

BUILDING BLOCKS

to Colorado's Content Standards

Reading & Writing



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the following individuals who so graciously gave of their time, energy and expertise throughout the writing and editing of this document:

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Introduction

We know more now than we have ever known before about the importance of the early years in a child's development. Research on brain development has demonstrated the phenomenal pace at which learning takes place from the moment we are born. We also know that poverty, illness or special learning needs can have a dramatic impact on a young child's ability to learn.

Recent studies like The Carolina Abecedarian Project and the Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study have documented the direct connection between quality early childhood programs and later academic, social and emotional success.

*From the executive summary of the **Abecedarian study**, October 1999:*

- The Abecedarian study provides scientific evidence that early childhood education significantly improves the scholastic success and educational attainments of poor children even into early adulthood.
- Reading achievement scores were consistently higher for individuals with early intervention and the effects remained significant from primary school through age 21. Mathematics achievement showed a pattern similar to that for reading.

*From the executive summary of the **Cost, Quality and Outcomes study**, June 1999:*

- Child Care quality was related to basic cognitive skills (language and math) and children's behavioral skills in the classroom (thinking/attention skills, sociability, problem behaviors, and peer relations), both of which are important factors in children's ability to take advantage of the opportunities available in school.
- Children who have traditionally been at risk of not doing well in school are affected more by the quality of [early childhood] experiences than other children.

National and local attention has focused closely on insuring that our school systems provide every child with the opportunity to achieve the highest standards possible. Policy makers and the general public have begun to ask questions about what is happening for children before they enter kindergarten and the first grade. What can be done to increase a child's chances for success? Can early learning experiences affect a child's ability to competently read, write, and do math? Can a child at play really be learning?

This document takes what we know about a child's early years and uses that knowledge to describe the building blocks necessary to give our children the greatest chance of success throughout their lives. If you are a teacher, parent, child care provider, elected official or anyone else concerned with children we hope you will take time to read what is here and let us know what you think.

Rationale

The Building Blocks to Colorado's Content Standards were developed for multiple purposes.

- **Connection of early childhood education to the K-12 Content Standards:** Early activities in which young children engage need to be recognized as part of the kindergarten-12th grade continuum. Young children are capable learners and adults in their environments should have high expectations for them. The activities referenced in this document are examples of *experiences appropriate for young children* that will lay the foundation for later accomplishment of content standards.
- **Advocacy for appropriate teaching strategies:** Young children learn through active exploration. The environment and interactions with peers and adults are important components reflected in this document, which support active learning. Adults who work with young children need to grow in their understanding and knowledge of appropriate early learning which occurs through action and interaction rather than through teaching practices suited for older children. They can then begin to explain this to parents and administrators, which will lead to effective early childhood advocacy in the community as a whole.
- **Tool to support awareness and understanding of early childhood foundational skills: parents and teachers in various early childhood settings can use this document.** Many of these adults realize the importance of laying the foundation for literacy, numeracy, science, social skills and the arts but are unsure of how to accomplish this. The Building Blocks can provide specific examples of what needs to be achieved and how it might look in an early childhood setting.

How to use the Building Blocks

The Building Blocks address literacy (reading and writing), math, science, social skills and the arts. Each section begins with a list of the Colorado Content Standards for the K-12 system, followed by a more detailed description of each standard. This is coupled with an Early Childhood Foundation for each standard--statements that reflect the types of experiences and interactions preschool learners need to develop the foundation for attaining the standards (see shaded box). The term "preschool learner" refers to any young child, ages 2 1/2 - 5, regardless of whether the child is in an early childhood setting or at home. The term "adult" refers to any adult who has interactions with the child whether that person is a teacher, child care provider or family member. The term "environment" refers to any place where young children might be--

Each individual standard is broken down into 3 sections: Building Blocks for Learning, Steps for Getting There and Examples.

Building Blocks for Learning: These statements describe skills appropriate for preschool learners. They are the indicators of the early childhood curriculum, which can be used as a guide for the adult in creating learning experiences and individualized plans for young children. Special educators who are required to tie goals and objectives from a child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to state content standards can also reference them.

Steps for Getting There: These statements are examples of interactions and experiences necessary for young children in acquiring the Building Blocks. Each section contains statements of the adult's role as a facilitator/ *teacher* of learning. It also contains suggestions for materials to include in the child's environment. These are not all inclusive but rather a guide that will assist the young child in preparation for success with the K-12 Content Standards.

Examples: The scenario listed for each Building Block is intended to provide a description of an activity in which the children are engaged. These activities planned by the child and teacher should reflect the interest and needs of young learners.

Recommended Teaching Practices

**From the Joint Position Statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) &
The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

During the infant and toddler years:

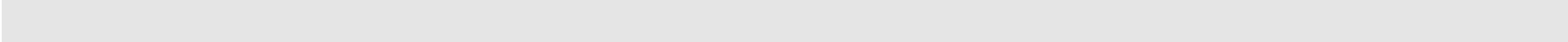
Children need relationships with caring adults who engage in many one-on-one, face-to-face interactions with them to support their oral language development and lay the foundation for later literacy learning. Important experiences and teaching behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Talking to babies and toddlers with simple language, frequent eye contact, and responsiveness to children's cues and language attempts,
- Frequently playing with, talking to, singing to, and doing fingerplays with very young children,
- Sharing cardboard books with babies and frequently reading to toddlers on the adult's lap or together with one or two other children, and
- Providing simple art materials such as crayons, markers, and large paper for toddlers to explore and manipulate.

During the preschool years:

Young children need developmentally appropriate experiences and teaching to support literacy learning. These include but are not limited to:

- Positive, nurturing relationships with adults who engage in responsive conversations with individual children, model reading and writing behavior, and foster children's interest in and enjoyment of reading and writing,
- Print-rich environments that provide opportunities and tools for children to see and use written language for a variety of purposes, with adults drawing children's attention to specific letters and words,
- Adults' daily reading of high-quality books to individual children or small groups, including books that positively reflect children's identity, home language, and culture,

- Opportunities for children to talk about what is read and to focus on the sounds and parts of language as well as the meaning,
 - Teaching strategies and experiences that develop phonemic awareness, such as songs, fingerplays, games, poems, and stories,
 - Opportunities to engage in play that incorporates literacy tools, such as writing grocery lists in dramatic play, making signs in block building, and using icons and words in exploring a computer game, and
 - Firsthand experiences that expand children's vocabulary, such as trips in the community and exposure to various tools, objects and materials.
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COLORADO STATE STANDARD 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

In order to meet this K-12 standard, K-12 students will:

- 1.1 Use comprehension skills (such as previewing, predicting, inferring, comparing and contrasting, re-reading and self-monitoring, summarizing, identifying the author's purpose, determining the main idea, and applying knowledge of foreshadowing, metaphor, simile, symbolism, and other figures of speech);
- 1.2 Make connections between their reading and what they already know, and identify what they need to know about a topic before reading about it;
- 1.3 Adjust reading strategies for different purposes such as reading carefully, idea by idea; skimming and scanning; fitting materials into an organizational pattern, such as reading a novel chronologically; finding information to support particular ideas; and finding the sequence of steps in a technical publication;
- 1.4 Use word recognition skills and resources such as phonics, context clues, picture clues, word origins, and word order clues; reference guides; roots, prefixes, and suffixes of words for comprehension; and
- 1.5 Use information from their reading to increase vocabulary and enhance language usage.

Early Childhood Foundation for Standard 1:

In building a foundation for reading and understanding a variety of materials, young children need language experiences that relate to their world and their relationships, they need opportunities to play with sounds and words, and they need to have a variety of written materials with which to interact everyday.

Learning to use comprehension skills begins with understanding that symbols and print convey meaning and with using oral language during broad experiences in the everyday environment. Making connections between reading and what children already know begins with experiences with a variety of books. Gaining word recognition skills begins with exposure to pictures, sounds and symbols. All of these experiences lead to young children building vocabulary and enhancing their language usage, which are the foundations for literacy development.

Standard #1

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>1-A: Preschool learners hold books, turn pages and look at pictures, words and symbols.</p>	<p>The environment includes enough books to provide each child many opportunities to pick up books and become familiar with how they are used.</p>	<p>Charlie picks up his favorite book to show it to his friend. He realizes that it is upside down and quickly turns it around before beginning to turn the pages.</p>
<p>1-B: Preschool learners use play, pictures and illustrations, to tell and retell a story.</p>	<p>The adult encourages children to tell and retell stories through play activities in a variety of centers in the classroom.</p> <p>The environment includes props, materials and manipulatives for telling and retelling stories.</p>	<p>A small group of children is exploring a basket filled with fruit found in the story of <i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i>. Using the small plush caterpillar, Ms. Joan helps them as they take turns retelling the story of how it ate through the different fruits. Later, two of the children use flannel board pieces to retell the story again.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>1-C: Preschool learners develop vocabulary to effectively express feelings and thoughts, describe experiences, interact with others and communicate their needs.</p>	<p>The adult frequently reads books with rich descriptive vocabulary, exploring and extending children's understanding of the meaning of new words.</p> <p>The adult talks with individual children often, encouraging them to express their ideas, needs and feelings.</p>	<p>Snow is falling during outside time and the children are scooping it up. Emily tells her friend that she wants to take a snowball inside like Peter in <i>The Snowy Day</i>. When they run to tell the teacher their plan, she says, "What do you think will happen if we take it inside?" Emily responds, "It will just go away". The teacher says, "Oh, you mean it will melt. I wonder what we could do to keep it from melting."</p>
<p>1-D: Preschool learners use picture clues to infer and predict what happens next in a story.</p>	<p>While reading individually or in small groups the adult asks children questions about stories.</p>	<p>Jaden's father, Mr. Baylor, is reading <i>Peter Rabbit</i> with Jaden and two other children. He points to Peter hiding in the watering can and asks, "What do you think is going to happen?"</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>1-E: Preschool learners gain information through listening experiences with adults or peers who speak and/or read.</p>	<p>The adult facilitates opportunities for young children to engage in one-on-one conversations and activities as well as in groups.</p>	<p>Becky brings a collection of seashells to school after visiting Ocean Journey. She begins to tell Tommy about the seashells and he asks, "How come there's nothing inside?" With Ms. McCord's support, Becky tells him about the animals that used to live inside.</p>
<p>1-F: Preschool learners know that pictures and print convey meaning, beginning with recognition of symbols, the written form of their own name, and familiar letters or words found in their environment.</p>	<p>The adult writes down the child's spoken stories, lists, and riddles.</p> <p>The adult demonstrates the written form of the child's name on paintings, drawings, and cubbies.</p> <p>The adult rereads the child's spoken words that have been written through dictated stories, lists, and charts.</p> <p>The environment includes many sources of written materials, such as books, charts, labels, and signs.</p>	<p>The class is riding the bus to the pumpkin patch. As they come to a stop sign, Juanita says, "Look. That sign says STOP!" Ardie says, "STOP starts with an 'S' Together they decide they will make STOP signs later to use with their bikes on the playground. After the field trip, Mr. Engelsohn gets a large piece of paper and markers. "Let's think about our visit to the pumpkin patch. Who would like to tell me what they saw and we'll write a story."</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>1-G: Preschool learners begin to become phonemically aware—the ability to hear separate sounds. They're learning that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speech is composed of individual sounds, • that words are composed of syllables and sounds, • that some words rhyme, and • that sounds can be manipulated. 	<p>The adult plans activities and interacts so as to draw attention to the phonemes (the smallest unit of speech) in spoken words.</p> <p>The adult promotes syllable-sound awareness by clapping or tapping out the syllables of words or slowly "sounding out" words.</p> <p>The adult heightens the child's awareness and attention to sounds by providing opportunities for children to experiment and play with sounds through singing songs, rhyming, creating nonsense words, and moving to music.</p> <p>The environment includes rhythm instruments, children's music and movement tapes, and a center where children may listen to a variety of story and sound tapes.</p>	<p>Patrick is in the listening center playing a cassette tape with different environmental sounds. With each sound he hears, he points to the picture in the accompanying book. "That's a car horn honking," Patrick says. "Honking-bonking-conking-tronking!".</p> <p>Several children are saying the letters of their names while their teacher, Juliette, writes them on their watercolor paintings. "T for Tammy?" says one child. "That's my letter. T-e-r. Terrence."</p>

COLORADO STATE STANDARD 2: Students write and speak for a variety of audiences and purposes.

In order to meet this K-12 standard, K-12 students will:

- 2.1 Write and speak for a variety of purposes such as telling stories, presenting analytical responses to literature, conveying technical information, explaining concepts and procedures, and persuading;
- 2.2 Write and speak for audiences such as peers, teachers, and community;
- 2.3 Plan, draft, revise, proofread, and edit written communication;
- 2.4 Use a variety of devices such as figurative language, symbolism, dialect, and precise vocabulary to convey meaning;
- 2.5 Organize written and oral presentations using strategies such as lists, outlining, cause and effect relationships, comparison/contrast, problem/solution, and narration; and
- 2.6 Use handwriting and, at the most appropriate time, word processing to produce a product that is legible.

Early Childhood Foundation for Standard 2:

In building a foundation for writing and speaking for a variety of purposes and audiences, young children need many opportunities to communicate their ideas to attentive listeners, both adults and children. They need to hear language being used for different purposes; and they need an environment filled with varied examples of symbols and written language.

Learning to tell stories and convey information begins with early conversations and an understanding that words have meaning. Learning to write for and speak with others begins with families, friends, and teachers. Young children use words to help adults understand their needs, recount events, enter into and participate in play with others, create imaginative stories, ask questions, express and understand feelings, and solve problems.

Standard #2

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>2-A: Preschool learners use spoken language for a variety of purposes.</p>	<p>The adult talks with children frequently, encouraging them to share their experiences and ideas and listening attentively to their contributions.</p> <p>The adult facilitates the use of words between children to express ideas, desires, feelings, and to resolve conflicts.</p> <p>The adult provides opportunities, including costume materials and props, for creative dramatic play and for telling and acting out stories.</p> <p>The classroom environment provides a variety of play centers that encourage children to interact and communicate with one another.</p>	<p>Alyssa enters preschool in the morning and calls out a greeting to her teacher and friends, "Good Morning," echoing her mother. She tells her teacher, "On the way to school we saw two rabbits, and they didn't see us." Alyssa approaches a group of children in the dress-up area and asks, "What're you playing?" When they answer "Spaceship", she asks, "Can I play too?" She then offers her ideas, "I'm the princess who drives the spaceship to the toystore."</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>2-B: Preschool learners use symbols for communication and for enjoyment.</p>	<p>The adult creates opportunities for children to make symbols and word labels in response to their needs and interests.</p> <p>The environment includes books and writing tools, from crayons to computers, in each area of play.</p> <p>The classroom environment provides opportunities for children to interpret the meaning of words and symbols, including pictures of toys on the shelves, photos of children, and labels on materials and areas.</p>	<p>Casey pulls a checkbook out of a purse in the dress-up area. She writes a series of circles and "x's", and says, "This says Miss Nan gets \$100."</p>
<p>2-C: Preschool learners use pictures and symbols as a representation for oral language.</p>	<p>The adult provides opportunities for the children to record their thoughts and stories by having children draw, and by writing words that the children dictate to them.</p>	<p>During a "choice time", Hondo draws a picture of his family driving home with their new puppy. He "tells the story" to the adult who writes the words he says and reads them back to him.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>2-D: Preschool learners participate in activities that are representative of their own culture and others through songs, nursery rhymes, dramatic activities, storytelling, and poetry.</p>	<p>The adult provides a rich variety and frequent repetition of songs, poems, finger plays, and storytelling, which encourage the children's participation and exposes them to many cultures.</p>	<p>Shelby's mother, a Korean-American, visits a preschool and teaches the children a singing game she played as a child using little bags filled with rice. The children learn the Korean words and look at traditional clothing.</p>
<p>2-E: Preschool learners develop increasingly complex and abstract use of language.</p>	<p>The adult consciously models use of specific vocabulary orally and in symbols and writing. He or she creates opportunities for children to learn to use and recognize precise vocabulary that relates to math, science, art, and social experiences.</p>	<p>On a trip to a pumpkin farm, the farmer talks to the children about planting, using words like tractor, hoe, growing season, and fertilizer. Later that week, Marianna uses the toy garden hoe in the sand and tells another child to "Get the fertilizer".</p>

COLORADO STATE STANDARD 3: Students write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

In order to meet this K-12 standard, K-12 students will:

- 3.1 Know and use correct grammar in speaking and writing;
- 3.2 Apply correct usage in speaking and writing;
- 3.3 Use correct sentence structure in writing; and
- 3.4 Demonstrate punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Early Childhood Foundation for Standard 3:

In building a foundation for writing and speaking using conventional grammar, usage and sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, young children need many opportunities to express themselves in a variety of ways. They need to hear adults speaking appropriately and using questions, exclamatory statements, and humor. Children need to see examples of grammatical conventions used in everyday life, such as those found on cereal boxes, newspapers, a family letter, chart of daily schedule, and in books.

Learning to speak and write correctly begins with opportunities to engage in conversations with their families, other young children, and adults. Children have the opportunity to experiment with using symbols, letters, and a variety of writing materials. The children's environment offers consistent, daily examples of spoken and written language that serve as models for the children's own language development.

Standard #3

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>3-A: Preschool learners begin to experiment with basic writing conventions such as grasp, body and paper positioning, and writing progression.</p>	<p>The adult provides opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills, which support grasp—using tongs, play doh, spray bottles, tweezers, and small objects in art projects.</p> <p>The adult provides children with opportunities to follow a progression in writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures and scribbles • Letter-like forms • Letters from names and the environment • Strings of letters • One letter (first sound) to represent a word. <p>The classroom environment provides an easily accessible writing center, filled with a wide variety of materials— markers, pens, pencils, crayons; paper of different shapes, sizes, textures, as well as envelopes, cards, sticky notes, and postcards; stamps, checkbooks, and receipt pads. Similar materials are available in each center throughout the room.</p>	<p>Jessie and Holly are playing in an area that is set up like a grocery store. Holly discovers the pad of paper and markers the adult has provided. "Look! We can use these to make a grocery list." Next she draws squiggles down the paper as she names milk, cookies, and grapes.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>3-B: Preschool learners become aware of grammar and punctuation through listening to and experimenting with oral language.</p>	<p>The adult talks, tells stories and reads books with exaggerated expression.</p>	<p>Sitting on the floor with a group of children, Mr. Chavez begins to chant "Going on a Bear Hunt". He models varied tones, inflections and emotions through his voice. Mr. Chavez adds rhythmic gestures to compliment the words of the chant. The children respond with excited animation.</p>
<p>3-C: Preschool learners become aware of grammar and punctuation through exposure to written language.</p>	<p>The adult reads books with exaggerated expression and occasionally shows and talks about punctuation marks.</p> <p>The adult maximizes opportunities for modeling written punctuation and grammar by writing stories about incidental events (i.e. the wind slamming a door) that occur in the environment and by using correct punctuation while taking child's dictation.</p>	<p>It is center time at Spice Canyon Preschool and the children are busily engaged in activities. Suddenly, the sky darkens and the rain turns into hail. The sound of the hail on the roof of the modular building is deafening. Some children leave their activities and flock to the teacher who is in the library corner. Mrs. Havener senses their excitement and, as the hail diminishes, she records their comments including the appropriate punctuation marks. "What was that noise? It was so loud! I was scared!"</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
3-D: Preschool learners begin to associate sounds with the written letter.	The adult occasionally breaks down words into phonemes when reading and/or when a child asks how to spell a word.	Kyle is designing a menu with art materials. He asks an adult how to spell "hot dog." The adult sounds out the word, while telling Kyle which letters to write.

COLORADO STATE STANDARD 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

In order to meet this K-12 standard, K-12 students will:

- 4.1 Make predictions, analyze, draw conclusions, and discriminate between fact and opinion in writing, reading, speaking, listening, and viewing;
- 4.2 Use reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing to define and solve problems;
- 4.3 Recognize, express, and defend points of view orally and in writing;
- 4.4 Identify the purpose, perspective, and historical and cultural influences of a speaker, author, or director; and
- 4.5 Evaluate the reliability, accuracy, and relevancy of information.

Early Childhood Foundation for Standard 4:

In building a foundation for applying thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing, young children need exposure to good children's literature. They need opportunities to discuss and solve problems from stories and in real life. Children need opportunities to use their imagination to create their own stories through play.

Learning to make predictions, analyze, draw conclusions, and discriminate between fact and opinion begins with active play experiences. Children solve problems in their play, make predictions about events that occur, and learn by interacting with real objects, books, toys, games, and other children. Open-ended activities and conversations with an interested adult offer children opportunities to solve problems and express their point of view.

Standard #4

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>4-A: Preschool learners begin to compare, predict actions, and draw conclusions through everyday experiences and play.</p>	<p>The adult provides hands-on learning activities that encourage prediction, reflection, and evaluation, including science experiments and cooking activities.</p> <p>The adult talks with children about their play in ways that encourages them to make new connections and expands their thinking about the activity.</p> <p>The environment contains a variety of manipulative objects including pattern and building blocks, puzzles, sorting toys, math manipulatives.</p>	<p>Ashley is playing with miniature pigs and a house built of "bricks" (legos). She fits in two pigs, then three and tries various ways to add more so that they will all be able to stand up. " I wonder if there's another way to fit the pigs in your house," says her mother as she stops by to observe.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>4-B: Through exposure to high quality children's literature, preschool learners predict logical next steps in a story, ask questions about stories and dramatize stories.</p>	<p>The adult reads predictable books many times to help children recognize predictable patterns in the story sequence.</p> <p>The adult encourages children to ask questions throughout daily activities.</p> <p>The environment contains quality, age-appropriate children's books found in a reading center as well as many other learning centers.</p> <p>The environment includes dramatic play props that link to the stories that are read and are rotated on an ongoing basis such as furniture (table, chair, crib, store dividers), male and female clothes (hats, shoes, material, costumes) and props (dolls, dishes, cash register).</p>	<p>A small group of children were baking muffins with Ms. Hepp. She says, "Who will help me measure the flour?" "Not I!" said Stan. "Not I!" said Amy. "Not I!" said Ardie. "Then I'll do it myself!" said Ms. Hepp. The children laughed as they recalled the story of the <i>Little Red Hen</i>.</p> <p>The adult has finished reading the story <i>Caps for Sale</i>. When the children go out to the playground, they find a box filled with various caps and hats, a "tree"-step ladder, and small pieces of rope for monkey tails. Young Mario talks about the monkeys in the book as he shakes his fist and stamps his feet.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>4-C: Preschool learners interpret and convey meaning through nonverbal communication.</p>	<p>The adult provides opportunities for children to interpret facial expressions, voice tones, and gestures of others (peers, characters in books, photographs) and to imitate these.</p> <p>The environment contains images of people and story characters of differing ages and nationalities who are conveying varied emotions.</p>	<p>Kathleen sees Alex crying. She looks concerned and tries to comfort him. The adult says, "You look worried about Alex. Are you wondering why he's crying?"</p> <p>Sophia had finished reading <i>Where The Wild Things Are</i> and the children were talking about it. Colin says, "Max looks lonely. He missed his mom. Sometimes I miss my mom, too."</p>
<p>4-D: Preschool learners recognize that different words and different languages have meaning and value.</p>	<p>The adult provides opportunities for children to experiment with different words with the same meaning (synonyms) and with words from other languages.</p> <p>The classroom environment has varied books filled with rich, appropriate vocabulary as well as books in languages representing the cultures of the children in the class.</p>	<p>As their day begins, the children in Mrs. Gray's family child care home sing a brief "Hello" song. Sometimes Mrs. Gray talks with the children about the different ways to greet others—"Hi", "Howdy", "How ya' doing?", "Hola", "Good morning", or "Guten tag".</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>4-E: Preschool learners ask relevant questions and make thoughtful comments.</p>	<p>The adult encourages children to ask and answer questions beginning with who, what, where, why and when during informal and formal discussions with individuals or groups.</p> <p>The environment offers materials in a way that intrigues and engages children so that they will begin to ask questions and comment on the materials.</p>	<p>Sylvia, an adult working with children of various ages, has covered a new classroom poster with pieces of construction paper that create a "puzzle". Each day Sylvia removes one "puzzle piece" to reveal a portion of the poster. Throughout the day the children talk about what has been revealed and what the poster might look like when all of the "puzzle pieces" have been removed.</p> <p>Brian sets out a can of playdoh, some twigs, pieces of colored cellophane, and a few other items on a clear, plexiglass surface. He gives the children no directions but comments, asks questions, and encourages others to do the same as they begin to play with the objects.</p>

COLORADO STATE STANDARD 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.

In order to meet this K-12 standard, K-12 students will:

- 5.1 Select relevant material for reading, writing, and speaking purposes;
- 5.2 Understand the structure, organization, and use of various media, reference, and technological sources as they select information for their reading and writing;
- 5.3 Paraphrase, summarize, organize, and synthesize information;
- 5.4 Give credit for others' ideas, images, or information;
- 5.5 Use information to produce a quality product.

Early Childhood Foundation for Standard 5:

In building a foundation for reading to locate, select, and make use of relevant information, young children need experiences with books that provide information such as number or alphabet books and stories that stimulate thinking and concept development. Children need opportunities to use books when trying to find answers to questions.

Learning to select relevant material and understanding how to access resources begins with frequent interaction with books and other media in the home, school, and libraries. Learning to find, organize, and use information begins early by watching parents, siblings, and caregivers use information from books and other media. Young children learn that books and media can be used as a tool, as well as for pleasure.

Standard #5

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>5-A: Preschool learners select books, tapes, and music related to things they are interested in or are learning about.</p>	<p>The adult talks with children and carefully observes their interests and then supports this through books, music, and materials in the classroom.</p> <p>The classroom environment includes books related to the materials and activities in each interest area—books about fish next to the aquarium, fine art books in the art area, cookbooks in the housekeeping area.</p>	<p>Mr. Liu observes that Abby is fascinated by ballet. He sets out books that address Abby's interest. He creates "word cards" that show pictures of the different ballet positions and articles of clothing, labeled with the correct names. Mr. Liu also includes a tape of "The Nutcracker" for a related music experience. He also provides props and accessories related to Abby's interest. She chooses an orange chiffon scarf, a purple tutu and the ballet slippers. Abby asks two of her friends to join her in creating a performance.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>5-B: Preschool learners use a variety of media to experience stories.</p>	<p>The classroom environment includes a "listening center" where children can turn pages of a book while listening to a story on tape; a computer center with high-quality, age-appropriate software; and a "reading area" that contains a variety of reading materials, including children's magazines, newspapers, and books.</p>	<p>Janie brings a newspaper article to school with a picture of the new polar bear cubs. Ms. Nordstrom helps Janie as she shares her article with a small group of children. The children then talk about other classroom resources for learning more about polar bears (the book, <i>Polar Bear, Polar Bear</i>; documentary videotape on Alaska; a computer encyclopedia).</p>
<p>5-C: Preschool learners use a library to locate materials they need or ones that are of particular interest to them.</p>	<p>The adult takes the children to the public or school library and introduces them to how and where materials are located and used.</p>	<p>Mrs. White Raven sends home a list of neighborhood libraries and asks parents to take their children to get a library card and to choose a book of interest. In addition, she works with the parent committee to plan a family field trip to the local library for a "Pajama Storytime". Later in the month the children create a "library" in the play area using cardboard boxes, shelves, and index cards.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>5-D: Preschool learners begin to create stories and records of events in an organized way.</p>	<p>The adult listens and encourages children to tell their own stories in an organized way.</p> <p>The adult encourages a variety of activities to extend the story.</p> <p>The adult keeps records of children's stories and documentation of activities related to their stories. The child has opportunities to "reread" and revisit their stories.</p> <p>The environment has a wide variety of games and materials that encourage sequencing.</p>	<p>Sharon listens intently, kneeling so that she is at Darcy's eye level, as Darcy tells her about her camping trip. Sharon asks questions, "What happened first? And then what happened?" She suggests that Darcy share her camping trip story with others by drawing a picture, telling her story, or acting out her trip with other children in the dramatic play area.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>5-E: Preschool learners begin to recognize books by their cover and to identify the beginning, middle, and end of stories and books.</p>	<p>The adult shows children books before reading and talks with them about the basic characteristics of the book cover.</p> <p>The adult provides books that have very concrete beginnings, middles, and ends and discusses this sequence with the children.</p>	<p>Patrick and Han Jiao are acting out one of their favorite stories. They begin to argue about the correct sequence of events. Mr. Slovic, their teacher, encourages them to talk about what happens first, what happens in the middle, and what happens at the end of the story. He then encourages both children to make a storyboard of their own. Mr. Slovic gives each child a long piece of paper divided into three sections (beginning, middle, end). He encourages them to draw pictures for each section as he writes down the words they dictate.</p>

COLORADO STATE STANDARD 6: Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.

In order to meet this K-12 standard, K-12 students will:

- 6.1 Know and use literary terminology;
- 6.2 Read literature to investigate common issues and interests;
- 6.3 Read literature to understand places, people, events and vocabulary, both familiar and unfamiliar;
- 6.4 Read literature that reflects the uniqueness and integrity of the American experience;
- 6.5 Read classic and contemporary literature, representing various cultural and ethnic traditions from throughout the world; and
- 6.6 Read classic and contemporary literature of the United States about the experiences and traditions of diverse ethnic groups.

Early Childhood Foundation for Standard 6:

In building a foundation for reading and recognizing literature as a record of human experience, young children need exposure to stories that reflect experiences that are similar to, and that are different from their own. Children need to hear stories that help them understand their own feelings and their relationships with others. Children need to use a wide variety of books and other media.

Learning to know and use literary terminology begins with identifying authors, illustrators, and the parts of a book. Children begin to identify similarities and differences between characters and places in books and their own lives. Adults introduce children to literature that reflects American history, culture, and values. Developing a love of books begins with seeing the child's own and others' experiences reflected in stories.

Standard #6

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>6-A: Preschool learners begin to identify the role of the "author" and the "illustrator" of books that are read to them or that they create.</p>	<p>The adult identifies the author, illustrator and the parts of books when reading to children.</p> <p>The environment contains materials for children to create their own stories and pictures in book form. The children are noted as the "author" and the "illustrator" when doing so.</p> <p>The classroom environment contains several books by the same author displayed together.</p>	<p>When reading <i>We Were Tired of Living in a House</i>, Jo states, "This book was written by Liesel Skorpen, she is the author. Doris Burn is the illustrator. She drew the pictures." Later, Jo helps the children write their names on books they have created themselves, noting that they are the "authors" and "illustrators".</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>6-B: Preschool learners listen, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature including fairy tales, folk tales, legends and myths, rhymes and poems, fiction and non-fiction.</p>	<p>The adult supports the child's ability to listen attentively and to share back what, specifically, has moved them or sparked their imagination.</p> <p>The adult frequently reads to children individually and in small groups, and engages the children in conversations about what they have read.</p> <p>The classroom environment contains a wide variety of age- appropriate literature, both in the literacy center and in other areas of the classroom that are available at all times.</p>	<p>Mrs. Howitson, the librarian, reads some poems from Robert Lewis Stevenson's <i>Poems for the Very Young</i>. The children especially like "I Have a Little Shadow". They talk with Mrs. Howitson about the shadows they have seen, explore shadows out on the playground. Later, they experiment with shadow puppets in the classroom, discovering how shadows are made.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>6-C: Preschool learners begin to use new vocabulary from literature in another context.</p>	<p>The adult listens for, and acknowledges, a child's attempts to use new words from stories/books in other contexts.</p> <p>The classroom environment is organized to support children's literacy development by using signs, name charts, picture schedules, and labels on materials and centers.</p>	<p>Mr. Monet, a local artist, reads a book about colors that introduces words such as magenta, turquoise, and chartreuse. Later in the day, several children experiment with mixing colors and making their own color wheels in the art area identifying "new" colors by name and then labeling them.</p>
<p>6-D: Preschool learners begin to understand a variety of cultures, traditions, and histories, through listening to stories and participating in activities.</p>	<p>The classroom environment is reflective of the cultures, ethnicity, race and family traditions of the children who participate in the program and live in their community.</p>	<p>Early in July, Lawrence reads the children several stories about American Independence Day. Lawrence and the children talk about the many ways their families celebrate this holiday.</p> <p>When Payten's mom, Mrs. Gonzales, visits the group she reads <i>Big Moon Tortilla</i> and makes tortillas with the children.</p>

Building Blocks for Learning	Steps for Getting There	Examples
<p>6-E: Preschool learners begin to make connections between books or stories and their own experiences and classroom learning.</p>	<p>The classroom environment has realistic materials in the dramatic play area, which reflect the children's lives while exposing them to print materials.</p>	<p>The children love Raffi's song, <i>The Grocery Store</i>. In the dramatic play area there is a "grocery store center" that includes empty cereal boxes and cans, receipt pads, price tags, name tags, a cash register, shopping lists and signs detailing the "hours" the store is open and who is currently "working" in the store. Miss Jackie helps the children explore and use the materials.</p>
<p>6-F: Preschool learners relate their own experiences and feelings with those of a character in a book.</p>	<p>The adult suggests and provides books that might be of interest to the children.</p> <p>The environment has a variety of books that address children's everyday experiences and feelings.</p>	<p>Hannah reads the book, <i>Tough Boris</i>, to an individual child. She then asks, "Why do you think Tough Boris cried when his parrot died? Are there things that make you sad?"</p> <p>Miss Sandy knows that David is terrified of thunderstorms. She reads the story, <i>Thundercake</i> with David several times, talking with him about how the character in the story feels. When David asks, Miss Sandy loans the book to David and his parents to read together at home.</p>

Bibliography and Resource List

Many educators have worked diligently to create content standards for Early Childhood. We are grateful we were able to refer to these documents while developing *Building Blocks to Colorado's Content Standards*. We also utilized many of the following books as references and guides. We hope you will find these resources equally useful in your own work with young children.

Early Childhood Content Standards Documents:

El Paso District 11 Early Childhood Content Standards

Early Learning Task Force Preschool Education/Harrison District #2-Colorado. (1992)

Jefferson County Early Childhood Content Standards

Michigan State Board of Education Early Childhood Education, Parenting and Comprehensive School Health Unit (1992). *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten through Second Grade*.

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