



WMELS Alignment – Preparation

What Children Should Know and Be Able To Do

Rev. 7.20.2021

Purpose and Background: This tool is designed to assist a local program in determining how a classroom's/program expectations align with the domains and performance standards identified in the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards.

The WMELS specify developmental expectations for children birth through entrance to first grade and address all the domains of a child's learning and development. The developmental domains are highly interrelated. Knowledge and skills developed in one area of development impact the acquisition of knowledge and skills in other areas of development.

Teachers/providers who are knowledgeable about child development and learning are able to make broad predictions about what children of a particular age group typically will be like, what they typically will and will not be capable of, and what strategies and approaches will most likely promote their optimal learning and development.

12 Principles of Child Development and Learning that Inform Practice ¹

- All areas of development and learning are important.
- Learning and development follow sequences.
- Development and learning proceed at varying rates.
- Development and learning result from an interaction of maturation and experience.
- Early experiences have profound effects on development and learning.
- Development proceeds toward greater complexity, self-regulation, and symbolic or representational capacities.
- Children develop best when they have secure relationships.
- Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.
- Children learn in a variety of ways.
- Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation and promoting language, cognition, and social competence.
- Development and learning advance when children are challenged.
- Children's experiences shape their motivation and approaches to learning

¹ *"Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8" (PDF), NAEYC, adopted in 2009.*

1. In YoungStar, programs can earn indicators when every classroom/provider has their curriculum/programming and assessments aligned with WMELS. This alignment is meant to ensure child care programming is not narrowly focused on certain domains, or that lesser attention is paid to

some domains. It is not possible to align a curriculum and assessment ONLY with WMELS unless a program has first determined what they expect children to know and be able to do at each age level. WMELS does NOT define age level expectations it only offers a continuum so the work needs to be done by the program to define “**what children should know and be able to do**”.

2. The purpose of this document is to use the WMELS to develop local expectations of what children should know and be able to do. If the teacher/program expectations for the age group of children are not developmentally appropriate, then it will be difficult to determine the choice of curriculum and assessment. Once a teacher/program has defined expectations of what children should know and be able to do at each age level, then a program can look for curriculum and assessment that matches what the local program determined children should know and be able to do and also meet the standards of quality they have identified.
3. For each domain, each classroom should read and discuss the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards description and rationale of the domain. Read and discuss the developmental expectations and domain elements.
 - a. Do all classroom team members have a shared understanding of the knowledge and skills that are included within that domain? If not use additional child development resources to understand what is meant by each performance standard. The examples given for each performance standard in the continuum examples can help with this discussion. Remember, these are examples and are not meant to be comprehensive.
 - b. Is it ordered developmentally or in a way that makes instructional sense, i.e., from easy to more difficult?
 - c. Do expectations represent greater complexity or difficulty for developmentally older children?
4. For each domain, the program should discuss the understanding of the knowledge and skills that included within each performance standard.
 - a. Is it ordered developmentally or in a way that makes instructional sense, i.e., from easy to more difficult?
 - b. Do expectations represent greater complexity or difficulty for developmentally older children?
5. If the program says “yes”, there is a match between what we would expect, the next step is for the program to look at the quality of a curriculum and assessment to meet the expectations of that particular age level. If the program says no, they should choose other curriculums and assessment tools that match. See the **Curriculum and the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards: An Alignment Review Tool** and the **Assessment Alignment with Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Review Tool**.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/wmelscurriculumalignment.pdf>

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/wmelsassessmentalignment.pdf>

Domain: Health and Physical	INFANTS	ONE YEAR OLDS	TWO YEAR OLDS	THREE YEAR OLDS	FOUR YEAR OLDS	FIVE YEAR OLDS
A. Physical Health and Development Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will be physically healthy and will be able to effectively care for their own physical needs.						
A.EL.1a The behaviors to meet self-help and physical needs – SLEEP						
A.EL.1b The behaviors to meet self-help and physical needs – DRESSING						
A.EL.1c The behaviors to meet self-help and physical needs – TOILETING						
A.EL.1d The behaviors to meet self-help and physical needs – EATING						
A.EL.2 The behaviors to meet safety needs						
A.EL.3 Demonstrates a healthy lifestyle						
B. Motor Development Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will develop and refine their use of small and gross motor skills.						
B.EL.1a Moving with strength, control,						

balance, coordination, locomotion, and endurance – PURPOSE and COORDINATION						
B.EL. 1b Moving with strength, control, balance, coordination, locomotion, and endurance – BALANCE and STRENGTH						
B.EL.2 Exhibits eye-hand coordination, strength, control, and object manipulation						
C. Sensory Organization Performance Standards: Child in Wisconsin will integrate input from all sensory systems and learn to respond appropriately and automatically within their environment.						
C.EL.1 Using senses to take in, experience, integrate, and regulate responses to the environment						

Summary/Notes:

Coverage and Balance – how do these expectations appropriately cover the domain performance standards and are they evenly balanced?

Depth and Difficulty – how do these expectations provide for a sequence of increasingly complex skills and are the activities intellectually challenging at a developmentally appropriate level?

Are there Areas of Concern:

DOMAIN: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL	INFANTS	ONE YEAR OLDS	TWO YEAR OLDS	THREE YEAR OLDS	FOUR YEAR OLDS	FIVE YEAR OLDS
A. Emotional Development Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will demonstrate emotional competence and self regulation.						
A.EL.1 Expression of a wide range of emotions						
A.EL.1 Understands and responds to others' emotions						
B. Self-Concept Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will have a personal sense of well being.						
B.EL. 1 Developing positive self-esteem						
B.EL.2 Demonstrating self-awareness						
C. Social Competence Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will form and maintain secure relationships and gain understanding of social systems.						
C.EL.1 Demonstrating attachment, trust, and autonomy						
C.EL.2 Engages in social interaction and plays with others						
C.EL.3 Demonstrates understanding of rules						

and social expectations						
C.EL.4 Engages in social problem solving behavior and learns to resolve conflict						

Summary/Notes:

Coverage and Balance – how do these expectations appropriately cover the domain performance standards and are they evenly balanced?

Depth and Difficulty – how do these expectations provide for a sequence of increasingly complex skills and are the activities intellectually challenging at a developmentally appropriate level?

Are there Areas of Concern:

DOMAIN: Language Development and Communication	INFANTS	ONE YEAR OLDS	TWO YEAR OLDS	THREE YEAR OLDS	FOUR YEAR OLDS	FIVE YEAR OLDS
A. Listening and Understanding Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will convey and interpret meaning through listening and understanding.						
A.EL.1 Deriving meaning through listening to communications of others and sounds in the environment						
A.EL.2 Listens and responds to communications with others						
A.EL.3 Follows directions of increasing complexity						
B. Speaking and Communicating Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will convey and interpret meaning through speaking and other forms of communicating.						
B.EL. 1 Using gestures and movements (non-verbal) to communicate						
B.EL.2a Using vocalizations and spoken language to communicate (Language Form –						

Syntax: rule system for combining words, phrases, and sentences, includes parts of speech, word order, and sentence structure)						
B.EL.2b Uses vocalizations and spoken language to communicate (Language Content – (semantics: rule system for establishing meaning of words, individually and in combination)						
B.EL.2c Uses vocalizations and spoken language to communicate (Language Function – Pragmatics: rules governing the use of language in context)						
C. Early Literacy Performance Standards:						
Children in Wisconsin will have the literacy skills and concepts needed to become successful readers and writers.						
C.EL.1 Develops ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze the auditory parts of spoken language (Ability to segment oral language into words, syllables, or phonemes independent of						

meaning)						
C.EL.2 Understanding concept that the alphabet represents the sounds of spoken language and the letters of written language (Utilizing this concept as an emerging reading strategy)						
C.EL.3 Shows appreciation of books and understand how print works						
C.EL.4 Uses writing to represent thoughts or ideas						

Summary/Notes:

Coverage and Balance – how do these expectations appropriately cover the domain performance standards and are they evenly balanced?

Depth and Difficulty – how do these expectations provide for a sequence of increasingly complex skills and are the activities intellectually challenging at a developmentally appropriate level?

Are there Areas of Concern:

DOMAIN: Approaches to Learning	INFANTS	ONE YEAR OLDS	TWO YEAR OLDS	THREE YEAR OLDS	FOUR YEAR OLDS	FIVE YEAR OLDS
A. Curiosity, Engagement, and Persistence Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will use curiosity, engagement and persistence to extend their learning.						
A.EL.1 Displays curiosity, risk-taking and willingness to engage in new experiences						
A.EL.2 Engages in meaningful learning through attempting, repeating, experimenting, refining and elaborating on experiences and activities						
A.EL.3 Exhibits persistence and flexibility						
B. Creativity and Imagination Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will use invention, imagination and play to extend their learning.						
B.EL. 1 Engages in imaginative play and inventive thinking through interactions with people, materials and the environment						
B.EL.2 Expresses self creatively through						

music, movement and art						
C. Diversity in Learning Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will engage in diverse approaches to learning that reflect social and cultural contexts such as biology, family history, culture and individual learning styles.						
C.EL.1 Experiences a variety of routines, practices and languages						
C.EL.2 Learns within the context of his/her family and culture						
C.EL.3 Uses various styles of learning including verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, visual/spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal						

Summary/Notes:

Coverage and Balance – how do these expectations appropriately cover the domain performance standards and are they evenly balanced?

Depth and Difficulty – how do these expectations provide for a sequence of increasingly complex skills and are the activities intellectually challenging at a developmentally appropriate level?

Are there Areas of Concern:

DOMAIN: Cognition and General Knowledge	INFANTS	ONE YEAR OLDS	TWO YEAR OLDS	THREE YEAR OLDS	FOUR YEAR OLDS	FIVE YEAR OLDS
A. Exploration, Discovery, and Problem Solving Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will develop their capacity to use cognitive skills as a tool to acquire knowledge and skills. These skills include reasoning, reflection, and interpretation.						
A.EL.1 Uses multi-sensory abilities to process information						
A.EL.2 Understands new meanings as memory increases						
A.EL.3 Applies problem solving skills						
B. Mathematical Thinking Performance Standards: Children in Wisconsin will understand and use early mathematical concepts and logical thinking processes to extend their learning.						
B.EL. 1 Demonstrates an understanding of numbers and counting						
B.EL.2 Understands number operations and relationships						
B.EL.3 Explores, recognizes and describes, shapes and						

spatial relationships						
B.EL.4 Uses the attributes of objects for comparison and patterning						
B.EL.5 Understands the concept of measurement						
B.EL.6 Collects, describes and records information using all senses						

C. Scientific Thinking Performance Standards:

Children in Wisconsin will understand and use scientific tools and skills to extend their learning.

C.EL.1 Uses observation to gather information						
C.EL.2 Uses tools to gather information, compare observed objects, and seek answers to questions through active investigation						
C.EL.3 Hypothesizes and makes predictions						

C.EL.4 Forms explanations based on trial and error, observations, and explorations						
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Summary/Notes:

Coverage and Balance – how do these expectations appropriately cover the domain performance standards and are they evenly balanced?

Depth and Difficulty – how do these expectations provide for a sequence of increasingly complex skills and are the activities intellectually challenging at a developmentally appropriate level?

Are there Areas of Concern: