

# One District's Journey to Play-based Learning in Kindergarten

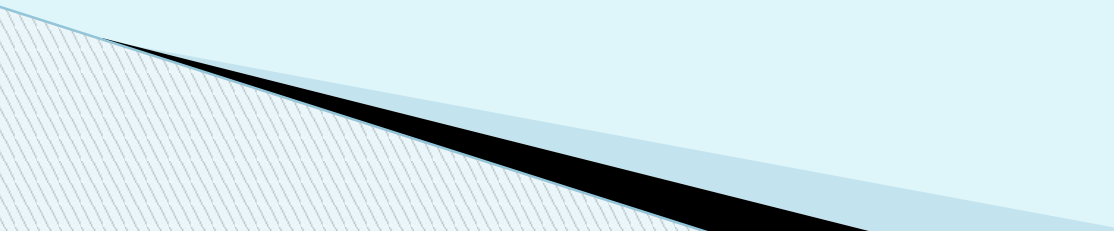


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U-46 Director of Early Learners



Dr. Julie Kallenbach  
Early Childhood Consultant

# Sharing our Experience

- ▶ Impetus for the change
  - ▶ Planning and Structure of the Framework
  - ▶ Play-based Model of Learning
  - ▶ Implementation Plan
  - ▶ Professional Development
  - ▶ Reflection and Next Steps
- 

# U-46 Strategic Plan Alignment

## Thematic Category

## Aspirations

## Priorities

1

Student  
Achievement

We will educate the whole student by providing an enriched, high quality experience that empowers all graduates to be competitive members of the global society.

1. We will implement and support a challenging, standards based curriculum across all content areas.
2. We will coordinate our efforts to provide a nurturing and safe learning experience and a flexible approach in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of each student.

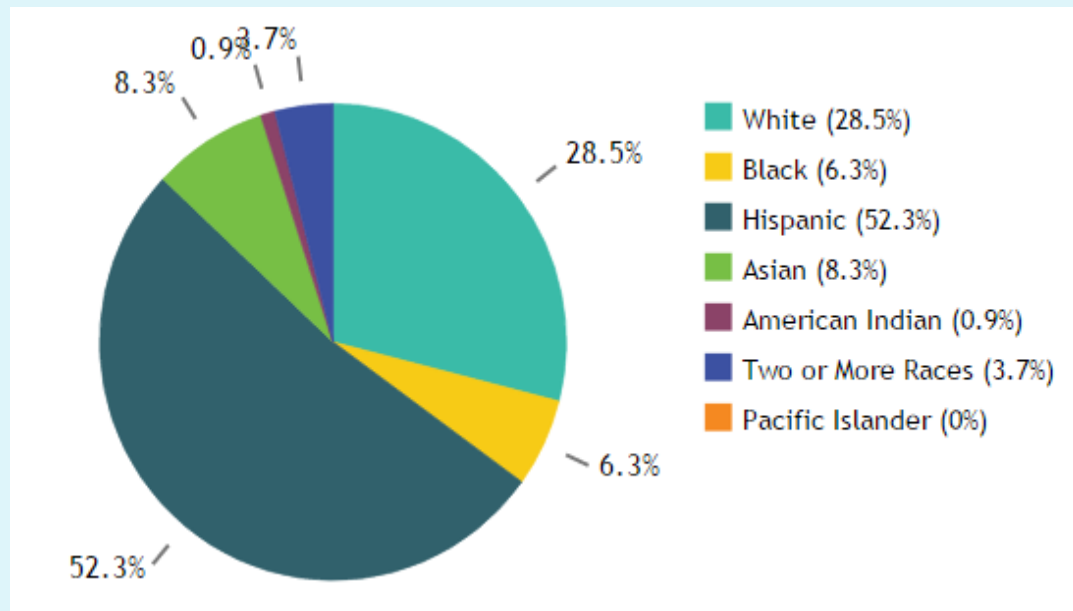
### ► Priority 1

We will implement and support a challenging, standards-based curriculum across all content areas.

- Instructional Goal : Invest in high-quality early childhood learning to ensure the long term success of all students.
  - Instructional Initiative
    - Implement full-day kindergarten across the district

# U-46: Who We Are

- ▶ 2nd largest school district in Illinois
- ▶ Serving 40,000 students in 11 communities at 55 buildings
- ▶ 40 Elementary buildings
- ▶ Diverse population
- ▶ 57.8 % Low Income
- ▶ 28.4 English Learners



# Current U-46 Numbers

- ▶ 2692 Kindergarten Students
- ▶ 122 Sections of Kindergarten
- ▶ 29 students in half-day Kindergarten
- ▶ 2663 students in full-day Kindergarten

# Full-Day Kindergarten Timeline

- ▶ **Sept. 2015** – Proposal to Board of Education to implement universal Full-Day Kindergarten
- ▶ **Nov. – Jan.** – Committee of teachers and administrators met weekly to develop the FDK Framework
- ▶ **April 2016** – Board approves FDK proposal
- ▶ **June – Aug. 2016** – Professional development for Kindergarten teachers and principals

# Committee

- ▶ Application process
- ▶ Chosen by
  - Grade level (prek, k, 1<sup>st</sup>)
  - Expertise (literacy, math, science, special ed)
  - District location
  - English, Bilingual
  - Experience in full day, half day
  - Teachers, administrators, departmental staff

# Planning Format

## ▶ Full Days on Wednesday for 2 Months

- Build common background knowledge with readings and research
- Break into subcommittees
- Writing and reporting out

## ▶ After School 2.5 hours

- Committee sharing and participant additions





# Financial Planning

<b>Full Day Kindergarten Budget</b>				
Based on an projected estimate of 41 new sections of FDK, 22 Gen Ed and 19 DL				
<b>Expense</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Calculation</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Instructional Materials	Adopted curricula	41 sections	\$133, 827.00	Textbook
	DL Supplemental Materials	\$2014.50 X 19 DL sections	\$38,276.00	Title III
	Eureka Math kit materials	\$608.84 X 41 sections	\$24,962.00	Textbook
	Science			Textbook
Furniture and Equipment	FDK classroom set up	\$12000 X 41 sections	\$492,000.00	FDK
		\$3000 X 80 (Retrofit existing classrooms)	\$240,000.00	FDK
PD		8 days X 120 teachers X \$125 per day stipend	\$120,000.00	FDK/ C&I
	Workshop presenters/ consultant	Not to exceed \$24, 000.00	\$24,000.00	FDK

# U-46 Framework Document

- ▶ Established the U-46 Guiding Principles
  - Based on the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- ▶ Developmentally appropriate, best practice for Kindergarten
- ▶ Aligned to state standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching

# U-46 Framework Document

- ▶ Utilizes U-46 curriculum resources
- ▶ Practical, day to day guidance for teachers with descriptions, charts, photos, and videos
- ▶ Defines critical attributes of play

U-46 Full Day  
Kindergarten  
Program



U46 Kinder Todo el Día  
Aprendiendo a través del  
JUEGO



# U-46 Guiding Principles

Based on NAEYC's 5 Guidelines for Effective Teaching:

- ▶ *Creating a Caring Community*
- ▶ *Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning*
- ▶ *Planning Curriculum to Achieve Standards*
  - *Establishing an Effective Classroom Structure*
- ▶ *Assessing Children's Learning and Development*
- ▶ *Establishing Reciprocal Relationships with Families*

# U-46 Guiding Principles

## TEACHING TO ENHANCE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

**Principle 2:** Teachers intentionally plan an optimal balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated learning experiences based on their knowledge of child development and individual children, understanding that young children construct and retain their own knowledge by interacting with their environments and others.

### **Danielson Framework for Teaching**

#### **Components of Domain 1: Planning and Preparation and**

#### **Domain 3: Communicating with Students**

1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

3a: Communicating with Students

3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

3c: Engaging Students in Learning

3d: Using Assessment in Instruction

3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

# Framework Features: Learning Centers

## The Block Center

### Description of Activities

In the block center, students use social skills, math, writing, science and visual spatial skills. This center allows for self-regulation to expand as children share materials and ideas. Children recreate their world with various materials and role-play with small theme-based manipulatives. Critical thinking and problem solving are constantly evident here.



### Materials


- At least three types of blocks; Wooden unit blocks, cardboard bricks, Duplos,
- Magnetic building sticks
- A large space for building
- Building plans, blueprints
- Clip boards
- Pens, pencils, crayons and paper
- Cars, trucks, people and animal figures
- Construction hats and shirts
- Books about construction and transportation





# Framework Features: Learning Centers

The following table describes some of the typical learning center activities and materials

ABC/Word Work Center	
Description of Activities	Materials
<p>The ABC center grows and changes as the children learn. This center provides meaningful opportunities for children to develop letter and word knowledge through exploration. Children apply letter and word play to read and write in authentic ways.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Uppercase and lowercase magnetic letters</li><li>● A magnetic surface</li><li>● Paper, crayons, pencils and markers</li><li>● ABC books</li><li>● ABC charts</li><li>● Various ABC font materials</li><li>● White boards and dry erase markers</li><li>● Making words activities</li><li>● Names of the students</li><li>● Wikki sticks</li><li>● ABC stampers and pads</li></ul>

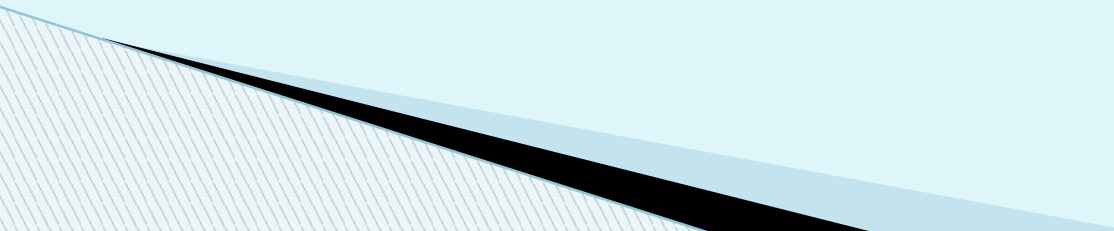
# Framework Features: Schedule

## Recommended Time Allotment for Curricular Area

<b>Language Block</b>	30 mins.	Oral, phonemic and phonological awareness.
<b>Literacy Block</b>	60 mins.	15 mins. - Shared reading 40 mins (approximately). - Literacy centers - Teacher works in small guided oral language / reading groups with children 5 mins. - Reflection
<b>Writing Block</b>	45 mins.	15 mins. - Mini lesson 25 mins. - Writing independently. Teacher works in guided writing groups or conferences with children. 5 mins. - Reflection
<b>Math Blocks</b>	60 mins.	10 mins - Warm up activity 15 mins. - Mini lesson / concept development 30 mins. - Math centers. Teacher works in small groups on math concepts/skills 5 mins. - Reflection
<b>ESL Block Science/SS</b>	45 mins.	Science/social studies (if needed - otherwise integrated in literacy and math) May include some inquiry-based learning
<b>Free Choice Centers</b>	50 mins.	Free choice centers Plan, do, reflect
<b>End of day Reflection</b>	10 mins.	10 mins.



# Play-Based Model

- ▶ Definition
  - ▶ Engaging Environments
  - ▶ Intentional Planning
  - ▶ Scaffolding for learning
- 

# Play-Based Model

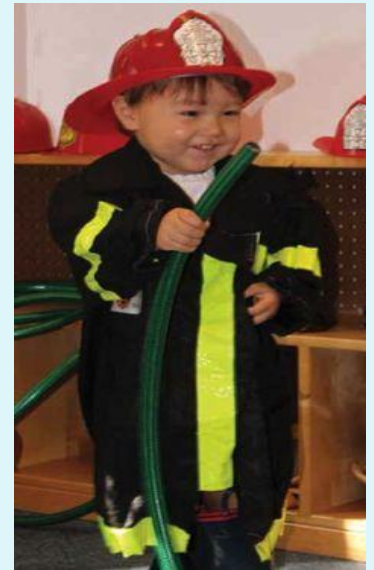
## THE KINDERGARTEN CONTINUUM



(Miller and Almon, 2009)

# Definition: Types of Play

- Large motor
- Small motor
- Mastery
- Rules-based
- Make-believe
- Symbolic
- Sensory
- Language
- Construction
- Playing with the arts



# Play-Based Model: Intentional Planning

- ▶ Collaboration focused on standards-based instruction





# Play-Based Model

- ▶ Engaging environments



# Play-Based Model

Balance of teacher-directed



and child-initiated activities





# Play-Based Model

- ▶ Child choice at engaging centers



## Play in Choice Centers

Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation as well as for promoting language, cognition, and social competence. The intellectual and cognitive benefits of playing have been well documented. Children who engage in quality play experiences are more likely to have well-developed memory skills, language development, and are able to regulate their behavior, leading to enhanced school adjustment and academic learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2005).



At least 50 minutes is available in the play-based kindergarten framework for child-initiated play in centers of their choice. Teachers are available, scaffolding to support mature play development, intentionally promoting language development, problem solving, self-regulation and working memory.



# Play-Based Model

- ▶ Incorporates ESL best practices
  - Authentic learning with real-life materials and situations
  - TPR: Movement tied to verbal
  - Predictable routines with repetitive language
  - Using songs and chants
  - Scaffolding language through sentence stems

# Play-Based Model

- ▶ Active engagement with peers and materials



# Play-based Model

## Effective Teaching Practices

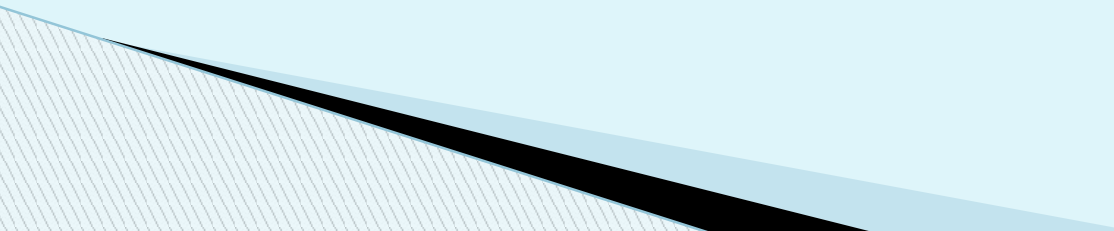
(Adapted from NAEYC: Developmentally Appropriate Practices: Focus on Kindergarten, 2014 and Danielson's Framework for Teacher Evaluation Instrument, 2013 Edition)

<b>Effective Teaching Practices</b>	<b>Teaching Practices of Concern</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Integrating learning activities</li><li>● Adapting the schedule to adjust for student engagement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fragmented teaching of discrete objectives</li><li>● Rigid, tightly-paced schedules</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Demonstrating warmth, caring, and responsiveness to individual children's interests and feelings</li><li>● Engaging in frequent extended, reciprocal conversations with students and prompting them between students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Attending to curricular activities over opportunities for relationship building</li><li>● Excessive lecturing to the whole group</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Conducting cooperative work in small groups or in Independent learning</li><li>● Reading to children in small groups and</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Excessive time in whole group instruction</li><li>● Only reading to children in large</li></ul>

# Questions on Play-based Learning?



# FDK Implementation Plan

- ▶ Coordination among all departments
  - ▶ Involvement of Stakeholders
  - ▶ Communication Plan
  - ▶ Classroom Materials
  - ▶ Professional Development
  - ▶ Ongoing Support
- 

# FDK Implementation Plan

## ► Coordination among all departments

- Administration
- Teaching and Learning
- Information Services
- Human Resources
- Plant Operations
- Business Services
- Communication
- Transportation



**Human Resources**

# FDK Implementation Plan

- ▶ Involvement of stakeholders
  - Community presentations
  - Teacher informational and feedback meetings
  - Administrator participation

# FDK Implementation Plan

## ► Communication Plan



- Website updates
- Fact sheets and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Social media
- Video series for parents [http://www.u-46.org/pages/SDU46/Hot\\_Topic/FDK\\_Videos](http://www.u-46.org/pages/SDU46/Hot_Topic/FDK_Videos)
- School welcoming events
- Media coverage



# FDK Implementation Plan

- ▶ Classroom materials
  - Inventory and retrofit of existing classrooms
  - New classroom set ups for added sections



# FDK Implementation Plan

## ▶ Professional Development

- Eight days for teachers

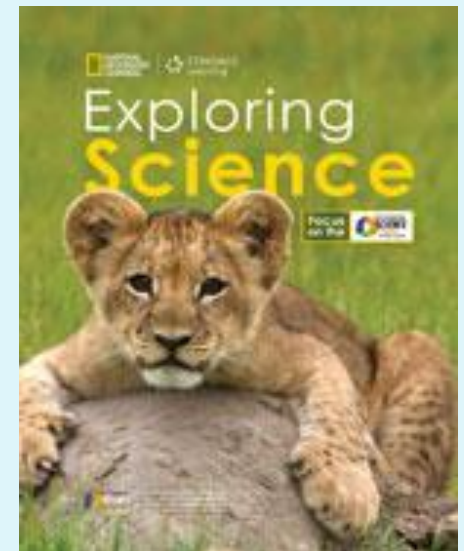
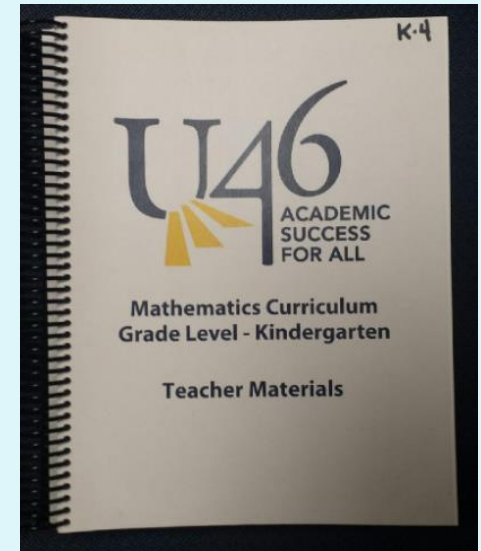
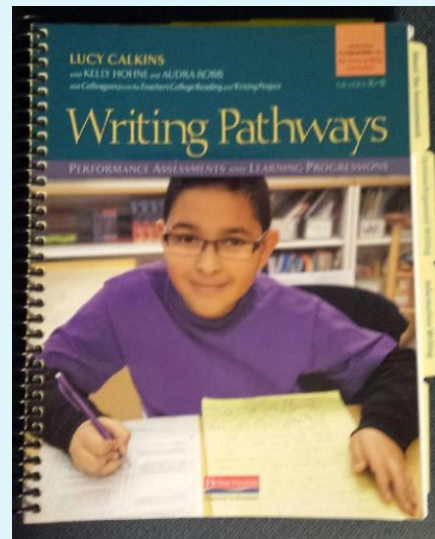
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- Creating a Caring Community – The First 20 Days
- Play-based learning
- Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS)



# FDK Implementation Plan

## ► Professional Development

- Eight days for teacher
  - Social Emotional Development
  - Math
  - Science
  - Literacy



# FDK Implementation Plan

## ▶ Professional Development

- Attended by administrators
- Differentiated based on individual need
- Active hands-on learning
- Utilized a national speaker, local early learning experts, resource professionals and teacher leaders





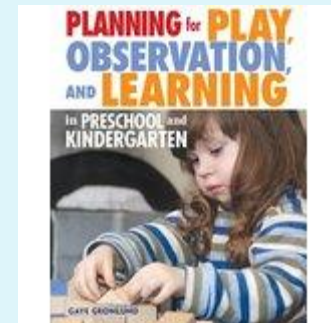
# Additional Incentives

- ▶ “Swag Bag”
  - Clipboard
  - Apron with pen and post it notes
  - Fidgets for the classroom
- ▶ First Day T-shirt
- ▶ NAEYC DAP pin
- ▶ Professional books
- ▶ Classroom Give-aways



# Ongoing Support

- ▶ District administrators out at elementary buildings the first week of school
- ▶ Kindergarten Transition Facilitator
- ▶ Five FDK Teacher Leaders supporting all K teachers
- ▶ Monthly collaboration opportunities (K Kafe)
- ▶ Ongoing professional development
- ▶ Professional resources



# FDK Teachers– Ready to Shine!



# Collaborative Teaching in U-46

[Collaborative Teaching](#)





# Teacher's Perspective

## Jan Wilcox

- ▶ Former half-day K teacher, current full-day teacher
- ▶ National Board Certified Teacher
- ▶ Centennial Elementary School

# Questions?



# Reflection and Next Steps



# Successes

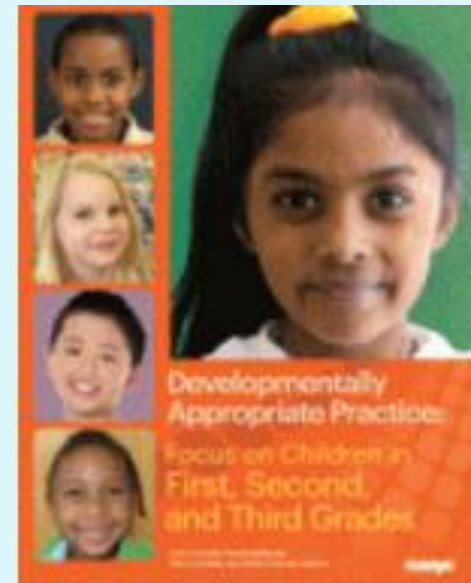
- ▶ Diverse committee of respected teachers
- ▶ Creating a Framework document with links
- ▶ Administrators taking the same PD
- ▶ Aligning materials to play-based learning
- ▶ KIDS: training, embedding KIDS in other parts of the PD, using KIDS as report card

# Challenges

- ▶ Late-registering students
- ▶ Staffing
- ▶ Make-up Professional Development for late hires
- ▶ Logistics of material distribution

# Planning for the Transition to 1st

- ▶ 1st grade teachers seeking more training on what to expect from incoming students
- ▶ Professional development to be offered in the summer
- ▶ Invitation to attend Kindergarten Kafes





# Next Steps

- ▶ Monthly Kindergarten Kafe
  - KIDS evidence collection and data entry
  - Math Center Make and Take
  - Universal Supports
  - Scaffolding Learning in Play
- ▶ Pilot Family Engagement Promise
- ▶ Measuring outcomes for success



# Self-assessment and Classroom Visits

## What to Look for in a Play-based Kindergarten Classroom

This document outlines key actions that visitors should see during various times in the schedule in a play-based, developmentally appropriate kindergarten. Many of the examples are from the [2013 Danielson Framework for Teaching](#) with early learning examples.

A developmentally appropriate kindergarten classroom using a play-based learning model

- Is purposefully and intentionally planned by the teacher to address standards.
- Balances teacher-directed and child-led activities.
- Provides active, hands-on experiential learning.
- Integrates learning across multiple domains.
- Allows sufficient time for child-initiated activities.

When Visiting a Classroom	The teacher is likely to...	The students are likely to...
Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model pro-social behavior with warm greetings to individual students by name (2a)</li> <li>• Remind students of class expectations (2a)</li> <li>• Listen to and inquire about students' background and lives outside the classroom (1b, 2a)</li> <li>• Collect social and communication evidence with anecdotal notes, photos, checklist (1e, 1f, 3d)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow arrival routines such as sign-in, Question of the Week (2c)</li> <li>• Self-manage their belongings (2c)</li> <li>• Express thoughts and needs to the teacher and peers (2a)</li> </ul>
Morning Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage students to build off each other's ideas (2d)</li> <li>• Use rich language (3a)</li> <li>• Use music and movement (3a)</li> <li>• Explain the learning plan for the day, including special events, etc.(3a)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather in assigned spot and participate in waiting activities (books, conversations, etc.) (2a)</li> <li>• Actively participate (3c)</li> </ul>

# Report Card Revisions

Kindergarten Student Report Matt Smith							
COG-MATH - Cognition: Math	Unable To Rate	Building Earlier	Building Middle	Building Later	Integrating Earlier	Integrating Middle	Integrating Later
COG-MATH 1 Classification			Student's current level				
		Sorts objects into two groups based on one attribute but not always accurately	Sorts objects accurately into two or more groups based on one attribute	Sorts objects into two or more groups based on one attribute, then puts all the objects together and resorts the entire collection into new groups.	Sorts objects into groups based on at least two attributes. Sometimes sorting by one attribute and then subdividing those groups based on a second attribute	Sorts objects by attributes that are subtle and not immediately obvious and describes the resulting categorical groups	Sorts objects to gather and organize information, compares the groups of objects, and interprets the information.
COG-MATH 2: Number Sense of Quantity				Student's current level			
		Identifies small quantities without counting, up to three	Counts up to five objects using one-to-one correspondence AND Recites numbers in order, one through ten	Shows understanding that the last number counted is the total number of objects in the group	Solves simple everyday problems involving numbers by counting up to 10 objects using one-to-one correspondence AND Recites numbers correctly, up to 20	Recites numbers up to 100 by ones and by tens, starting at any number and Counts at least 20 objects correctly using 1-to-1 correspondence and Demonstrates understanding that teen numbers are composed of ten and ones and Reads and writes numerals 0 to 20.	Counts beyond 100, starting at any given number AND Demonstrates understanding that in two-digit numbers the first digit represents the number of tens and the second digit represents the number of ones AND Reads and writes two digit numerals up to 100.

# Resources

- ▶ British Columbia Ministry of Education, Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide. Retrieved online <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/kindergarten>
- ▶ Ontario, 2010. The Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program [https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/kindergarten\\_english\\_june3.pdf](https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/kindergarten_english_june3.pdf)
- ▶ Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Office of Early Learning. Washington State Full Day Kindergarten Guide (Public Draft). August, 2015. Retrieved at <http://www.k12.wa.us/EarlyLearning/pubdocs/WAFull-dayKGuide-PublicReviewDraft.pdf>

# Resources

Bodrova, E. & D. J. Leong. 2007. Tools of the mind: The Vygotskian approach to early childhood education. (2nd ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Copple, C. Bredekamp, S, Koralek, D. Charner, K. eds. 2014. Developmentally appropriate practice: Focus on kindergarten. NAEYC. Washington, DC.

Miller, E., & J. Almon. 2009. Crisis in the kindergarten: Why children need to play in school. College Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood.

Sutherland SL and Friedman O. 2013. Just pretending can be really learning: children use pretend play as a source for acquiring generic knowledge. Dev Psychol. 49(9):1660-8.