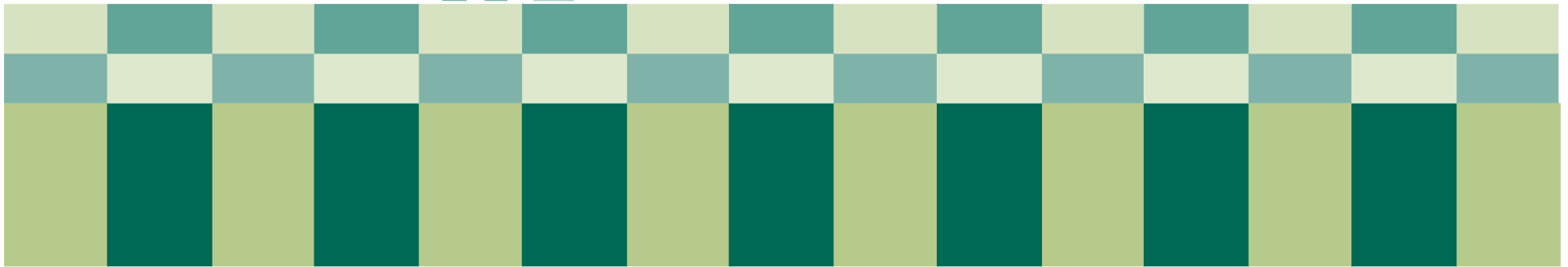


Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines
Family Child Care



Early Learning Assessment



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Providers from the Western Maine ELOA Pilot Project

This project was made possible by a Western Maine ACCESS Early Learning Opportunities Grant,
Child Care Bureau, Administration Children, Youth & Families, US Department of Health & Human Services

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PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE EARLY LEARNING ASSESSMENT

This Assessment has been designed to help family child care providers take a careful look at the children in their care and to document the learning, skills, and abilities of each child from age 3 through kindergarten entry. It can also be used as a self-assessment, helping providers to reflect upon their work with children and to identify any areas or activities needing more attention.

The tool organizes learning into seven areas or domains of development. Each area has several specific indicators, which were developed from *Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines* (which in turn relate to the state's Learning Results for older children in school).

A child's early development across this wide range of areas builds the foundation for later success in school, work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Research in brain development highlights the critical importance of the first years of life. The experience of each child - in relationships with family, providers, and other children, and in the context of the child care and home environments - will either support and nurture the child's development, fail to develop his or her full potential, or put the child at risk for later difficulties.

The Assessment is intended to help providers:

- observe, assess, and document what each child understands and what s/he can do,
- track the child's ongoing development and progress,
- recognize the unique strengths, abilities, and needs of each child,
- understand the diverse range of abilities and needs of the group of children,

- design a rich learning environment appealing to a range of interests and all the senses,
- plan activities customized to each child and the group of children,
- guide spontaneous interactions to support developmental goals, and
- be more reflective and intentional in their work with children.

The first goal is to notice and document the unique development of each individual child. Experienced providers have seen an amazing array of patterns of development in the children they have known. Parents are struck by the differences between their own children. Truly, each child develops at his/her own rate, influenced by: prenatal care and childbirth, genetic make-up and health, the quality of relationships and attachment to family members and caregivers, early physical and sensory experiences, and much more.

This tool ensures that all children, regardless of ability or "disability," can show what they can do and what they know. It respects and appreciates the culture and language skills of children who are learning English as well as the varying experiences of those who are growing in rural, suburban, or urban settings.

Parents and Providers Together. To ensure learning, it is important that children explore and apply new learnings through experiences that are interesting, satisfying, and respectful. This promotes development much more effectively than formal teaching and lessons.

This tool can also be used to help providers and families work as partners to support the child:

- observing the child's abilities and interests as well as areas of difficulty,
- sharing this information with each other to document an accurate picture, and
- planning together some goals and next steps for the child.

Although this tool organizes learning into areas of development, our goal is to support the whole child. In the real world, there are not discrete developmental areas. They are overlapping and interconnected.

This assessment was developed to be friendly and easy to use for providers and parents. The overall number of indicators were reduced from the *Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines* for manageability and to reduce the time required to implement the assessment. A few were combined to eliminate some overlap in content. As the usability of this first edition of the assessment is reviewed, more will be added. We encourage providers to be familiar with all of the Maine ECLG and to add other indicators they would like to use.

Designing Curriculum and Activities. Children learn by doing and pursuing their curiosity in the rich experiences of daily life. The greatest learning and the most interest for young children occurs when an activity engages many aspects of development at the same time. Think about cooking or preparing for a family party. Sitting children down for an academic lesson (and even providing M&Ms for correct answers) produces what adults call "in one ear and out the other." Hands-on, real-world activities are the best for young children.

Thoughtful providers can offer activities that involve rich, multi-faceted experience. For example, a trip to a grocery store can involve:

- reading the lunch menu and making a shopping list
- stopping to see if a neighbor needs anything,
- searching in the store for the foods on the shopping list,
- admiring a photo of the cashier’s grandchildren,
- counting money,
- deciding who will carry which groceries,
- if walking, physical exercise, healthful fresh air and hopefully sunshine,
- planning who will do what to prepare lunch.

Similarly, a project to grow seeds can involve:

- reading and interpreting pictures,
- following planting instructions,
- observing weekly changes and documenting them in drawings or a graph
- discussing what is observed and answering “what if” questions.

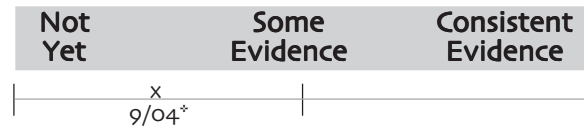
Children build their sense of belonging to a meaningful, interdependent group as they work together in the garden. As they track their efforts and exchange ideas, they are building skills and dispositions that will serve them well in the future.

Young children are hard-wired to learn. They have great curiosity and desire to touch, hear, see, smell, and taste. The Assessment will help providers organize their observations to design and shape developmentally appropriate curriculum that encourages children’s play, natural curiosity, and enthusiasm for learning.

Guidelines for Your Documentation

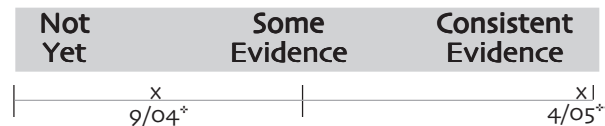
Considering a child’s development on an indicator, think about what you have observed. Place a mark along the continuum line to summarize the evidence you have observed, and note the month and year.

For example,
 “IV.F.3. Dictates words for an adult or another child to write (ex., a letter, a story, a note on a drawing or painting)”



You can jot down brief documentation notes the page, or you can make an asterisk (*) to refer to a longer note on the back of the previous page or in another place. For example,
 * *Annie asked me to write her name on her painting today.*”

The next time you observe this child on this indicator, again place a mark along the line with the date and observation documentation.



Note on the back of the previous page:
 ** *Annie dictated a note to her mom that was several sentences long. Recently she has been asking me to write notes describing her drawings.*

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Maine DHHS does not endorse one assessment over another, but rather believes that there are many ways to assess children, just as there are many curriculum ideas.

Glossary

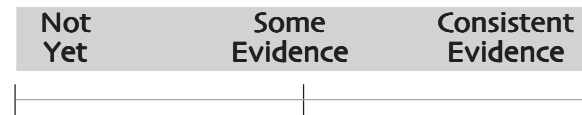
Assessment - Documentation of ongoing observations of a child's development. Authentic assessment requires that observations are carried out by an adult who has an ongoing relationship with the child and that the observations occur over time during real-life, hands-on activities.

Screening - Measurement of a child's development at one point in time, to identify possible concerns. Screening is usually accompanied by referral for further evaluation, in areas such as vision, hearing, dental health, or neural-psychological development. This assessment is not a screening tool.

Domains of Development - This assessment organizes learning into seven areas or domains.

Indicators - specific statements used to assess a child's development in the various learning areas, developed directly from Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. For example, "I.B.3 Interacts respectfully and cooperatively with familiar adults."

The developmental continuum - the graphic used to document your observations about a specific child on an indicator:



Three points are labeled on the continuum:

"Not Yet" - No evidence of this indicator has been observed.

"Some Evidence" - The child is developing and building competence in this area, especially with help, but is not yet consistently and fully competent.

"Consistent Evidence" - The child shows fairly consistent mastery of this indicator, without help from others.

Customizing the Assessment to Work for You

Each provider is as unique as each child. How can YOU make these worksheets work for you???

Here are some ideas that have worked for other providers:

Keep sticky pads nearby to document observations as they happen.

Set aside a few minutes every week for regular observation and documentation time.

Focus attention on and document the needs of one child at a time, using a separate copy for each child.

Focus attention on one developmental area at a time, using one page of the assessment (perhaps using pens of different colors for each child) and documenting the range of development among your group of children.

Plan an activity giving thought to how to adapt it to meet the range of abilities of the children in your group, allowing each child to participate at her/his own level.

Design an activity that will help you focus on a related group of indicators and document information for each child.

As a self-assessment, identify gaps in your curriculum and environment for continuing improvement. Plan changes to support children's development in new ways.

Summarize the information about a child to use in a parent conference

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

I. Personal and Social Development

A. Self Awareness and Self Control

1. Seeks emotional support from adults when needed.
2. Recognizes and describes own feelings.
3. Expresses feelings, needs, and opinions in difficult situations without harming self, others, or the environment.
4. Follows basic rules and routines.
5. Separates easily from family and joins child care activities.
6. Adjusts to new situations.
7. Explores new interests.
8. Understands how own actions affect others.
9. Accepts the consequences of own actions.
10. Uses materials and equipment safely and respectfully.

Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence

Observation Notes

B. Social Competence

1. Follows through with basic responsibilities (ex., dressing self, helping others, cleaning up).
2. Interacts respectfully and cooperatively with familiar adults.
3. Interacts respectfully and cooperatively with other children.
4. Participates in ongoing interactions with other children, (ex., helping, sharing, discussing).
5. Listens to and follows directions.
6. Listens to conversations with interest.

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

I. Personal and Social Development

B. Social Competence

	Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence
7. Resolves conflicts with peers through compromise and discussion.	_____	_____	_____
8. Understands and respects the needs and rights of others.	_____	_____	_____

Observation Notes

C. Social Study of Families and Community

1. Recognizes and describes the feelings of others.	_____	_____	_____
2. Develops understanding of self as part of a family, the child care group, and a community.	_____	_____	_____
3. Demonstrates a beginning understanding of the concept of generations (ex., grandparents, parents, self, aunts and uncles as parents' siblings).	_____	_____	_____
4. Helps with some jobs and tasks (ex., making snacks, setting the table).	_____	_____	_____
5. Acts out various adult work roles and different aspects of these jobs (ex., mother, teacher, doctor, police officer).	_____	_____	_____
6. Observes and shows interest in other ways of communicating (ex., other languages including songs, sign language, gesturing).	_____	_____	_____
7. Identifies tools and technology used at home, school, and work.	_____	_____	_____
8. Shows awareness of cultural differences (ex., languages, holidays, foods, arts and crafts, music, clothing, forms of shelter).	_____	_____	_____

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

II. Approaches to Learning

A. Initiative and Curiosity

1. Eagerly participates in and learns about a variety of topics, ideas, and tasks.
2. Solves problems through trial and error as well as interactions with other children and adults.
3. Shows flexibility and imagination when approaching tasks and activities.
4. Plays out real-life experiences and ideas.
5. Engages in fantasy play.

Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Observation Notes

B. Persistence and Reflection

1. Persists in and completes a variety of activities and projects.
2. Sets goals and develops and carries out plans.
3. Uses planning to achieve a desired outcome (ex., selecting appropriate types and quantities of materials).
4. Maintains concentration for a period of time, despite distractions and interruptions.
5. Applies prior experience and knowledge to new situations.
6. Tries different approaches including trial and error in carrying out tasks.
7. Solves problems independently through trial and error or through interactions with children or an adult.
8. Discusses and documents experience and describes what was learned.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

III. Creative Arts

	Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence	Observation Notes
1. Moves in time to the beat and rhythm in music.	_____	_____	_____	
2. Uses a variety of art materials (ex., paint, crayons, playdough, paper, glue).	_____	_____	_____	
3. Art creations reflect increasing detail, creativity, and/or realism.	_____	_____	_____	
4. Identifies shapes, textures, and colors.	_____	_____	_____	
5. Tells about and/or role-plays characters from stories and people and events from experience or imagination.	_____	_____	_____	
6. Uses props in dramatic play.	_____	_____	_____	
7. Begins to share opinions about artistic creations and experiences.	_____	_____	_____	

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

IV. Early Language and Literacy

	Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence	Observation Notes
A. Communicating				
1. Asks and answers simple questions about self and family.	_____	_____	_____	
2. Tells about experiences and communicates information, feelings, opinions, and questions.	_____	_____	_____	
3. Communicates clearly enough to be understood by unfamiliar listeners.	_____	_____	_____	
4. Uses an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.	_____	_____	_____	
5. If home language is other than English, progresses in understanding and using English.	_____	_____	_____	
6. If home language is other than English, maintains and progresses in understanding and use of home language.	_____	_____	_____	
B. Book Knowledge and Appreciation				
1. Seeks and enjoys experiences with picture books (ex., asks for a story to be read, studies pictures).	_____	_____	_____	
2. Handles books with care.	_____	_____	_____	
3. Knows to view each page in sequence from front to back of book.	_____	_____	_____	
4. Knows that books provide information.	_____	_____	_____	
5. Understands that books have a title, author, and illustrator.	_____	_____	_____	
6. In pretend play, incorporates literacy activities (ex., pretending to read, write, and/or use signs).	_____	_____	_____	

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

IV. Early Language and Literacy

C. Comprehension

1. Names objects in picture books.
2. Shows understanding of the basic plot of simple stories, in a variety of ways (ex., retelling, role play, responding to questions).
3. Makes reasonable predictions about what will happen next or how things might have turned out differently in a story.
4. Understands the main idea of simple information.

Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Observation Notes

D. Sounds in Spoken Language

1. Recites simple poems or nursery rhymes.
2. Shows awareness of word sounds through rhyming and naming words that begin with the same sound.
3. Recognizes that alphabet letters represent sounds.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

E. Print Concepts

1. Recognizes own written name.
2. Identifies some labels and signs (ex., stop, restaurant name).
3. Recognizes that letters are grouped to form words.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

F. Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing

1. Identifies some letters of the alphabet.
2. Uses scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent thoughts (ex., pretend writing using letter-like symbols).
3. Dictates words for an adult or another child to write (ex., a letter, a story, a note on a drawing or painting).
4. Asks adult or older children how to spell words.
5. Writes a few basic words, perhaps using invented spelling (ex., own name and that of a friend or parent, "Hi," "I love you").

Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Observation Notes

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

V. Health and Physical Education

Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence
---------	---------------	---------------------

Observation Notes

A. Healthy Habits

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Makes health needs known and meets some of them independently (ex., asks for water or gets a drink when thirsty, explains that he/she feels sick). | _____ |
| 2. Uses basic personal hygiene practices and understands that they help to maintain good health (ex., blows nose, washes hands after using toilet). | _____ |
| 3. Tries a variety of nutritious foods and knows the difference between some healthful foods and some with little nutritional value. | _____ |
| 4. Regularly participates in physical activities, ex., active games, outdoor play, dancing. | _____ |
| 5. Practices safety skills in different situations (ex., crossing street, using seatbelt, awareness of strangers). | _____ |

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

B. Gross and Fine Motor Skills

	Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence
1. Shows increasing levels of control and balance in climbing, running, marching, jumping, hopping, skipping, and galloping.	_____	_____	_____
2. Demonstrates ability to coordinate movements in throwing, catching, kicking, and bouncing balls.	_____	_____	_____
3. Shows hand-eye coordination while working puzzles, drawing shapes and patterns, stringing beads, and using scissors.	_____	_____	_____
4. Shows the strength, dexterity, and control needed to use tools such as scissors, paper punch, and stapler.	_____	_____	_____
5. Shows ability to use writing, drawing and art tools including pencils, markers, chalk, paint brushes, and various types of adaptive technology as needed.	_____	_____	_____
6. Uses standard and/or adaptive equipment safely and appropriately (ex., tricycle, swing, slide, wheel chair).	_____	_____	_____

Observation Notes

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

VI. Math

A. Numbers and Number Sense

	Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence
1. Counts objects in sequence to 10 or beyond.	_____	_____	_____
2. Matches a number of objects with the corresponding written numeral (ex., three dogs with the written numeral "3").	_____	_____	_____
3. Shows understanding that numbers have many uses (ex., measurement, recipes, prices, children's ages, phone numbers, and street numbers).	_____	_____	_____
4. Shows interest in numbers and counting to determine and describe quantity (ex., counting the number of children present, sheets of paper needed, steps down from the porch).	_____	_____	_____
5. Answers questions with information gained through data (ex., How many different kinds of shoes are children wearing? How many children are eating lunch here today?).	_____	_____	_____
6. Arranges objects in a sequence and describes the order (ex., first, second, third, last).	_____	_____	_____
7. Matches geometric shapes (ex., matches identical pictures, dominos, lotto game).	_____	_____	_____
8. Sorts objects by characteristics (ex., blocks by shape, buttons by color or number of holes, shells by type).	_____	_____	_____

Observation Notes

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

	Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence	Observation Notes
9. Shows understanding of and uses relationship words (ex. up, down, inside, outside, next to, in front, behind, on top of, under).				
10. Shows basic understanding of past, present, and future (ex. yesterday, today, tomorrow, before, and after).				
B. Shape and Size				
1. Recognizes, names, matches, and sorts simple shapes.				
2. Determines whether two objects are the same or different in size and shape.				
3. Recognizes and compares objects based on differences in length, width, volume, weight.				
4. Recognizes some basic concepts of time and sequence (ex., morning, afternoon, yesterday, today, tomorrow, before, after).				
5. Describes simple navigation activities (ex., how to get from the kitchen to the front door; how to get from own bedroom to bathroom).				
C. Patterns				
1. Notices, copies, and creates simple patterns (ex., leaf shapes, color pattern red-yellow-red-yellow-red, simple clapped rhythms).				

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

VII. Science

A. Scientific Knowledge

	Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence
1. Knows differences between living and non-living things.	_____	_____	_____
2. Sorts living things by characteristics such as ways of moving, habitat, and appearance.	_____	_____	_____
3. Identifies human and animal body parts, knows their functions, and know that they need food, water, and air to survive.	_____	_____	_____
4. Knows that plants have different parts, and need food, water, air, and sun to survive.	_____	_____	_____
5. Cares for the natural environment (ex,. picks up litter, waters plants).	_____	_____	_____

Observation Notes

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

B. Scientific Process

	Not Yet	Some Evidence	Consistent Evidence
1. Demonstrates curiosity about and explores the natural environment outdoors.	_____	_____	_____
2. Proposes ways to answer questions.	_____	_____	_____
3. Makes predictions and tests them (ex., whether an object will float or sink in water, whether another child will want to play a particular activity).	_____	_____	_____
4. Observes and discusses changes that have occurred (ex., plant growth, foliage color change, stages of living things (caterpillar/butterfly), night and day, seasons, weather, a new building in the neighborhood).	_____	_____	_____
5. Uses tools to measure similarities, differences, and changes over time, ex., balance scale, measuring children's heights, cookie widths, plant growth.	_____	_____	_____
6. Observes and describes cause and effect relationships (ex., cooking eggs, melting ice, making playdough).	_____	_____	_____
7. Learning to collect, describe, and represent information through observation, discussion, drawings, maps, and charts.	_____	_____	_____
8. Makes generalizations or conclusions based on experiences.	_____	_____	_____

Observation Notes

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

SUMMARY

Reviewing all your observations, what stands out about this child? What does s/he like to do, what are special interests?

What areas are showing continuing growth and development of skills and abilities?

Are there any areas that the child is not interested in and do not show continuing development?

Plans for future activities or conversations with child and/or parents: