

2021 Early Learning and Development Standards Curriculum Alignment

Guidance Document



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

Introduction

In March, 2021, the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) issued a Request for Information from publishers of evidence-based, comprehensive, and content/domain-specific curriculum for children ages three to five to align with the state’s 2013 Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS). Through submissions received, RIDE has been able to endorse a final list of curricula that is RIDE-approved. This assessment and the final curriculum endorsement will be used for the purpose of selecting curricula for use in child care centers, family child care homes, Head Starts, Pre-Kindergarten programs, and other early childhood programs across the state.

Background

The Rhode Island Department of Education and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services worked collaboratively with national experts, Rhode Island’s higher education community, and Rhode Island’s early childhood stakeholders to its early learning and development standards.

These standards, which were approved for use by the Rhode Island Board of Education on May 23, 2013, extend educational expectations to infants and toddlers, and are integrated with preschool early learning standards to create a seamless birth-to-60-month continuum. The Early Learning and Development Standards are set forth with the following important considerations, which are relevant to all early learners:

- **Early learning occurs within the context of nurturing relationships;** it is only through consistent and secure early relationships that children feel safe enough to explore their environments and learn. Play—especially with adults and with other children—is a key element for early learning and a primary vehicle through which young children begin to understand themselves in relation to others and to orient themselves to the world and to the delight of learning. Strictly defined, it is any freely sought activity that is pleasing to the “player.” It can be physical (bouncing up and down or riding a tricycle), imaginative (playing “peek-a-boo” or “dress-up”), creative (building with blocks or drawing pictures), social (acting out a dramatic episode), or mental (daydreaming). And it can be any combination of these. Paradoxically, play is the most important work of childhood.
- **Early learning is integrated across all areas of development;** and while specific domains of learning are identified, each area of learning is influenced by progress in others. As well, each child may progress at different rates in each of the domains. Finally, while learning is sequential—starting simple (concrete) and becoming more complex (abstract)—development unfolds in fits and starts.

- Early learning is rooted in culture and supported by the family.

Rhode Island Definitions of Curriculum

Curriculum is a standards-based sequence of planned learning experiences where students practice and achieve proficiency in content and applied learning skills. Curriculum is the central guide for all educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning, so that every student has access to rigorous academic experiences. The structure, organization, and considerations in a curriculum are created in order to enhance student learning and facilitate instruction. Curriculum must include the necessary goals, methods, materials, and assessments to effectively support instruction and learning.

- *For additional information of how Curriculum has been defined in Rhode Island please visit the following state resource:*
<https://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Curriculum/CurriculumDefinition.aspx>

Curriculum Alignment Process

RIDE launched a Request for Information (RFI) process in to identify high quality curricula aligned to the 2013 Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards.

Vendors/publishers interested in submitting curricula to RIDE for the alignment review were to submit a full copy of the curriculum, a cover page, and a completed technical report (with citations or examples demonstrating how the curriculum aligns with each learning goal of the RIELDS).

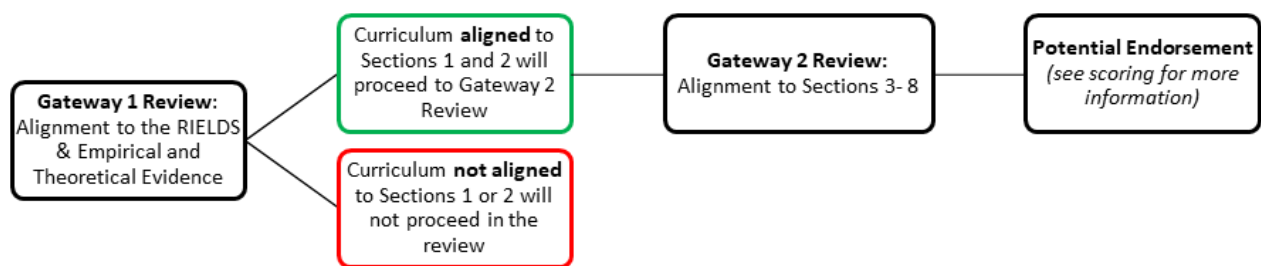
The review of the curriculum was executed through a two-tiered (“gateway”) process **[Figure 1]**. The Gateway 1 review consisted of the curricula’s alignment with sections 1 and 2 of the Department developed rubric: alignment with the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards, and alignment with evidence-based and theoretical methodology. Curricula in alignment with these sections of the rubric moved forward to the Gateway 2 review, where it was assessed for alignment against sections 3 through 8 of the Department developed rubric which included:

- **Goals and Objectives:** specific, measurable, and child-focused sets of goals and objectives for children’s development are developmentally appropriate and accessible for children ages 3-5 and address learning across all RIELDS developmental domains
- **Classroom Materials:** materials are developmentally appropriate and accessible to all children, are plentiful and representative of all of the developmental domains the curriculum

is intended to support, presents a range of diverse representations, and is offered in languages other than English

- **Child Assessment System:** the curriculum offers a formative assessment system through a variety of documentation methods for record keeping, and provides a method for storing student assessment data; the assessment system is primarily observational and developmentally-based for children ages 3-5, is clearly and explicitly linked to the overarching evidence-base and theoretical philosophy of the curriculum and comprehensively assesses all relevant domains, components, and learning goals identified in the RIELDS; assessment system provides information and strategies on how to gather observations from various sources and settings, interpret or use information to inform instruction, and share child outcomes with families
- **Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** the curriculum is developmentally appropriate for all children ages 3-5, regardless of ability or other differentiating needs, and provides clear information for educators on how it may be scaffolded or adapted for diverse learners to support success; there is variety by way of learning opportunities, materials, and teaching strategies to support learning outcomes; children’s thinking and learning over time moves from simple towards complex; the curriculum promotes a positive climate and learning environment to support a caring and equitable community of learners
- **Teacher Supports, Usability, and Professional Development:** the curriculum’s structure is clear, easy to use, developmentally appropriate, and allows flexibility to support new and experienced educators and children’s varying interests and needs; sample lesson plans/detailed instructional guides are provided to support implementation; ongoing PD/TA is designed to help teachers understand and implement curriculum to fidelity with targeted PD opportunities for understanding the child assessment system; PD opportunities are convenient and accessible to all teachers and may be offered in languages other than English
- **Family Engagement:** information and resources are provided to support family engagement through regular, bidirectional communication, and family’s active involvement in their child’s education

Figure 1: Curriculum Alignment Process



Curriculum Alignment Review Committee

The Curriculum Review Committee met for the purpose of reviewing curricula submitted by the vendors/publishers. Each had access to the full copy of the curriculum, and scored each curriculum against a department developed rubric. Each member conducted a detailed, independent review of the curriculum. Each individual score was used for the purposes of discussion and upon completion, the team settled upon one consensus score. The review committee consisted of RIDE staff and consultants, Pre-K and Kindergarten classroom educators, Pre-K education coordinators, and early learning training and technical assistance providers.

The Curriculum Alignment Review Committee published an approved list of pre-kindergarten curriculum which may be accessed by the following link.

- [RI's Approved List of Pre-Kindergarten Curricula](#)

The approved curriculum included in this list have met all of the criteria for evaluation across the Gateway 1 and Gateway 2 review processes, and demonstrate alignment to the expectations for high-quality curriculum as determined by RIDE. To learn more information about each approved curriculum, please click on the names of each curriculum, which are hyperlinked within this list.