

Connections

FIRST CONNECTIONS – EARLY INTERVENTION IN ARKANSAS

(800) 643-8258

<https://dhs.arkansas.gov/dds/firstconnectionsweb>

Winter 2017 January, February, March

Volume 6 / Issue 1



Inside this issue:

- ❖ AR Child Development and Early Learning Standards. . . cover story
- ❖ Resource Guide for Practitioners. . . p. 2
- ❖ Supporting Families in Reaching Their Goals. . . p. 2 sidebar
- ❖ Frequently Asked Questions about IDEA Natural Environment Requirements. . . p.3
- ❖ Web-based Training Opportunities. . . p. 4 / sidebar
- ❖ Did you Know? . . . p. 4

AR Child Development and Early Learning Standards

The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission approved the revised Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards (CDELS) during their April 2016 meeting. These standards were developed with input from stakeholders representing early childhood professionals and parents and address key areas of development for children from birth through 60 months. The Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office led the committee in the development and revision of the CDELS. This work was funded through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation with guidance, support, and editing/review by national experts prior to final approval.

Previous versions of Arkansas Standards were organized by “Learning Strands.” The CDELS addresses and expands on these strands by addressing the following Domains of Development and Learning:

- ❖ Social and Emotional Development
- ❖ Cognitive Development
- ❖ Physical Health and Development
- ❖ Language Development
- ❖ Emergent Literacy
- ❖ Mathematical Thinking
- ❖ Science and Technology
- ❖ Social Studies
- ❖ Creativity and Aesthetics

Each of these domains is divided into age ranges and into specific areas of development and learning. All

of the domains of development and learning are organized in a color coded visual format to enable those using the CDELS to see the range of skills across a Domain Component and age range. This format allows milestones to be easily identified and, for those who work with children, to see where an individual child falls on the developmental continuum. By addressing Social and Emotional Development first, the CDELS recognizes that early learning and development is relational and stress how important the social and emotional development is throughout the lifespan.

IFSP teams can use the AR CDELS as a guide to understand developmental milestones and identify strengths and needs while developing the IFSP. The CDELS can also serve as a tool used in the Childhood Outcomes Summary Process (COS Process).

Training opportunities for the CDELS will be available through the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE). The Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards are available at:

English:

[http://www.arheadstart.org/Ark_Early_Learning_Standards%20\(19\)%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.arheadstart.org/Ark_Early_Learning_Standards%20(19)%20(1).pdf)

Spanish:

<http://www.arheadstart.org/CDELS.Spanish%20Version.pdf>

Supporting Families in Reaching Their Goals

The Department of Human Services (DHS) in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Career Education (DCE) will begin offering free GED® courses and preparation / tutoring in conjunction with Arkansas Tech University, Pulaski Technical College and the Warren School District. The host sites for the classes are:

- Arkansas Health Center in Haskell
- Booneville Human Development Center
- SE Arkansas Human Development Center in Warren

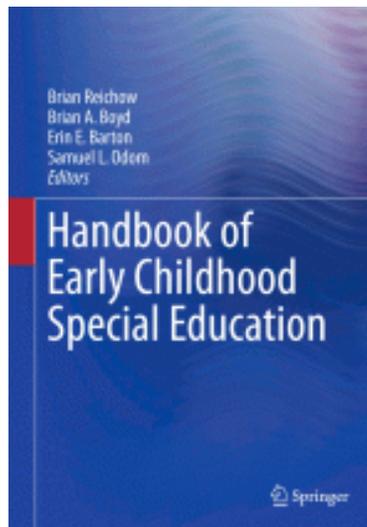
The GED® courses are available at no cost to individuals in these communities unable to satisfy high school graduation requirements that may have limited job and career opportunities for these families.

The GED® test certifies high school-level knowledge and skills in the core academic areas of Reasoning through Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematical Reasoning. Upon successful completion of the test, the Arkansas High School Diploma is awarded to the student.

For more information about class times and locations, contact the sites directly at 501-860-0500 in Little Rock, 479-675-2121 in Booneville, and 870-226-6774 in Warren.

Resource Guide for Practitioners

This resource guide examines effective interventions and provides guidance on emerging scientific techniques to support implementation and advancement in the field. *The Handbook of Early Childhood Special Education* focuses on evidence-based practices and covers core intervention areas in ECSE, such as literacy, motor skills, and social development as well as diverse contexts for services, including speech-language pathology, physical therapy, and pediatrics. Contributors offer strategies for planning, implementing, modifying, and adapting interventions to help young learners extend their benefits into the higher grades. Concluding chapters emphasize the importance of research in driving evidence-based practices (EBP).



Topics featured in the handbook include:

- Family-centered practices in early childhood intervention.
- The application of Response to Intervention (RtI) in young children with identified disabilities.
- Motor skills acquisition for young children with disabilities.
- Implementing evidence-based practices in ECSE classrooms.
- Cultural, ethnic, and linguistic implications for ECSE

The handbook is an excellent resource for researchers, professors, upper-level undergraduate and graduate students, and practitioners across such disciplines as early childhood education, clinical social work, speech and physical therapy, developmental psychology, behavior therapy, public health, and child and school psychology.

Citation: Reichow, B., Boyd, B. A., Barton, E. E., & Odom, S. L. (Eds.). (2016). *Handbook of early childhood special education*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-28492-7



Frequently Asked Questions about IDEA Natural Environment Requirements

Natural learning environments (NLE) are " ...experiences and opportunities afforded developing children as part of daily living, child and family routines, family rituals, and family and community celebrations and traditions" (Dunst, Hamby, Trivette, Raab, Bruder, 2000). NLE are critical for the growth and development of all children. Natural learning environment practices support parents and other important care providers in fostering child learning and development. The information in these FAQ's provided by *Coaching in Early Childhood* provides useful information to support practitioners in use of these practices.

Q: If services are provided in a center, clinic, or provider office but the parent is present and involved, doesn't that meet NE requirements?

A: Therapy clinics, centers primarily for children disabilities, and practitioner offices are not considered natural environments. Regardless of how hard we try, we are providing decontextualized interventions, which are not supported by the research on how children learn. Children learn best when they learn in context and have multiple opportunities to practice the skills and abilities throughout their day. The generalization research indicates that it is much easier to generalize newly learned skills when they are learned within the context of meaningful, functional activities as they happen naturally versus setting up contrived situations in a clinic or office.

Q: If a center-based program has a preschool open to the public and incorporates natural environment learning philosophies into individualized treatment, would it be considered to be a natural environment?

A: A center-based program would only be considered a natural environment if the ratio of typically developing children to children with disabilities is similar to the ratio in the general community. "Individualized treatment," however, would not be considered part of a natural learning environment. Early intervention or early learning would be individualized and occur within the context of the naturally planned and occurring activities in the daycare or preschool classroom with EI practitioners supporting the teacher in promoting the child's participation in the classroom activities rather than the practitioner using a pull-out model, which would be considered decontextualized intervention.

Q: How do we embed natural environment practices into our therapy when children live in homes with virtually no toys or books?

A: The first place to start is to get an understanding of how the child spends his or her time. *What does the child do? Where does the child go? What are the parents/caregivers doing during the child's day?* This is part of the assessment process to identify the child's existing (and desired) activity settings. If the family has no toys or books, then the practitioner must identify what the child is currently using as play objects (i.e., pots, pans, empty containers, rocks, sticks, sand, etc.) and to support caregivers in maximizing the child's enjoyment of what play objects do exist. If the family is *interested* in obtaining other objects for the child to play with, then the practitioner is responsible for assisting the family in identifying resources to obtain them (i.e., toy lending resources, public libraries, garage sales, Goodwill, budgeting to purchase toys, etc.). Our responsibility is to support the family with what they have, where they are, and share information that matches their priorities.

Q: What about the houses we go into, where the houses are dirty and not conducive to therapy?

A: More often than not, this is an issue of our values versus the family's values. In order to be truly family-centered, we have to acknowledge that different families have different lifestyles and different standards of tidiness. If it is an abusive or neglectful situation, we are mandated reporters. If it's not abuse or neglect, we need to look closely at our own values. The fact is that is where that child lives. We need to support the family in promoting the child's developing in their natural environment.



Web-based Training Opportunities

Free:

TITLE: Classroom Management Supports for ADHD Behaviors in Early Childhood Education Settings

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJOqLJIfNAs>

about the Webinar: *Hyperactive, non-compliant, and disruptive behaviors in the classroom are often challenges for early childhood educators, regardless of whether a young child is diagnosed with ADHD or not. Understanding the rationale for and principles of behavior management and self-regulation approaches can help you support positive development for young children with challenging behaviors using evidence-based strategies.*

Low-cost:

TITLE: Weaving Inclusion into Everyday Activities \$30.00

URL: https://apps.research.unc.edu//events/index.cfm?event=events.eventDetails&event_key=E2A6D0922A2CFAD39837A70B4294E9F2BE6B5B63

about the Webinar: *learn about the practice of embedded interventions to help children participate in a variety of early learning opportunities and environments promoting high quality inclusion. Aligns with DEC Recommended Practices. Practitioners learn to use a decision-making process to help a child participate more fully in an inclusive setting through embedded interventions.*

5-hour course worth .5 CEUs

Did You Know . . . ?

New Medicaid Management Information System May Streamline Provider Claim Process

Medicaid is implementing a new Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS). The new MMIS will be known as “interChange” and is currently scheduled for Go-live Mid-spring 2017.

The Core Arkansas Medicaid Enterprise (AME) MMIS Replacement Project is one of the largest, most complex technology projects in state history. The current Legacy MMIS is over 30 years old with outdated technology that is costly to maintain. With the help of special funding from the federal government, the new interChange MMIS’s modern technology and user-friendly, time-saving features make entering claims and following up on PAs less time consuming for service providers and Part C staff.

To make transition from Legacy to interChange as smooth as possible, the project management office (PMO) has put together a team and a variety of support resources. The AME PMO Business Transition Team will help oversee training, provide communications, and help manage the change. The Business Transition Team has created a group of “Change Champions” to assist in providing information to each unit. Amanda Smith and Zabrina Swift serve in the role of Change Champions to represent First Connections in this change initiative.

Change Champions work closely with leadership and the Business Transition Team to address issues that are a direct impact of the new MMIS, interChange and identify and communicate core changes that will impact the unit. Future communications will include important information about AFMC resources and training on the new MMIS, which will be offered via Web-based as well as traditional, instructor-led courses.

