

# Rhode Island Early Learning Standards



## Level III Professional Development

### The Administrator's Role in Implementing a Standards-Based Program

30 Hours

#### Purpose:

To prepare early childhood administrators to lead a program-wide effort to improve program quality through implementation of the RI Early Learning Standards in the areas of curriculum, assessment, differentiated teaching and learning, and family engagement. Participants will create a plan for the full implementation of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards in their program and begin to develop a Program-wide Portfolio to document their progress.

#### Objectives:

- To design a plan for fully implementing the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards in their program
- To influence program-wide practices through the design and implementation of a philosophy, written plans, and procedures that support the implementation of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards
- To develop strategies to support staff in developing competencies to implement a Standards-based classroom
- To formulate marketing and communication plans to foster program-wide and community awareness of program quality resulting from implementation of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards
- To design a Program-wide Portfolio to document progress in completing a program improvement plan and implementing the Standards on a program-wide level

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

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

In this module, participants will focus on getting to know one another and through this process begin to establish a group of community learners. In addition, this session will provide an overview of the core professional development sessions and the 5 additional Next Step sessions, that together constitute a 3-credit course option. Participants will understand how the sessions are designed to support development of a Program-Wide Portfolio to document their progress in implementing Standards-based programs. The session will provide participants with an introduction and overview of the RI Early Learning Standards and their value for teachers, parents, administrators, and policy-makers. Participants will also discuss strategies to support the appropriate use of Standards by early childhood practitioners working in their programs.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Be aware of the focus of this 30-hour core training for Level III: The Administrator's Role in Implementing a Standards-Based Program and the 45-hour, 3-credit option.
- Have a working knowledge of the eight developmental domains in the Standards and their appropriate uses

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- Recognize the four core components of a Standards-based program: curriculum, assessment, differentiated teaching and learning, and family engagement
- Understand how the sessions will be used to develop a Program Quality Improvement Plan and Program-Wide Portfolio to support ongoing efforts to improve quality through implementation of the Standards

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

The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards play a critical role in the development of curriculum in high quality early childhood programs. In Session 2, participants will focus on program Standard 1: Implementing a Quality Curriculum Aligned with the Standards. They will examine the elements of a quality curriculum, discover how the Early Learning Standards serve as a foundation for purposeful teaching, reflect on their own program philosophy, and take steps to ensure that the program philosophy reflects their vision of a quality curriculum aligned with the Standards. Participants will continue focusing on Program Standard 1 in Sessions 3 and 4.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Analyze their administrative responsibilities and recognize the importance of the administrators role in implementing Standards-based programs
- Understand the relationship between Standards and curriculum
- Know the components of a quality curriculum both program-wide and at the classroom level
- Understand the elements of a program portfolio in preparation for starting a portfolio for their own program
- Begin to develop/refine their program philosophy to reflect key characteristics of a quality curriculum aligned with the Standards (Program Standard 1)

### **Session 3: Implementing a Quality Curriculum Aligned to the Standards**

Building upon the work accomplished in Session 2, participants will take a more in-depth focus on the elements of a quality curriculum to determine how they can support staff in developing the competencies they need to improve classroom practice in this area. In addition, participants will be introduced to a process for aligning their own curriculum with the Rhode Island's Early Learning Standards.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Develop strategies for communicating information about a Standards-based program.
- Learn a process of aligning program curriculum with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards
- Deepen their understanding of the essential components of quality curriculum
- Begin to identify strategies to support their teachers in implementing a quality curriculum aligned to the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards

### **Session 4: Getting Starting on Your Program Improvement Plan and Program Portfolio**

In Session 4, administrators will apply what they have learned about implementing quality curriculum aligned with the Standards to their own program by assessing program strengths and needs in this area, establishing a program goal, designing a program improvement plan, and documenting their progress in the Program Portfolio.

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**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Learn a process for developing Program Quality Improvement Plans and Program Portfolios
- Begin to develop a Program Quality Improvement Plan and Program Portfolio based on the first Program Standard

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

Administrators will focus on Program Standard 4: Engaging Families in their Child’s Education and understand the important role that family engagement plays in quality early childhood programs. Participants will understand the building blocks of effective family engagement and make plans to provide a continuum of opportunities that engage families in their child’s education so that:

1. Families are aware of the developmental expectations of their child (what preschool age children should know and be able to do)
2. Families recognize how Standards-based programs like their own support their child’s learning
3. Families understand and embrace the positive role they play in supporting their child to learn at home and at school
4. Families are involved as decision-makers in the program

Participants will be introduced to *Fun Family Activities with Preschoolers*, a resource that can be used by staff to support children’s learning. They will then reflect on the three key indicators of family engagement and begin to develop a Program Quality Improvement Plan that specifies goals and strategies for improving their program in this area.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Understand the building blocks of successful family engagement
- Recognize the role of administrators in creating a program philosophy, written plans, and staff development systems that support family engagement throughout the program
- Plan and implement family engagement opportunities that promote families as decision-makers
- Begin to develop a program improvement plan in the area of family engagement
- Use the Program Portfolio to document their progress in improving program quality in the area of family engagement

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

In Session 6, participants will focus on Program Standard 2: Assessment. Participants will understand the meaning of authentic assessment and increase their knowledge of different methods for ongoing assessment of children’s growth and development. Participants will then begin to determine ways that the program can design and implement a program-wide system of authentic assessment aligned with curriculum and the Standards.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Define authentic assessment, identify various methods used to document children’s development, and understand the purposes of each of these methods
- Recognize the connection between Standards, curriculum and assessment
- Begin to develop a program-wide system for authentic assessment linked to curriculum

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### **Session 7: Developing a Program-Wide System for Assessment**

Participants will recognize the importance of using assessment information to design learning opportunities to support each child's development toward the Standards. Participants will develop a plan for implementing a program-wide system for assessment and supporting staff in this area.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Understand how teaching staff need to organize and use assessment information and design learning opportunities that support individual levels of development
- Begin to develop a program improvement plan in the area of assessment
- Use the Program Portfolio to document their progress in improving program quality by implementing a system of authentic assessment linked to the Standards

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

In this module, administrators will have the opportunity to obtain information about differentiated teaching and learning. They will gain an appreciation of the role of practitioners in designing learning experiences and teaching strategies to support each child's growth in reaching and exceeding the Standards. They will receive an overview of the differentiated model as a framework for planning and implementing learning opportunities that match children's developmental levels, interests, and learning styles. Administrators will then assess the programs' progress in implementing the differentiated model of teaching and learning.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Gain an appreciation of the practitioner's role in implementing the differentiated teaching model
- Understand the characteristics of individual learning styles of children
- Practice using the differentiated model to design multi-level learning centers and activities to support a group of children with different development levels, learning styles and interests
- Begin to develop a program quality improvement plan in the area of differentiated teaching and learning and use the Program Portfolio to document their progress

### **Session 9: Developing a System of Support for Staff**

The purpose of this session is to provide participants with the opportunity to build on their knowledge and experience to design a system of support for practitioners in their program. This system of support will be focused on the competencies necessary for practitioners to implement a standards-based program. Strategies for assessing strengths and next steps with staff will be discussed along with a framework for designing professional development opportunities. Administrators will begin to develop a program quality improvement plan in this area.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Recognize the role of administrators in creating a system of support for staff development
- Focus on the staff competencies necessary to implement the four components of a standards-based program and design strategies for integrating this information in program management systems
- Identify and apply various methods of supporting staff development that address individual levels, learning styles and interests

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- Utilize this information when developing program quality improvement plans for staff development

### **Session 10: Final Project**

In this final session, participants will present a visual presentation they have created that demonstrates strategies for moving forward in implementing a program-wide Standards-based program. These presentations will focus on one of the four Program Standards. Administrators will share their Program Quality Improvement Plan and Program Portfolio.

**Competencies.** Participants will:

- Demonstrate through a visual presentation the design of a program-wide improvement plan and program portfolio focusing on one or more of the Program Standards
- Provide professional feedback to each other to support the implementation of their plan
- Formulate a marketing and communication plan to educate families and the community on the use of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards to improve program quality
- Commit to full implementation of a Standards-based program over time

### **Books and Materials:**

Rhode Island Early Learning Standards  
Fun Family Activities for Preschoolers  
Student Workbook  
Program Standards and Guiding Questions  
Program Portfolio  
Standards Educational Materials

### **Certificate Requirements:**

- Attendance and Participation
- Completion of Session Assignments
- Portfolio Development  
Each participant is expected to build a Program Portfolio as s/he progresses through the sessions. Each portfolio will contain program assessments, goals, and artifacts that demonstrate the program's quality improvement efforts in each of the four Standards for Programs.
- Final Project  
Each student will create and share a visual presentation during the final session that represents how they will use the information they have learned to assess the strengths and needs of their program and develop a program quality improvement plan for improving the quality of their program.

### **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.