

TEAM Observation Guidance Documents: Cover Sheet

BACKGROUND

Certain subgroups of educators, which are listed in the table below, operate in unique situations that may require additional attention to apply the TEAM evaluation model with fidelity and provide educators with meaningful feedback. As such, we have conducted numerous focus groups, with educators working in these areas, to develop additional guidance to support evaluation. The accompanying documents are meant to serve as an instructive, although not exhaustive, list of areas to which administrators should direct additional attention based on the unique instructional or service setting of the educator. These are meant to supplement, not replace, the TEAM evaluation rubric. Together, the pre-observation questions, key areas for gathering evidence, examples of evidence and artifacts, and examples of excellence present an evaluator with additional resources to use to conduct high-quality evaluations.

COMPONENTS

The accompanying documents for each educator group are broken down into two components.

1. The *Observation Guidance* document provides:

- a quick glance at some guiding questions and overarching concerns for each educator group; and
- examples of pre-observation questions, key areas to focus evidence gathering, and examples of appropriate evidence/artifacts the evaluator may collect.
 - NOTE: Key areas for evidence are not intended to replace the indicators in the TEAM evaluation model, but rather are more detailed guidelines for evaluating indicators that educators have identified as particularly tricky to observe.

2. The *Observation Support* document provides:

- additional context for the evaluator when considering the responsibilities of each educator,
- detailed examples to illuminate some of the key indicators and areas for evidence, and
- a platform for meaningful discussion between educators and evaluators around best practices.
 - NOTE: This can be especially useful for structuring pre-conference discussions.

Available observation guidance documents include:

GENERAL EDUCATOR RUBRIC	SCHOOL SERVICES PERSONNEL RUBRIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Educators • College, Career and Technical Educators (CCTE) • Early Childhood Educators • Pre-K Educators • Early Literacy K-3 Educators • Gifted Educators • Interventionists • Online Educators • Special Educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Audiologists • School Counselors • School Psychologists • School Social Workers • Speech/Language Pathologists (SLP) • Vision Specialists

TEAM Observation Guidance: Pre-K Educators

The department’s [definition of Quality Early Learning](#) offers guidance for high-quality early learning instruction. Three major goals in improving early learning practices in Tennessee include:

- An instructional approach based on leaders’ and teachers’ knowledge of child development and effective teaching practices;
- High-quality, purposeful materials and activities that are available throughout the environment and across the day for children to explore, discover, create, and build knowledge and understanding of concepts; and
- Question sequences and purposeful tasks that match approaches to early learning and the rigor of the Tennessee Early Learning and Developmental Standards ([TN-ELDS](#)).

In order to further support these early learning practices, this guidance document highlights the connections between planning, observing, and guiding children’s growth toward mastery of the TN-ELDS through developmentally appropriate practices and the TEAM teacher rubric. This guide should assist evaluators in evaluating early learning instruction in preschool classrooms. Effective early learning environments provide a balance between teacher-directed and child-directed learning experiences with significant time spent in learning centers exploring and interacting with high-quality materials and resources.

The indicators below are key areas on the TEAM rubric that are particularly relevant in the early grades and may look significantly different than in later grade levels.

PLANNING

Because young children enter a classroom with differing starting points and rates of learning, effective instructional plans include **carefully sequenced lessons** that support, build on, and can be adapted to each stage in a child’s learning progression.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLANS	
Instructional plans include...	
Measureable and explicit goals aligned to developmental science, Tennessee Early Learning and Development Standards (TN-ELDS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructional plans include conceptual units of study with integrated content from science and social studies that is inclusive of complex, rich texts to build children’s knowledge and skills and extend opportunities for children to explore and learn at deeper levels of cognitive complexity.• Intentional instruction includes focus on oral language and literacy development, mathematics, approaches to learning, and social-personal competencies.• Child-initiated learning tasks and experiences involve experiential learning with longer periods of time needed for higher levels of thinking, problem-solving, and cooperative play.• Cooperative play/experiential learning activities during learning center time are characterized by shared planning and organizing of play scenarios around goals or story themes. Cooperative play involves higher levels of social interaction, problem-solving, perspective-taking, language, responsibility, and creativity.• At the beginning of the year, children orally plan their activities. Later, children express their plans using a combination of drawings and writing. Extended time spent in learning centers

INSTRUCTIONAL PLANS
Instructional plans include...

	<p>allows children to reach these higher levels of engagement and thinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher interactions and questions for interactive read alouds and learning center activities are intentionally planned. • A variety of instructional strategies and structures are planned that include whole group, learning centers, and small group that foster opportunities for children to engage with and explore topics.
<p>Activities, materials, and assessments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are aligned to Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS) • Are sequenced from basic to complex • Build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students' lives, and integrate other disciplines • Provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson and unit closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities and materials are anchored in the TN-ELDS and demonstrate an integrated approach to teaching the standards. Skills are not taught in isolation. • Materials reflect the children's individuality, interests, and creativity. • Activities and materials provide opportunities for children to engage in higher order thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. • Daily tasks and end-of-unit tasks are open ended and allow for multiple ways to demonstrate learning. • End-of-unit tasks provide children with developmentally appropriate experiences and writing to demonstrate their newfound knowledge. • Authentic tasks provide children with a real purpose and audience for writing. The task is connected to the child's school, home, and community experiences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., a child orally shares a story about a bird stuck in a bush that her mom rescues. The teacher reiterates the characters, setting, and problem presented in the story shared by the student. The teacher suggests for the child to create a book about that story to share with the class during story time. During center time, the child creates her own book telling the story. ○ E.g., the class observes birds each day outside their classroom window. The children become curious about the types of birds and their various colors. The teacher puts out binoculars, informational bird guide books, and drawing materials for children to sketch and look up birds. Children create a bird watching guide for their peers. • Significant time is devoted to learning centers which include child choice and provide authentic, interactive play and assessment opportunities (i.e., socio-dramatic) to support learning objectives in multiple developmental domains, including language, physical, early numeracy, self-regulation, science, and social studies. • Children self-select centers and make a plan for their own work. Plans include where they will work, whom they will work with, and what they plan to do. After plans are made, children follow through with their plan during learning centers time. In the beginning of the year, these plans are created orally. Later, these plans become written with the use of drawing and words. • Daily, planned observations of children at play and work provide an opportunity for ongoing formative assessment.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLANS Instructional plans include...	
	<p>Anecdotal records provide “snapshots” of where children are in their development and guide next instructional steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections of children’s work throughout the year capture authentic evidence of children’s growth toward mastery of integrated standards.
Evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson plans incorporate children’s interests and support their stages of emergent writing and reading. • Instructional activities are child-centered and provide a balance between teacher-directed and child-directed instruction. • Physical and motor development needs are met through planned activities that meet children’s need for movement, manipulation, social interactions, and pretend play. These include singing, dancing, role playing, and opportunities for movement about the classroom and learning centers. • Activities evoke curiosity, creativity, and innovative thinking. • Activities/tasks are appropriately challenging and allow for multiple ways to demonstrate learning.
Evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and tools for scaffolding learning are accessible to children (interactive alphabet display, removable name cards, labels or charts at child’s eye level to scaffold writing). • Learning centers, materials, and activities provide opportunities for children’s continued development of physical, language, social/personal, and cognitive skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ E.g., in the writing center, there are tongs, tweezers, and clay to build hand muscles needed to hold pencil. There are also moveable alphabet pieces for children to create stories with. • Whole group and learning center instructional plans are modified to provide additional scaffolds and supports to help individual children in reaching developmental and instructional goals.

STUDENT WORK Assignments require students to...	
Organize, interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than reproduce it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning centers provide children with multiple opportunities throughout the day to process their learning through interactions with each other and the teacher, practice and exploration of ideas and concepts with age-appropriate materials, and open-ended writing opportunities to express their learning and understanding. “Assignments” at the preschool level involve inquiry-based, experiential learning.
Draw conclusions, make generalizations, and produce arguments that are supported through extended writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher prompts young learners to think deeply about ideas and concepts through purposeful questioning that allows children to demonstrate more complex learning. Children’s work may show evidence of this type of scaffolding and teacher dictation of children’s ideas.

STUDENT WORK**Assignments require students to...**

Connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their daily lives both inside and outside of school

- Authentic tasks provide children with a real purpose and audience for writing. The more genuine the purpose and audience, the more connected the work will be to children's daily lives both inside and outside of school.

ASSESSMENT**Assessment plans...**

Are aligned with Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS)

- Development-based assessments are aligned with the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards.
- Daily, planned observations of children at play and work provide an opportunity for ongoing formative assessment. Anecdotal records provide "snapshots" of where children are in their development and progress toward mastery of academic learning standards. Formative data guides next instructional steps.
- Children's growth toward mastery of integrated standards is documented through collections of authentic children's work samples.

Have clear measurement criteria

- Development-based assessments are conducted through observation and clearly linked to instructional goals and objectives.
- Data from development-based assessments provide the teacher with information about what children know and are able to do.
- Checklists, observation forms, progress reports, and parent reports are used to effectively capture child outcomes in all developmental domains.

Measure student performance in more than three ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test)

- Development-based assessment is gathered from various sources, at various times across the day, during activities of all developmental domains, and in realistic settings.
- Assessment processes and tools are developmentally appropriate and occur in the context of children's natural learning rather than a "testing" format. Because assessments are integrated in the learning, children are often unaware that the assessment occurred.
- Activities/tasks included in learning centers are appropriately challenging and provide multiple ways for children to demonstrate learning.
- Child performance and growth are tracked and measured through projects, experiments, role playing, and writing that combines drawings and attempts at writing.

Require extended written tasks

- Rather than extended writing tasks, preschool children need extended time to orally rehearse, process, and express knowledge and to represent knowledge gained through drawing and emergent writing.

Are portfolio based with clear illustrations of student progress toward state content standards

- Portfolio samples demonstrate an integrated approach to learning.
- Portfolios show children's progression over time toward state content standards. Children use a combination of pictures,

ASSESSMENT**Assessment plans...**

	drawings, and emergent writing to convey knowledge gained in science and social studies content.
Include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment information is effectively used to plan and adapt instruction to meet developmental or learning needs of all children. • Observation and formative data collected is used to inform the types of scaffolds and learning supports needed to positively engage with children during learning center and small group time.

ENVIRONMENT**EXPECTATIONS**

The teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The physical environment is child-centered and intentionally organized to reflect developmental domains and academic standards for learning and the individual needs, interests, and cultures of the children. • Learning spaces and materials provide opportunities for children to explore, develop, and work toward mastery of the TN-ELDS. • Materials included within each learning center support an integrated approach to teaching the standards. • The classroom environment evolves based on the teacher's knowledge of child development and observed growth stages, needs, and interests of children. The teacher adds appropriately challenging materials to learning centers and wall displays to scaffold learning and deepen concept development. • A print-rich learning environment provides opportunities for children to explore their writing and foundational skills throughout the day. • All developmental stages of writing are honored, encouraged, and displayed. • The environment enables and invites interactive experiences, experiential learning, independence, movement, and cooperation through distinguishable learning centers that include literacy materials (e.g., books, paper, writing materials, and materials that encourage fine motor development) at every center. • Learning centers provide frequently rotated, accessible materials that are varied, developmentally appropriate, aligned to TN-ELDS, open-ended, self-correcting, and reflective of children's interests.
The teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions that are open-ended and allow for multiple solution paths provide children opportunities to construct and refine knowledge through conversation. • Opportunities for accountable talk during discussions provide a safe way for children to express and develop ideas. • The teacher models how to learn from one's mistakes.
The teacher creates learning opportunities where all students can experience success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A print-rich learning environment also provides opportunities for children to explore their writing and foundational skills, making corrections as needed.

EXPECTATIONS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher uses displays that teach and scaffold. The learning environment is designed to support the developmental needs of children. • Self-correcting and sequential materials are available and accessible in the environment to allow children to keep going in their learning when the teacher is working with other children. • Materials included in learning centers and around the room invite higher levels of engagement, problem solving, discovery, and creativity. • Selection of culturally responsive materials supports diversity and inclusion.
Students take initiative and follow through with their own work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the teacher is not immediately available to assist learning, wall displays and accessible materials serve as tools and resources to allow children to follow through with their own work. • Displayed learning center charts remind children of where they are supposed to be to allow them to take initiative and be responsible for their own learning and work. • At the beginning of the year, children orally plan their activities. Later, children express their plans using a combination of drawings and writing. Extended time spent in learning centers allows children to follow through with their planned work and to reach these higher levels of engagement and thinking.
The teacher optimizes instructional time and promotes growth for every student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The daily schedule allows for significant time spent in learning centers and less time spent during transitions to optimize instructional time, resulting in children being able to reach higher levels of play and thinking. • Children demonstrate knowledge of classroom routines and expectations, including staying in their selected learning center, cleaning up their materials, and making smooth transitions between activities. • A large portion of the instructional day is utilized for children to engage in a high volume of experiential learning experiences and activities; listening and interacting with rich, complex texts on or above grade level; and exploring concepts concretely and responding to text through speaking, role playing, and writing. These experiences and interactions optimize instructional time by providing content and structural elements that are worthy of children's time and attention. • High-quality, content-rich texts allow students to develop world knowledge as they develop literacy expertise. Children are continuously challenged to stretch their knowledge and literacy expertise to the next level.

INSTRUCTION

STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES	
All learning objectives are clearly and explicitly communicated, connected to TN-ELDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards are taught in an integrated fashion that supports building knowledge and children's emergent writing and reading skills as they make meaningful connections between concrete experiences and text.

STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific, measureable, child-friendly, and developmentally appropriate goals are evident for each learning activity.
Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's major objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within each lesson, learning activities and experiences are always aligned with the goals for learning. • Age-appropriate learning center activities are aligned with sub-objectives and are logically sequenced and connected to bigger learning objectives to promote development of children's conceptual understanding and skills in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, health, and other content areas.
Learning objectives are: (a) consistently connected to what students have previously learned, (b) known from life experiences, and (c) integrated with other disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young children may not have a broad depth of knowledge and life experiences to draw upon. Therefore, well-designed lessons and learning center activities must be situated within a broader unit of study that builds world knowledge and scaffolds children's learning. This allows the teacher to make connections to other experiences that children have had during the unit, to other texts that have been read, and to other content that has been explored and studied.
Expectations for student performance are clear, demanding, and high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young learners can meet the expectations of the grade-level standards with appropriately constructed instruction. The teacher establishes daily and end-of-unit tasks that appropriately meet these expectations and plans lessons and activities that support children's learning toward these expectations. • Throughout the lesson, children are doing the majority of the work, and the one who does the work does the learning. • Across the day, children have opportunities to engage in rich conversations to make meaning of their experiences, inquiries, and interactions with text. • Texts that are at or above the complexity level for the grade are used often throughout the day. • Selected texts have been appropriately paired with the instructional strategy they match best (above-grade-level interactive read aloud, on-grade-level independent exploration and "reading"). • Children's writing exemplifies the rigor of the grade-level standards and represents children's emerging ideas, interests, and needs. • Children have opportunities to produce their own ideas during discussion and in writing.
There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the daily objective that supports significant progress toward mastery of a standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of progress toward mastery of the learning objective is gathered throughout the lesson in the conversations students are having, in the listening and responding to text that is read, and in the products that are created. • In order to effectively gather evidence during a lesson, evaluators should have an understanding of the assessment plans for the day—what will be assessed (knowledge and vocabulary acquisition, phonemic awareness, reading/listening comprehension, speaking and listening, and/or writing) and when and how that assessment will occur.

ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS

Activities and materials...

- support the lesson objectives,
 - are challenging,
 - sustain students' attention,
 - elicit a variety of thinking,
 - provide time for reflection,
 - are relevant to students' lives,
 - provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction
 - induce student curiosity and suspense,
 - provide students with choices,
 - incorporate multimedia and technology, and
 - incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.)
- Activities and materials are developmentally appropriate and provide scaffolds to support pre-reading and pre-writing skills.
 - Children's work shows evidence of instruction that integrates standards.
 - Tasks provide an opportunity to apply foundational skills taught in concrete, authentic ways and to build knowledge about the world around them.
 - High-quality texts are available and accessible to children throughout the environment and across the day to support concept development.
 - Large group instruction is used to introduce concepts, establish the purpose for learning, and share what new materials have been added to learning center areas that children might explore when they go to centers that day. Large group time should be appropriate to children's attention span and alternate between active and quiet activities throughout the day. Songs, rhymes, and games support learning in large group instruction as well as during transitions between activities.
 - Small group instruction is embedded during learning centers to allow the teacher (and assistant) to join children within centers to model rich language, problem-solving, and real-world connections to writing and reading.
 - Transitions between activities are minimized and include opportunities for movement, oral language, and problem-solving.
 - Activities/tasks are appropriately challenging and allow for multiple ways to demonstrate learning.
 - Thinking is made visible in the answers children provide to the questions posed as well as in the products children produce.
 - Time is provided for children to reflect on learning and make connections to prior learning and personal experiences.
 - Accessible materials are varied, developmentally appropriate, open-ended, self-correcting, and reflective of children's interests.
 - The teacher models positive interactions as she listens to children, responds to their needs, responds to questions, and engages in conversations with multiple children daily.
 - The teacher provides multiple opportunities for peer interaction.
 - Activities and materials evoke curiosity, creativity, and innovative thinking.
 - Curiosity and suspense are built frequently by adding new, intriguing objects placed in learning centers related to the unit of study for children to explore and make discoveries.
 - Children are provided frequent opportunities to make choices concerning activities and materials in order to match their own interests.
 - Concrete experiences are preferred and precede any technology-based learning. Technology is purposefully selected to enhance learning.

ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS	
Activities and materials...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional resources are available for children to explore. These can include books, objects from nature, cultural artifacts, recipes to cook, blocks to reconstruct famous buildings, and gardening activities that embed practice with counting, sorting, measuring, and categorizing.
Are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction and self-monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful math activities, as well as science and social studies activities, are experiential and sequential in nature, are embedded across the day, encourage associative and cooperative learning through play and game-like activities, and require children to plan.
Demand complex thinking and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex thinking and analysis are supported when the teacher joins children in learning centers and models his/her own complex thinking and analysis, connects text to children's play, and uses sequenced, open-ended questioning to extend children's thinking.
Are appropriately complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Texts and tasks are appropriately selected and sequenced to support higher-order thinking. Sequential learning activities, varied in modality, allow children to progress through a series of steps or levels of complexity (e.g., block building, dramatic play, writing a message, putting together a puzzle).

QUESTIONING	
Teacher questions are varied and high quality, providing a balanced mix of question types: knowledge and comprehension, application and analysis, and creation and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher's knowledge of children and their developmental needs is reflected in the types of questions he or she poses during the lesson. Questions are purposefully planned and sequenced to support children's thinking and learning.
Questions require students to regularly cite evidence throughout lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher intentionally asks questions that require children to review information from the text and engage them in opportunities to collectively and/or individually identify evidence from the text that supports this information.
Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purposeful, coherent questions are planned and sequenced to support the development of children's predictions and thinking, build vocabulary, and deepen understanding of the unit concepts.
A high frequency of questions is asked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because of the developmental nature of young learners and the need for extensive oral language development, a large number of purposeful, high-quality, and coherently sequenced questions are posed throughout individual lessons and across the unit of study.
Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions reflect a purposeful plan for developing student learning toward instructional goals. There is evidence of sequenced, open-ended questioning to build children's knowledge and skills with scaffolds to support children in completing daily tasks and connections to the unit concepts.

QUESTIONING

Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher purposefully plans opportunities that support children to generate their own questions as an authentic motivation for learning.
Questions regularly assess and advance student understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher uses questions to identify what children already know and to prompt children to deeper learning.

THINKING

The teacher provides opportunities for analytical thinking, where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young children must first experience concepts before they can think abstractly about them.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ E.g., the teacher might plan an activity in the science center where children are observing and analyzing different parts of a living flower using magnifying glasses. The teacher notices how some children are using picture cards of flower parts to identify and compare the parts of a living flower. Others are using informational text to compare not only the parts of the flower but also how leaves and petals differ by flower type. The teacher joins the learning conversation around flower parts and asks children to explain the ways flower parts are the same and different. Children are then asked to represent this information through an authentic writing opportunity.
The teacher provides opportunities for practical thinking, where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher facilitates the development of practical thinking skills and competencies connected to learning, such as the ability to persevere, resolve conflicts, focus, engage, and understand and regulate emotions.• Vocabulary is intentionally taught by introducing and incorporating new words into meaningful activities (e.g., story dictation, self and parallel talk, and interactive read aloud) and providing opportunities for children to hear and use words in multiple contexts.
The teacher provides opportunities for creative thinking, where students create, design, imagine, and suppose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative thinking is promoted through opportunities to authentically represent ideas and learning (as opposed to worksheets, which limit desired levels of creative thinking).• Learning centers provide children significant time to exercise creativity.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ E.g., in the art center, children use varied art materials to create a 3-D flower model complete with leaves, stems, roots, and petals. The teacher joins the art center and asks, "Suppose that one day, your flower loses its leaves. What would happen?" Children use their imagination to tell a story about what would happen if their flower lost its leaves. They may draw a picture about their story.
The teacher provides opportunities for research-based thinking, where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research-based thinking at the preschool is emerging and supported with access to explore high-quality materials and texts that represent a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems.

THINKING	
The teacher provides opportunities for students to generate a variety of ideas and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended materials provide children with endless ways to represent ideas and alternative solutions. • The teacher follows children's interests and creates opportunities to hypothesize about what might happen or what did happen. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ E.g., children notice birds outside their classroom window. The teacher helps students generate ideas about what the birds are doing and why they are pecking at the ground. Children may think the birds are hungry and are in search of food. They want to test their hypothesis by putting a bird feeder outside. The next day the bird feeder is missing. The teacher leads a discussion on what might have happened to the bird feeder. She charts ideas generated.
The teacher provides opportunities for students to analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous opportunities are provided for children to role play scenarios or story plots, which helps children experience and think about problems from different perspectives. • Interactive read alouds of high-quality text allow children to explore multiple perspectives and viewpoints.
The teacher monitors students' thinking to ensure that they understand what they are learning, are attending to critical information, and are aware of the learning strategies that they are using and why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During learning centers, the teacher circulates among centers and joins children within centers to monitor their thinking and help them make connections to learning. • The teacher pauses at critical points in reading text to monitor children's understanding and attention to key details.

PROBLEM SOLVING	
<p>The teacher implements activities that teach and reinforce three or more of the following problem solving types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstraction • Categorization • Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solutions • Predicting Outcomes • Observing and Experimenting • Improving Solutions • Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information • Generating Ideas • Creating and Designing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool children are developing the ability to reason, rationalize, predict, and think abstractly. The teacher plays a critical role in modeling the various ways to solve problems. • The teacher provides hints and assistance within feedback given (e.g.: <i>Try turning it another way. Why do you think this is not working? What else could you do?</i>) to help children explore possible solutions. Building with blocks and assembling puzzles allow children to observe and experiment. • Feedback loops include back-and-forth (serve-and-return) exchanges to encourage children to generate ideas and to be persistent in problem-solving.

Examples of science learning center tasks that are developmentally appropriate and meet the rigor of the standards		
Materials and Text	Learning Task for Science Center	Teacher's Role
Text: books about weather and seasons, how people and animals adapt and respond to changes in weather or seasons, and the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before going to the science center, children orally plan or draw their plan for what they will do in the science center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher uses information and literature text to help children connect the weather observed to how birds

Examples of science learning center tasks that are developmentally appropriate and meet the rigor of the standards

Materials and Text	Learning Task for Science Center	Teacher's Role
<p>role meteorologists play in reporting the weather</p> <p>Writing Materials: paper, crayons, pencils, rubber stamp letters and numbers</p> <p>Other Materials: sensory table, experiments, binoculars, thermometers; props: birds, nests, eggs, twigs, string, pipe cleaners, small wooden blocks, worms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children use weather text and tools to observe and record the weather for the day. They are also observing how plants, people, and animals behave in relation to the weather conditions. • With a partner, the children predict what the weather is like today. One partner might say, "I predict that it is sunny and windy today." The other partner might say, "I think it is cloudy and windy today." • Together, they go to the window and use the binoculars to observe and talk about what the weather is like today. • They use books to compare pictures of clouds seen. • They select art materials of their choosing to create a picture of what the weather is today. 	<p>might respond to different weather conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher might say, "I wonder what the Robin does when it is cloudy and windy. Let's look for clues in these bird books. How does she keep her nest of eggs from falling from the tree when the wind blows? Did the Robin use special materials to build a strong nest?" • "Here are some materials (small blocks, eggs, string, pipe cleaners, and twigs). I wonder if you could create a strong nest that would keep the Robin's eggs safe when it is cloudy and windy." • The teacher leaves the children to explore, investigate, and build. • The teacher rejoins later to hear the children describe what they used to build the nest and how they ensured it would be strong and safe in the wind. • The teacher brings a fan to create "windy" conditions so children can test the strength of their nests. • Following the experiment, the teacher gives children paper to draw and write about the nest they built.

Examples of dramatic play/prop box learning center tasks that are developmentally appropriate and meet the rigor of the standards

Materials and text	Learning Task for Dramatic Play/Prop Box Center	Teacher's Role
<p>Text: Read Aloud: Big Book: <i>Flower Garden</i> by Eve Bunting (about a girl who goes to flower shop to purchase flowers to plant in a window box as a surprise for her mother's birthday)</p> <p>Other Text: seed packets, plant books, magazines, books about gardens, family celebrations with flowers</p> <p>Writing Materials: paper, crayons, pencils, rubber stamp letters and numbers, order pads</p> <p>Other Materials: artificial flowers, flower box, Styrofoam, birthday cake, seed packets, water can, cash register</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before going to the dramatic play center or prop/box center, children orally plan or draw their plan for what they will do during the center. • Children negotiate and assume character roles to act out the flower birthday surprise story using the props added to the dramatic play area or prop box. They dress as the characters and use props to design the story setting. • Children talk through the plot of their play before acting it out. • As children engage in the role play activity, they experience story elements of characters, setting, plot, problem, and solution. • Through role playing, children experience the planning, planting, and growth of flowers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher joins in as a customer shopping in the flower shop. • The teacher reinforces new vocabulary related to the plants, flowers, and flower shop business by naming the various props he/she picks up and interacts with. • The teacher scaffolds the play with open-ended questions and might ask the child purchasing flowers, "What will your plants need to grow healthy and strong?" The teacher might ask, "How will you know how much water the plants need each day? How can you be sure?" • The teacher may also read the back of the flower tags or seed packets that describe how to care for the plant. <p>Portfolio Collection Opportunity: After having the opportunity to experience the story through role play, children will be ready to draw and write about the details of the story. The teacher can scribe the children's stories.</p>

Examples of blocks or constructive loose parts learning center tasks that are developmentally appropriate and meet the rigor of the standards

Materials and text	Learning Task for Blocks or Constructive Loose Parts	Teacher's Role
<p>Text: books about shapes, construction, buildings, tools, shelters, houses, habitats, weather, and animals</p> <p>Writing Materials: paper, crayons, pencils, rubber stamp letters and numbers</p> <p>Other Materials: shape stencils, animal and people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before going to the block or building center, children orally plan or draw their plan for what they type of bird shelter will build. • To begin, children check the daily weather report posted in the science center and discuss ideas of shelters they might need. • Using the building materials and added animal and people props, children will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher joins children initially to brainstorm possible shelters needed by the animals and people. • The teacher uses text to connect and springboard ideas. • Carefully sequenced, open-ended questions

Examples of blocks or constructive loose parts learning center tasks that are developmentally appropriate and meet the rigor of the standards

Materials and text	Learning Task for Blocks or Constructive Loose Parts	Teacher's Role
props, blocks, loose parts to construct and create 3-D models	create appropriate shelters for animals and people based on the reported weather conditions.	promote higher levels of thinking.

Before the Evaluation—Questions to ask yourself or to ask in a pre-conference

- How did you choose which standards to integrate and explicitly teach?
- How do you expect children to demonstrate growth toward mastery of standards?
- Where does this lesson fall into the unit? What came before this lesson? After?
- How are you using daily observation to know where children are in their physical, cognitive, social, personal, and language development?
- How is the environment prepared to evoke children's curiosity, creativity, and learning?
- What knowledge will students be building during learning centers?
- How will concrete experiences and texts be used to support students in building their knowledge?
- What about the activities or text will be difficult for students? What questions or think alouds will be used to support students in making meaning of the text?
- What opportunities will be provided for students to explore concepts and interact with materials and text?
- How will learning center activities and the text discussion support students in their writing today?
- What standards will be integrated, practiced, and/or assessed in learning center tasks?

During the Evaluation—Evidence Collection

- Are student experiences intentional and aligned to developmental and academic standards?
- How do students take initiative and follow through with their own work?
- How does the teacher monitor student progress and adjust the lesson to meet their needs?
- Are there multiple ways to demonstrate learning and to accomplish tasks?
- Do tasks follow concrete experiences that allow children to explore, investigate, and build?
- Did the teacher engage in feedback loops with multiple exchanges requiring higher levels of thinking?
- How was instructional time optimized? Was significant time appropriated for children to reach higher levels of thinking, problem-solving, and creativity during time spent in learning centers?
- How were high-quality texts and materials used to support concept development?
- Collect student work samples

Note: Best practice is to script the entire lesson including what the teacher says and does, and what students say and do. This list provides some areas of focus for that evidence collection.

After the Evaluation—Action steps

- During the lesson, did the concrete experiences lead to children's growth of knowledge and skill development of the intended standards?
- Did you teach the standards you intended to teach using an integrated approach? If not, what and how were the standards taught?
- Are students able to transfer the skills they've learned into the work they are producing?
- How did the work provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate gained knowledge and progression of skills?
- Is the student work open-ended in nature allowing for students at various levels of writing development to demonstrate growth towards the standards?
- Ask any follow-up questions about the teacher's decisions needed to clarify the connections between student evidence and teacher practices.
- Determine high-leverage areas to reinforce and refine.

