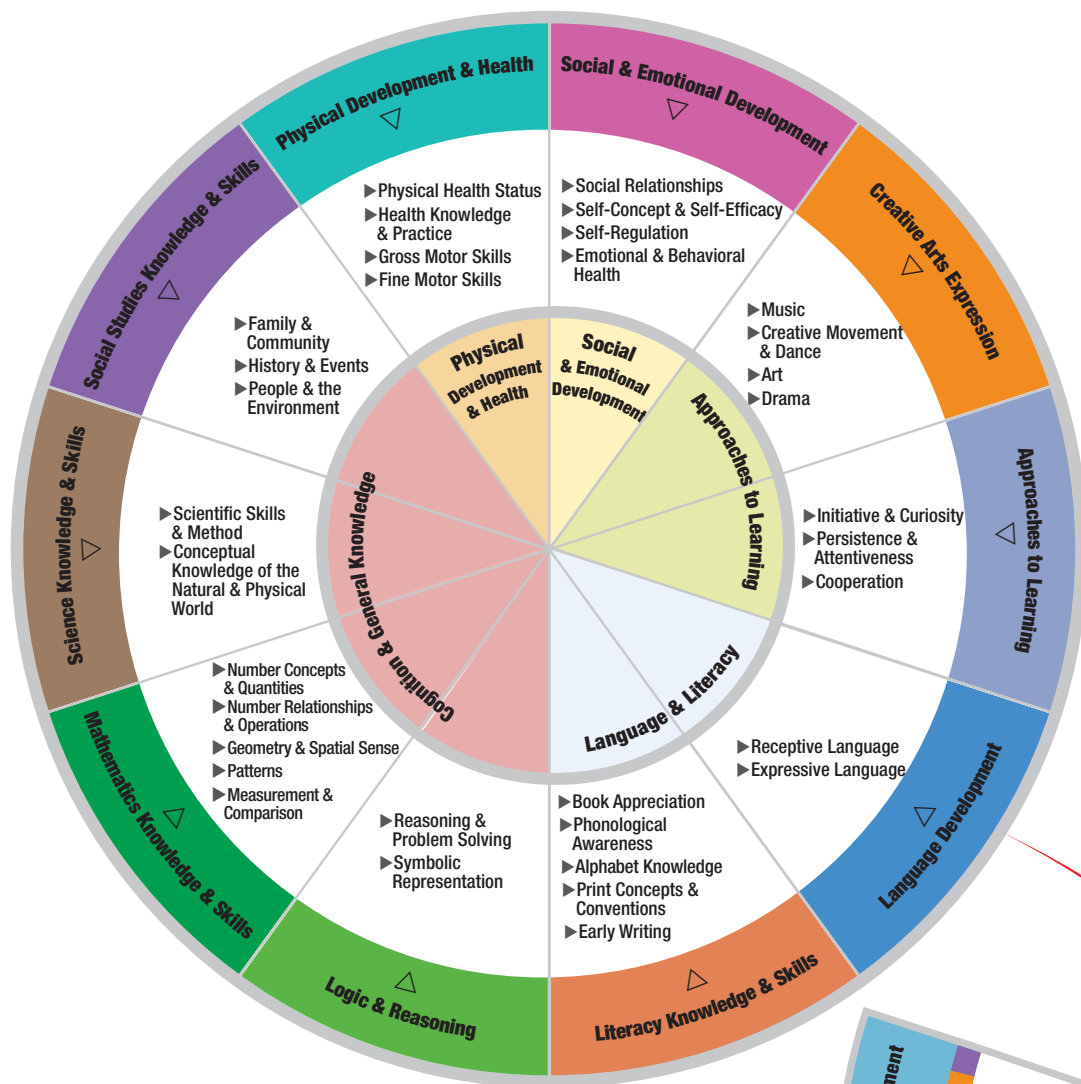


The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework



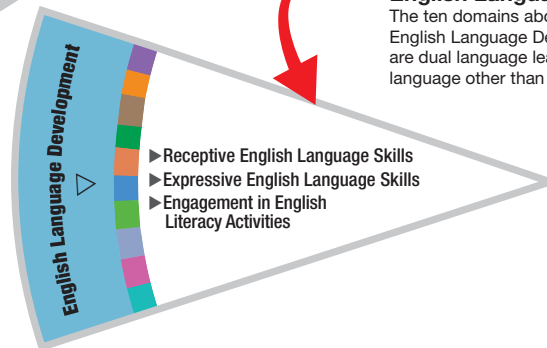
The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework Promoting Positive Outcomes in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children 3-5 Years Old

The *Framework* represents the foundation of the Head Start Approach to School Readiness. It aligns with and builds from the five essential domains of school readiness identified by the National Education Goals Panel (see inner circle) and lays out essential areas of learning and development. The *Framework* can be used to guide curriculum, implementation, and assessment to plan teaching and learning experiences that align to school readiness goals and track children's progress across developmental domains. The domains \triangle and domain elements \blacktriangleright apply to all 3 to 5 year olds in Head Start and other early childhood programs, including dual language learners and children with disabilities.

English Language Development

The ten domains above apply to all children. One domain, English Language Development, applies only to children who are dual language learners (DLLs). These children speak a language other than English at home.

\triangle Domain
 \blacktriangleright Domain Element



How Do Preschool Programs Support School Readiness?

In 2000, the Office of Head Start expanded the understanding of school readiness for preschool children, 3 to 5 years old, by delineating domains of learning and development in the Child Outcomes Framework. In 2010, the revised Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework was released. It reflects changes in the field of early childhood, new research findings, and legislation that expand our understanding of school readiness. Regulation 45 CFR Chapter XIII Part 1307, as amended, requires all agencies to establish school readiness goals, defined as “the expectations of children’s status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical health and well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness for kindergarten goals” (Part 1307.2).

The regulations require that agencies establish school readiness goals that “align with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, State early learning guidelines, and the requirements and expectations of the schools, to the extent that they apply to the ages of children, birth to five, participating in the program and at a minimum address the domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development” (45 CFR XIII 1307.3 (b)(1)(ii), as amended).

In order to help prepare children to be successful when they enter school, Head Start programs implement core strategies including:

- An integrated curriculum that addresses the essential domains of school readiness in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.
- “Aggregate and analyze aggregated child-level assessment data at least three times per year (except for programs operating less than 90 days, which will be required to do so at least twice within the operating program period) and use that data in combination with other program data to determine grantees progress toward meeting its goals, to inform parents and the community of results, and to direct continuous improvement related to curriculum, instruction, professional development, program design and other program decisions (45 CFR Chapter XIII 1307.3 (2)(i), as amended).
- Early learning coaching available to staff across program options and settings.
- An individualized Wellness Plan that promotes healthy development for every child.
- A parent partnership process that promotes an understanding of their child’s progress, provides support, and encourages learning and leadership.
- Ongoing communication with local schools to exchange information about children and programs and to align services for early learning, health, and family engagement.
- A learning community among staff to promote innovation, continuous improvement, and integrated services across education, family services, and health.

Each agency needs to utilize the five domains, represented by the inner wheel of the Framework as the basis for agency preschool school readiness goals. Agencies will indicate how the curriculum and child assessment(s) address or align with the established goals, and how parents are involved in this process. Head Start programs are expected to (ACF-PI-HS-11-04):

1. Adopt and align established OHS goals from the revised Framework.
2. Create and implement a plan of action for achieving the goals.
3. Assess child progress on an ongoing basis and aggregate and analyze data three times per year.
4. Examine data for patterns of progress for groups of children in order to develop and implement a plan for program improvement.

In order to help address school readiness requirements, the Office of Head Start will continue to communicate and support local programs, and will guide the efforts of the Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Network. Communications will support programs’ continued efforts to build their systems and to deliver quality services to children, families, and communities.