills and knowledge building on those already acquired.
- Development and learning proceed at varying rates from child to child, as well as at uneven rates across different areas of a child’s individual functioning.
- Development and learning result from a dynamic and continuous interaction of biological maturation and experience.



- Early experiences have profound effects, both cumulative and delayed, on a child’s development and learning; and optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning to occur.
- Development proceeds toward greater complexity, self-regulation, and symbolic or representational capacities.
- Children develop best when they have secure, consistent relationships with responsive adults and opportunities for positive relationships with peers.
- Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.
- Always mentally active in seeking to understand the world around them, children learn in a variety of ways; a wide range of teaching strategies and interactions are effective in supporting all these kinds of learning.
- Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation as well as for promoting language, cognition and social competence.
- Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery, and also when they have many opportunities to practice newly acquired skills.
- Children’s experiences shape their motivation and approaches to learning, such as persistence, initiative, and flexibility; in turn, these dispositions and behaviors affect their learning and development.

In addition to the critical components discussed by researchers and NAEYC, implementation brief developers encourage early childhood educators and their evaluators to also have a good understanding of the following issues in order to complete fair, valid, and reliable evaluations:

- **Early childhood educators are core instructional leaders.** A critical foundation for the early childhood field is the science of early childhood development supporting children from birth to age eight.
- **High quality early childhood education plays a crucial role in the foundation for school readiness for Colorado’s young children.** The evaluation requirements under Senate Bill 10-191 are intended to provide meaningful evaluations for all licensed educators in the state. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is incorporating early childhood educators into the scope and intent of S.B. 10-191 to ensure that they, too, benefit from opportunities for meaningful feedback and professional development. When including early childhood educators in evaluation systems, though, it is imperative to recognize the unique needs of young learners. In addition to developing the academic skills required to be successful in school, supporting young children’s overall brain development is a critical component of early childhood education. Critical components of this brain development include executive functioning and social competence.

As the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University points out, “acquiring the early building blocks of these skills is one of the most important and challenging tasks of the early childhood years, and the opportunity to build further on these rudimentary capacities is critical to healthy development through middle childhood and adolescence.”² These building blocks include “capacities to retain and use new information, focus attention, control impulses and make plans.”³ While brain development occurs most rapidly in the first 5 years of life, “the full range of executive function skills continues to develop into the adolescent years.”⁴ The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University also

² Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011) *Building the Brain’s “Air Traffic Control” System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function*; Boston

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid



recommends specific practices to support children in developing these capacities. These are described in the following exhibit.⁵

- **Colorado’s early care and education system is evolving with the introduction of four new elements which guide how early care and education professionals work with children and their families.** The opportunities presented by these changes are great and coordination is essential. CDE’s Educator Effectiveness Team, CDE’s Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, and the Colorado Department of Human Services’ Office of Early Childhood are working closely together to create a comprehensive, aligned and supported system that embodies continuous improvement and opportunities for meaningful feedback and ongoing professional development.
 1. **Early Learning and Development Guidelines** were adopted by the Early Childhood Leadership Commission in Jan. 2013. These guidelines reinforce the value of both development and academic standards in high quality early childhood programs.
 2. **Early Educator and Administrator Competencies** were adopted by the Early Childhood Leadership Commission in May, 2013. These competencies are serving to guide professional practices for early educators, including the Teacher and Principal Quality Standards. Additionally, the competencies serve as the foundation for an aligned p-3 EC Professional Development system.
 3. **School readiness assessment and individual readiness plans** for children in publicly funded preschool and kindergarten classrooms (S.B. 08-212) should be fully implemented by the 2015 – 2016 school year. Individual readiness plans should be informed by one of the State Board of Education’s approved readiness assessments.
 4. **Colorado Shines**, the next generation of Colorado’s Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), measures quality in five standard areas: 1) Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development; 2) Family Partnerships; 3) Leadership, Management and Administration; 4) Learning Environment; and 5) Child Health. These standards apply to all licensed childcare centers and family childcare homes, including preschool and pre-K programs in school districts.

Critical Factors in Developing Strong Early Childhood Foundational Skills

The critical factors in developing a strong foundation for essential skills in young children are children’s relationships, the activities they have opportunities to engage in, and the places in which they live, learn, and play (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University).

Relationships—Children develop in an environment of relationships. This starts in the home and extends to caregivers, teachers, medical and human services professionals, foster parents, and peers. Children are more likely to build effective executive function skills if the important adults in their lives are able to:

- **Support** their efforts;
- **Model** the skills;
- **Engage** in activities in which they practice the skills;
- **Provide** a consistent, reliable presence that young children can trust;
- **Guide** them from complete dependence on adults to gradual independence; and
- **Protect** them from chaos, violence, and chronic adversity, because toxic stress caused by these environments disrupts the brain circuits required for executive functioning and triggers impulsive, “act-now-think-later” behavior.

⁵ Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011) *Executive Function: Skills for Life and Learning*; Boston



Activities—Building these abilities in young children requires communities and caregivers to provide and support experiences that promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development broadly, including a range of strategies that:

- **Reduce stress** in children’s lives, both by addressing its source and helping them learn how to cope with it in the company of competent, calming adults;
- **Foster social connection** and open-ended creative play, supported by adults;
- **Incorporate vigorous physical exercise** into daily activities, which has been shown to positively affect stress levels, social skills, and brain development;
- **Increase the complexity** of skills step-by-step by
- finding each child’s “zone” of being challenged but not frustrated; and
- **Include repeated practice** of skills over time by setting up opportunities for children to learn in the presence of supportive mentors and peers.

Places—The home and other environments where children spend most of their time must:

- Feel (and be) **safe**;
- Provide space for **creativity, exploration, and exercise**;
- Be **economically and socially stable** in order to reduce the anxiety and stress that come with uncertainty or fear.



Considerations for Determining Whether an Early Childhood Educator Should be Evaluated in Order to Meet Requirements of S. B. 10-191

Classroom Type	Role and Teacher Assignment	Is CDE teacher licensing required and does S.B. 10-191 apply?	Key Considerations
Colorado Preschool Program (i.e. only children who are at risk); children ages 2 ½ to 6 years old*	Teachers and Assistant Teachers	<p>CPP funding for educators serving preschoolers does not require licensed teachers. S.B. 10-191 does not apply.</p> <p>Districts requiring teachers to be licensed may decide whether S.B. 10-191 applies.</p>	Mixed-age classrooms may include children from two years, 10 months to five years of age. There will be an observable difference in children’s behaviors as the year progresses.
CPP and Preschool Special Education*	Teachers Specialized Service Professionals Teacher Assistants	<p>Yes – Teacher Rubric</p> <p>Yes – use rubric for SSP</p>	Classrooms may be comprised of children qualifying for CPP and special education. Teachers in these classrooms may provide evidence/artifacts aligned with their work. Likewise, their evaluators will look for specific teaching behaviors reflective of the uniqueness of this work during observations.
Transdisciplinary	Specialized Service Professionals**	Yes – Use appropriate specialized service professionals rubric.	Small group instruction is appropriate for observations.
Kindergarten	Teachers	Yes	Two ½ day programs Full day K
1 st – 3 rd grade	Teachers	Yes	See Exhibit 3
Child Find	Coordinator	Yes – use teacher rubric or rubric for SSP or use Unique Role Guidance	Not all personnel provide direct support to children. Select most appropriate rubric.
EC Administrator	EC Coordinator, Child Find Coordinator, Head Start Manager, Asst. SPED Director	No. Districts decide whether S.B. 10-191 applies.	
Head Start	Teachers and	Head Start does not	



Classroom Type	Role and Teacher Assignment	Is CDE teacher licensing required and does S.B. 10-191 apply?	Key Considerations
	Asst. Teachers	require licensed teachers. S.B. 10-191 does not apply. Some districts require teachers to be licensed. Districts can decide whether S.B. 10-191 applies.	
Infant/toddler (birth – 2 years)	Teachers	No. May be required by district or BOCES policy.	Use of CLASS for infant and toddler teachers.

* Preschool Programs will have the opportunity to participate in Colorado’s new Quality Rating and Improvement System. Specific to the PDIS, EC professionals can register, complete a self-assessment and PD plan, and be awarded an EC Professional Credential. This system supports career pathway and degree attainment for EC professionals. Work to align these systems with Effective Educator is underway.

**Audiologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, School Counselors, School Nurses, School Orientation and Mobility Specialists, School Psychologists, School Social Workers and Speech-Language Pathologists