



Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast

Serving Citrus – Dixie – Gilchrist – Levy – Sumter Counties

Position on Curriculum

The Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast is responsible for ensuring that all school readiness providers use “appropriate curriculum”. What does this mean? What do we expect of providers?

It is our goal to work together with you and support you in meeting the following expectations:

- ✿ School readiness providers offer a learning environment that consists of developmentally appropriate and age appropriate practices with a broad range of activities and experiences for children
- ✿ School readiness providers have an understanding of child development theories, brain research, emergent literacy, and the importance of promoting social and emotional health in children
- ✿ School readiness providers “adopt” a philosophy and specific theories that they feel comfortable with in working with children
- ✿ School readiness providers understand that curriculum is all that you do during the learning day; it is your daily program
- ✿ School readiness providers understand that the many different curricula are tools for conducting well-thought-out, well-planned teaching, based on a good understanding of the individual needs of the child, as determined by an assessment of their capabilities and needs
- ✿ School readiness providers must choose good tools that are research-based, and also understand that new research is conducted constantly; teachers must keep educating themselves about what is good for children and what they can do to help children reach their highest potential
- ✿ School readiness providers realize that no one particular curriculum can “do it all” and that all curricula should be supplemented with a range of other tools, mixing and matching to plan a complete program to meet the needs of the child and prepare him/her for later school success
- ✿ School readiness providers can clearly explain *what they do and why*, when asked questions about their curriculum
- ✿ School readiness providers understand that children must master specific age and/or developmentally appropriate skills, develop the motivation and desire to learn, and feel good about themselves in order to thrive and succeed
- ✿ School readiness providers realize that curriculum tools, well-planned teaching geared to the children’s needs, and consistent caring relationships are the means to foster learning, resiliency, and readiness in children

*Together we can make a difference in the lives of children,
helping to prepare them for success in school and life!*

Curriculum Requirements

School readiness programs shall provide the elements necessary to prepare children for school by providing a curriculum that addresses acceptable practices based on the Florida School Readiness Performance Standards, including learning activities designed to enhance the following areas:

- Physical health
- Approaches to learning
- Social and emotional development
- Language and communication
- Cognitive development and general knowledge
- Motor development
- Character development

Curriculum recommendations:

- Curriculum choices should be age appropriate and research-based, especially concerning early literacy
- Include a strong literacy component, as appropriate to the age group taught, to include oral language, print awareness, phonemic and phonological awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Provide a nurturing, safe environment with developmentally appropriate materials and equipment
- Include age appropriate materials and equipment that support the selected curriculum
- The curriculum should be supported and enriched through parent/teacher communication regarding children's strengths, learning styles, and individual needs
- Include individualized learning experiences linked to on-going assessments of each child's needs
- Include learning activities designed to build on children's interests and skills to create meaningful experiences
- Ensure that children are active and engaged
- Provide a balance of teacher-initiated and child-initiated experiences
- Provide activities to foster brain development of infants and toddlers, including an environment rich in language and music, filled with a large variety of objects to stimulate visual, tactile, auditory, and linguistic senses in children
- Culturally sensitive to the child population, including children that may speak another language
- Parents are recognized as the child's first teacher, and are offered support in assisting with the education of their own child

Classroom recommendations for children age birth through two:

The program environment must be rich in language and music. Children must be exposed to a variety of language experiences, including teacher/child interaction, child/child interaction, books and stories, and songs and finger plays. The classroom should be filled with objects of various colors, textures, and sizes to stimulate visual, tactile, auditory, and linguistic senses in children. Activities must be provided to foster brain development.

Written lesson plans include activities that allow children a wide variety of experiences. The classroom schedule is flexible to meet the individual needs of the child, such as sleeping and feeding times of infants. Teachers include activities to meet the specific learning needs of the children as evidenced by their assessment scores and relevant reports and information.

A system should be in place to organize information and reports received regarding the children's assessment scores. Individual files should be maintained in some fashion, so that all teachers in a classroom can review each child's educational needs. Teachers should understand the correlation between the milestones of development and the child's readiness for later school success. Teachers should utilize the information in the E-LAP Planning Cards in the planning process, in Citrus and Sumter Counties.

Classroom recommendations for children age three through five:

The program has interest areas including the following experiences:

- Blocks of various types
- Dramatic play
- Art
- Library with wide variety of appropriate books
- Science/discovery

- ☀ Sand and water
- ☀ Music and movement
- ☀ Cooking
- ☀ Outdoors

Written lesson plans include activities that allow children to explore all of the above areas on a regular basis. Teachers include activities to meet the specific learning needs of the children as evidenced by their assessment scores and relevant reports and information.

A variety of curriculum resources should be used to assist in planning. Teachers should have easy access to resource materials, and an understanding of the skills needed by children for them to be ready for school.

A system should be in place to organize information and reports received regarding the children's assessment scores. Individual files should be maintained in some fashion, so that all teachers in a classroom can review each child's educational needs. Teachers should have an understanding of the Florida School Readiness Performance Standards, so that activities can be planned that will assist each child in moving forward in his/her development. Teachers should utilize the information in the LAP-D Planning Cards in the planning process, in Citrus and Sumter Counties.

Indicators of an Effective Curriculum

- ☀ Children are active and engaged
- ☀ Goals are clear and shared by all
- ☀ Curriculum is evidence-based
- ☀ Valued content is learned through investigation, play, and focused , intentional teaching
- ☀ Curriculum builds on prior learning and experiences
- ☀ Curriculum is comprehensive
- ☀ Professional standards validate the curriculum's subject-matter content
- ☀ The curriculum is likely to benefit children

An effective curriculum is just one part of an effective system of early childhood education, which includes early learning standards, assessment, and program evaluation. In order to produce positive outcomes for children, all parts of the system must be in place and linked together in a dynamic, meaningful way for continuous program improvement and positive outcomes for children. Teacher education is critical to the success of school readiness programs. Teachers who receive curriculum training and support are better able clearly articulate their goals for children, and offer the children a curriculum that will deliver the expected outcomes.

Early Childhood Curriculum Approval Process

The Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast is responsible for ensuring that all school readiness providers use "appropriate curriculum". The Coalition has approved the following curricula for use in school readiness sites:

Whole-day Curricula

1. Infant Toddler Planning Guide—Kaplan Press
2. A Planning Guide to the Preschool Curriculum—Kaplan Press
3. The Complete Daily Curriculum—Schiller/Phelps
4. High Scope Curriculum
5. High Reach Curriculum
6. Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers
7. Mother Goose Time
8. Wee Learn—LifeWay Christian Curriculum
9. Theme Based Curriculum
10. HIPPY Program
11. Kids in Motion
12. Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers
13. Opening the World of Learning (OWL)
14. InvestiGator Curriculum
15. Essentials Preschool Curriculum

16. Horizon Preschool Curriculum

Literacy Curricula

1. Letter Works: Building Early Literacy Skills
2. Breakthrough to Literacy
3. Creating Readers
4. Woven Word—Committee for Children
5. Waterford Reading
6. My Florida Alphabet (My Animal Alphabet)

Math Curricula

1. Math Their Way

Character Development Curricula

1. Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum—Committee for Children

Supplemental Curricula

1. Handwriting Without Tears
2. Talking About Touching – Committee for Children

The Coalition recognizes that the Infant/Toddler and Preschool Planning Guides (Kaplan Press) are closely aligned with the **Florida School Readiness Performance Standards** and the **Learning Accomplishment Profile** assessment system. For these reasons, use of the Planning Guides is encouraged in school readiness sites. The activities included build the skills that are measured on the LAP assessments. They are a useful resource to assist teachers in planning activities designed to meet the needs of children as indicated on the LAP assessments and follow up parent and teacher reports.

The Coalition realizes, however, that there are other early childhood curricula that may be a valuable resource to teachers as they plan for the learning of young children. Many school readiness providers utilize a variety of curricula. The Coalition's Advisory Councils are available to consider expanding the listing of Coalition-approved curricula to include other quality curricula that meet the standards required in Chapter 411 of the Florida Statutes.

The Advisory Councils have developed the following procedure for school readiness sites to submit their choice of curriculum for approval.

1. School readiness provider should review the Coalition's **Position on Curriculum** to be sure that the curriculum they wish to submit meets the requirements of the Coalition.
2. School readiness provider obtains **Request for Curriculum Approval Form** from the Coalition office.
3. School readiness provider submits the **Request for Curriculum Approval Form** to the Coalition, along with:
 - a. Sample lesson plan
 - b. Sample of curriculum materials, curriculum book, or similar item that can be reviewed
4. Contract Coordinator will conduct initial review, utilizing the **Checklist for Curriculum Evaluation**.
5. Results of the initial review will be shared with the Advisory Council at the next regularly scheduled meeting, when a decision will be made regarding the recommendation of the curriculum presented. If a curriculum is to be recommended, an action item will be presented to the board.
6. The school readiness provider will be notified in writing by the Coalition of the board's decision.
7. The Coalition's service provider(s) will also be notified.
8. Once a curriculum is approved, any school readiness provider may choose to utilize it.

The **Request for Curriculum Approval Form** and supporting documentation must be submitted to the Coalition office nearest you. The Coalition's mailing addresses are:

Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast
Attn: Ingrid Ellis
1564 N. Meadowcrest Blvd.
Crystal River, FL 34429

Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast
Attn: Tonya Hiers
122 N Main St
Chiefland, FL 32626



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Request for Curriculum Approval Form

School Readiness site: _____ Site owner/director: _____

County: _____ Phone: _____

Curriculum to be evaluated: _____ Date form submitted: _____

Age group curriculum is to be used for: _____

Do you intend to use this curriculum in conjunction with any other curricula? If so, which one/ones? _____

Explain why you feel that this curriculum is a valuable teaching tool in preparing young children for school. _____

Describe the research that this curriculum is based on. _____

Describe the early literacy content included in this curriculum. _____

Describe the character development content included in this curriculum. _____

Describe how this curriculum is used to assist the parent, as the child's first teacher. _____

Describe how this curriculum fits with Florida's School Readiness Performance Standards? _____

What training is provided to your teachers, to assist them in properly utilizing this curriculum? _____

Note: Please attach additional sheets as necessary, to answer questions fully.

Checklist for Curriculum Evaluation

Name of Curriculum: _____

Elements:	Yes/No/NA	Comments:
Utilizes developmentally appropriate practices		
Research-based or based on research		
Goals for children's development & learning		
Parent/teacher connection		
Correlated student assessment		
Progress monitoring & reporting		
Literacy component		
• Oral language		
• Print awareness		
• Phonemic & phonological awareness		
• Vocabulary		
• Comprehension		
Character development component		
Materials needed to implement/cost		
Aligned with SRPS or can be correlated		
Sensitive to cultural diversity		
Inclusion of children with disabilities		
Training available for teachers		
Overall ability to meet the educational needs of the whole child		

Additional comments: