

# Rhode Island Early Learning Standards



## Level II Professional Development

### Implementing a Standards-Based Program

30 Hours

#### Purpose:

To prepare early childhood professionals to use the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards in their work with children and families in various early childhood settings with the outcomes of: 1) increasing program quality and 2) supporting children to develop skills necessary to succeed in school.

#### Objectives:

- To implement a quality curriculum aligned with The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards
- To design and implement a child assessment system that is linked to the curriculum and Standards
- To utilize child assessment information to design learning environments and plan methods of instruction to support each child's learning toward the Standards
- To develop strategies and new opportunities to engage families in their child's development and learning
- To demonstrate progress and ongoing commitment to fully implement a Standards-based program through the development of a Practitioner Professional Portfolio

**Ten sessions. Each session is three hours in length**

#### Session 1: Getting to Know the Early Learning Standards

Activities in the opening session are designed to build a community of learners who become familiar with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards document and its value for teachers, parents, administrators, and policy-makers.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Understand the focus of the ten sessions of this professional development series and how they will support the development of a Practitioner Professional Portfolio
- Determine the appropriate use of Standards with young children
- Begin to have knowledge of the eight developmental domains in the Standards.

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### **Session 2: Quality Curriculum and the Connection to Standards**

In high-quality early childhood programs, The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards play a critical role in the development of curriculum. In Session 2, participants will examine the components of curriculum, reflect on their current teaching practices, and discover how the Early Learning Standards serve as a foundation for purposeful teaching. Participants will begin to focus on Standards 1 for Practitioners, *Implementing a Quality Curriculum Aligned with the Standards* and continue focusing on Standard 1 for Practitioners in Sessions 3 and 4.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Recognize the different components of a quality curriculum
- Understand the relationship between Standards and curriculum
- Demonstrate the ability to use Standards in the development of curriculum
- Understand the elements of a professional portfolio and how it will support self-directed learning

### **Session 3: Aligning Curriculum to Standards**

Building upon the work accomplished in Session 2, participants will be introduced to a process for aligning their own curriculum with Rhode Island’s Early Learning Standards. As they engage in the process, participants will develop a working knowledge of the domains, learning goals, and expectations of the Standards.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Develop a working knowledge of the content of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards
- Deepen their understanding of the essential components of quality curriculum as they relate to the Standards
- Understand a process they can use to refine curriculum to align to the Standards
- Begin to apply the process for aligning curriculum in their own practice

### **Session 4: Using Standards to Develop and Enhance Curriculum**

In Session 4, the community of learners will work together to create purposeful teaching strategies, age-appropriate learning opportunities, and rich learning environments based on what preschool children should know and be able to do.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Create appropriate learning activities for children based on the goals and expectations of the Standards
- Recognize the important role that families play in their child’s education
- Develop strategies to engage families in their child’s development and learning
- Engage in a self-assessment of their skills and progress in implementing an aligned curriculum to determine goals for improving competence in this area

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### **Session 5: Engaging Families in Their Child’s Education**

During Session 5, participants will focus on engaging families, Standards 4 for Practitioners, and acquire new skills and strategies for implementing a continuum of opportunities that: (1) support families in knowing what children should know and be able to do; (2) help families recognize how the program supports their child’s growth towards the Standards, and; (3) support families in taking an active role in their child’s learning both at home and at school. Recognizing the critical role that families play in their child’s education, participants will discuss ways to familiarize families with the Standards. They will be introduced to a family resource, *Fun Family Activities for Preschoolers*, and determine how they will use the resource to foster family connections.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Recognize the importance of getting to know families and creating opportunities appropriate to their individual circumstances
- Plan and implement family engagement opportunities connected to the Standards
- Develop a plan for introducing and promoting the use of *Fun Family Activities for Preschoolers* to families to support them in taking an active role in their child’s learning through home activities
- Engage in a self-assessment of their skills and progress in engaging families to determine goals for improving competence in this area

### **Session 6: Identifying Methods and Strategies for Assessment**

In Session 6, participants will increase their knowledge of different methods for ongoing assessments of children’s growth and development. They will sharpen their observation skills and gain new insight into the critical connection between the Standards, curriculum, and assessment.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Identify various methods used to document children’s development and understand the purposes for each of these methods
- Demonstrate the connection between Standards, curriculum and assessments
- Design an assessment plan linked to curriculum

### **Session 7: Using Assessment to Design Learning Opportunities and Refine Teaching**

Using the assessment information they have collected, participants will design learning opportunities to support each child’s development toward the Standards.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Understand how to organize and use assessment information
- Design learning opportunities to support individual levels of development
- Identify various methods of instruction to guide children’s learning
- Engage in a self-assessment of their skills and progress
- Determine goals for building competence in implementing a system for assessment aligned with the Standards

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### **Session 8: Differentiated Teaching and Learning**

In Session 8, the sessions will focus on supporting all children's development by understanding their different interests, learning styles, and developmental levels. Participants will design strategies to support each individual child's learning toward the Standards as they develop competence in Standard Four for Practitioners.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Understand individual learning styles of children
- Identify various methods of instruction used to support each child's learning based on their development levels, learning style, and interests
- Design specific strategies to enhance each child's development

### **Session 9: Demonstrating Standards-Based Programming**

Participants will use Session 9 to continue their work related to differentiated teaching and learning in order to strengthen their skills and knowledge in this important area. They will complete a self-assessment to measure their progress in meeting Standard Four for Practitioners. Participants will also reflect on their overall professional growth in the four components of a Standards-based program and identify the impact that the professional development has had on their practice with children. They will develop a long-range plan for continuing the implementation of Standards in their programs.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Deepen their understanding of differentiated teaching and learning;
- Complete an initial self-assessment of their skills and progress in engaging in differentiated teaching and learning to determine goals for improving competence in this area;
- Demonstrate an example of a learning center that includes the components of a Standards-based program and;
- Develop a plan for expanding the implementation of Standards in the programs.

### **Session 10: Poster Session**

In the final session, each student will create and share a visual display that demonstrates the strengths and goals they have identified that will be the ongoing focus of their practitioner professional portfolio.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Articulate the impact of the professional development on their practices with children and families
- Share their professional development strengths and the goals that will be the focus of their ongoing professional development and practitioner portfolio
- Commit to fully implementing the Early Learning Standards into their practice over time.

## Rhode Island Early Learning Standards



### Books and Materials:

Rhode Island Early Learning Standards  
Fun Family Activities for Preschoolers  
Student Workbook  
Practitioner Professional Portfolio  
Standards Educational Materials

### Certificate Requirements:

- Attendance and Participation
- Completion of Session Assignments
- Written Reflections

On a monthly basis, students will record their reflections regarding implementation of the various components of the Early Learning Standards in their program. It is expected that students will record experiences, their reactions and reflections to experiences, and integrate new information acquired through course work and discussions.

- Portfolio Development

Each participant is expected to build a Professional Portfolio as s/he progresses through the sessions. Each portfolio will contain self-assessments, goals, artifacts, and reflections that demonstrate the participants progress in meeting or exceeding each of the four Standards for Practitioners.

- Project and Demonstration

This assignment requires students to use the Early Learning Standards to develop and share assessment strategies and to design a learning center that incorporates the components of a Standards-based program.

- Poster

Each student will create a poster to display during the final session that represents how they will use the information and skills they have learned in their program practice.

### College Credit

Participants who complete certificate requirements and successfully participate in the 5-session Next Steps series are eligible for three college credits at the undergraduate or graduate level