



Early Learning Guidelines

Introduction

The President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* early learning initiative (*GSGS*) asks States to develop voluntary guidelines on literacy, language, pre-reading skills, and numeracy activities for children ages 3 to 5 that align with the State K-12 standards.

Although *GSGS* does not require it, States and Territories have also expressed interest in developing early learning guidelines (ELGs) for infants and toddlers.

Some States have already produced ELGs for infants and toddlers, while others are at different stages in the development process. Sometimes ELGs are developed as one component of program standards, however, these terms have different meanings and intended uses.

This fact sheet:

- Clarifies the difference between early learning guidelines and program standards;
- Presents a snapshot of States that have infant and toddler ELGs, including links to the guidelines;
- Provides a list of States that are currently developing ELGs for infants and toddlers.

The Difference Between Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards

Sometimes the terms early learning guidelines and program standards are used interchangeably but there are differences.

GSGS uses the term **early learning guidelines** to refer to child outcomes. *GSGS* defines early learning guidelines as research-based, measurable expectations about what children should know (understand) and do (competencies and skills) in different domains of learning. *GSGS* recommends that guidelines be applicable to various child care settings and to care provided by a parent.

Program standards are expectations about the characteristics or quality of child care settings.

Some states have included early learning guidelines (child outcomes) within frameworks that also address outcomes for programs, staff, families, communities and/or systems (e.g. California Desired Results and the Georgia Outcome and Indicator Framework).



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States That Have ELGs for Infants and Toddlers

Arkansas

Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care and accompanying *Picture This* brochure. Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

<http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/bench.pdf>
<http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/infanttoddbroch.pdf>

California

Desired Results for Children and Families. California Department of Education, Child Development Division. Child outcomes can be found on the Developmental Continuum and the Developmental Profiles that are available at http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/child_development/drdpforms.htm. A validation study is currently underway.

Georgia

Standards of Care. Georgia Office of School Readiness. <http://www.osr.state.ga.us/pre-k/stdsofcare.pdf>

Growing Smart and Healthy Babies. Georgia Department of Human Resources, Office of Regulatory Services, Child Care Licensing Section www.osr.state.ga.us/pre-k/stdsofcare.pdf

Kentucky

Building a Strong Foundation for School Success: Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards. Kentucky Department of Education <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Early+Childhood+Development/Kentucky's+Early+Childhood+Standards.htm>

States Developing ELGs for Infants and Toddlers

Many states are at varying stages of the process of developing early learning guidelines that focus on or include infants and toddlers. Some have just begun discussing the work by convening work groups or task forces, others have guidelines written in draft form, and some are revising previously developed guidelines. States that are working toward early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers include:

- **Connecticut**
- **Florida**
- **Guam**
- **Illinois**
- **Indiana**
- **Kansas**
- **Louisiana**
- **Maine**
- **Maryland**
- **Michigan**
- **Minnesota**
- **Nebraska**
- **New Mexico**
- **New York**
- **North Dakota**
- **Northern Mariana Islands**
- **Oregon**
- **Tennessee**
- **Washington**

For more information on early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers, contact Susan Medina, Information Specialist for the National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative by phone at 202.638.1144 or through an email to itcc@zerotothree.org.

The examples of state efforts in this fact sheet are provided for informational purposes and are not endorsed or recommended by the National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative nor by the Child Care Bureau. The information presented is a snapshot of current state activity related to ELGs for infants and toddlers based on information collected by the Initiative in its work with states and a preliminary review of the FY04-05 CCDF State Plans. This information may not represent all state efforts that exist. This fact sheet will be updated regularly to reflect new information.

