

# Curriculum

\*For more specific information regarding early childhood curriculum, please see Montana’s Early Learning Guidelines, which outline seven curriculum areas in detail. Contact the Montana Early Childhood Project at 1-800-213-6310.

## Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

### Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

### Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

### Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Inter.		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

## Common Features Across All Content Areas:

Creates a curriculum that assures a secure base for young children to explore and tackle challenging problems								
Includes blocks of uninterrupted time (at least one hour) for children to persist at self-chosen activities both indoors and out								
Balances individual, small and large group activities, allowing a balance of self-directed and guided learning								
Utilizes a thematic curriculum and a project approach								
Emphasizes developmentally appropriate methods that include play, open ended questioning, group discussions, problem solving, cooperative learning and inquiry experiences								
Provides experiences and activities and interacts with children in ways that allow children to construct their own knowledge								
Uses knowledge about individual children’s interests, abilities, and goals to plan appropriate learning experiences for each child								
Adapts curriculum content to meet the needs of all young children, including development of Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) for children with developmental delays								

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Aligns curriculum with young children’s developmental and learning styles, supporting growth of academic and social skills								
Provides both planned and spontaneous experiences that are developmentally appropriate, meaningful and challenging for all young children, including those with developmental delays or disabilities								
Provides experiences that help children become better able to manage or regulate their expression of emotions, and over time, to cope with frustration and manage impulses effectively								
<b>Language and Literacy</b>								
Provides a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that support literacy daily using reading and writing centers, props, storytelling, etc.								
Reads to children daily								
Provides opportunities to explore writing in a variety of ways, including drawing, copying, invented spelling, using word banks, and creating books, experience charts, writing in journals, and recording dictated stories								
Encourages children to use language, reading and writing to strengthen their own cultural identity, express thoughts and feelings, and other purposes								

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Encourages oral language through storytelling, felt boards, textless books, poetry, and fingerplays								
Models effective listening								
Develops basic concepts of print and understanding of sounds, letters, and letter-sound relationships								
<b>Science</b>								
Encourages children to actively explore materials, objects, and events using all of their senses, and describe, compare, sort, classify, and order in terms of observable characteristics and properties								
Poses open-ended questions about objects and events to children and responds to children's questions about the world (e.g. what do you think will happen if...?)								
Provides a variety of simple tools to extend children's observations (e.g., hand lens, measuring tools, eye droppers, balance scales, pulleys and ropes, incline planes, magnifying glasses, magnets)								
Engages children in simple investigations including making predictions, gathering and interpreting data, recognizing simple patterns, and drawing conclusions								

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Provides children daily access to science and discovery centers based upon their interests, that are added to over time, and changed when children's interest changes								
<b>Mathematics</b>								
Provides children with exposure to mathematical concepts through everyday activities and experiences as they are engaged in play and interactions with others								
<b>Numeracy</b> —Teachers provide developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote numeracy concepts by:								
Counting real things to help the child use personal experiences with objects to better understand numbers and practice counting as opportunities naturally arise								
Using objects with naturally occurring numbers and number words such as clocks, calendars, thermometers, computers, calculators, measuring cups, etc.								
Using number words and numerals, including zero, in meaningful everyday activities and talking to children about a variety of uses of numerals (e.g., street address or phone number)								
Using a variety of strategies (e.g., questions, comments, counting) to prompt children to think about quantity and number words and guess amounts and sizes								

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Using board games and manipulatives to learn math concepts (e.g., counting and planning ahead)								
Providing a variety of opportunities for exploring 1:1 relationships, such as asking children to pass out utensils, napkins and cups for each child								
Provides opportunities for the child to form numerals with many different mediums and to write numerals with different materials								
<b>Patterns and Relationships</b> —Providing developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote patterns and relationships by:								
Supplying a variety of materials for sorting, classifying, and grouping, and encouraging the child to explain the reasoning behind their decisions								
Encouraging the child to create, identify, match, and describe patterns in objects, designs, pictures, movement activities, and recurring events								
Helping the child recognize and describe sequence in nature, daily routines, and in stories								
<b>Measurement Relationships</b> —Teachers provide developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote measurement relationships by:								
Creating opportunities for children to experiment with measurement by providing measuring tools (e.g., rulers, measuring cups, scales, etc.) and including charts and posters with measurement language (e.g., growth charts)								

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Introducing general concepts of time (e.g., yesterday, today, tomorrow) and talking about time and sequence during daily activities								
<b>Geometry</b> —Teachers provide developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote geometry by:								
Encouraging the child to explore materials, nature, the environment (two and three dimensional objects)								
Providing a variety of geometric materials in a variety of shapes and sizes to create and explore shapes (e.g., paper, pipe cleaners, play dough, tape, wood, unit blocks, stencils, rocks, bubbles, etc.)								
Naming and calling attention to shapes naturally apparent in the environment (e.g., spider webs, leaves, rainbows wheels on the car, snowflakes, etc.)								
Using and encouraging the child to use language and physical gestures to demonstrate spatial words with people and things in the environment (e.g., beside, inside, behind, above, below, here, there, in out over, under, next to, near, and far)								
<b>Problem Solving</b> —Teachers provide developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote problem solving by:								
Encouraging children to experiment with many different ways to solve problems								

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Providing computational tools where they would naturally be used (calculator near writing, adding machine near an office)								
Providing a variety of shapes and materials that may be broken into parts and brought back together (e.g., pizza, crackers, unit blocks, puzzles, and play dough)								
Representing data using symbols, graphs, and charts								

**The Arts: Art, Drama, Music, Dance, and Creative Movement**

Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that promote the arts through:

Creating an aft center and allowing children to participate in both two and three dimensional art activities such as drawing, printing, sculpture, painting, modeling, weaving, puppetry, and collage								
Providing children with a variety of art media, such as paint, markers, glue, variety of paper, etc. to explore in child-directed projects								
Exposing children to elements of design including line, color, shape, volume or mass, design, pattern, space, balance, and texture, and exposing children to works of art								
Establishing a changing, relevant dramatic play area and including rich stimuli for dramatic play through props, literature, field trips, and real life experiences								

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Extending play through questioning, verbal affirmations, suggestions (e.g., additional props , switching roles, discussions about roles, etc.) and encouraging children to develop their own props and scenarios								
Modeling and engaging children in finger games, telling stories, and puppetry								
Developing a music center								
Providing music experiences on a daily basis and singing a variety of simple songs in various keys, meters, and genres (folk songs, ethnic songs, singing games, etc.)								
Allowing children to create instruments and play simple melodies and accompaniments and encouraging children to improvise songs and instrumental accompaniments to songs, stories, and poems								
Modeling the use of musical terminology and musical notation and encouraging children to use own and standard music vocabulary to describe voices, instruments, music notation, and music of various genres, styles, and periods from diverse cultures								
Encouraging children to identify the source of a wide variety of sounds								
Allowing children to respond through movement to music of various tempos, meters, dynamics, modes, genres, and styles								

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Modeling the joy of kinesthetic movement (e.g., dance with children)								
Establishing a movement area with props and space that encourages movement (e.g., scarves, ribbons, balls, music, and mirrors) and providing opportunities for child initiated activities								
Including movement vocabulary during movement activities (e.g., high/low, slow/fast, and smooth/jagged)								
<b>Social Studies</b>								
Models, encourages, and teaches skills that assist children in working cooperatively with others, including those who differ in gender, culture, ethnicity, ability or ideas								
Plans experiences and activities that assist children in understanding their community and recognizing similarities between cultures								
Plans experiences and activities that allow children to experience a sense of locations (e.g. directions and maps) and experience how people, things, and ideas move from one place to another								

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**Physical Development and Health Enhancement**

Makes adaptations to help children meet physical goals yet support culturally sensitive practices								
Provides developmentally appropriate gross motor activities and experiences to promote physical fitness, climbing and balance, walking, running, jumping, skipping, throwing, catching, carrying, and kicking								
Provides planned outdoor play experiences that expose children to a variety of gross motor equipment such as trikes, parachutes, balls, bean bags, climbing equipment, obstacle courses, etc.								
Provides developmentally appropriate fine motor activities and experiences that promote the development of eye hand coordination, using small muscles to complete tasks and for self-help skills (zipping, buttoning, etc.), and using drawing and writing tools								
Providing a rich variety of small manipulative materials, such as table toys								