

505-3-.13 BIRTH THROUGH KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

(1) **Purpose.** This rule states field-specific content standards for approving programs that prepare individuals to work with and teach children with unique learning needs from birth through kindergarten and supplements requirements in GaPSC Rule [505-3-.01 REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR APPROVING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS](#) and GaPSC Rule [505-3-.03 FOUNDATIONS OF READING, LITERACY, AND LANGUAGE](#).

(2) **Requirements.**

(a) To receive approval, a GaPSC-approved educator preparation provider shall offer an educator preparation program described in program planning forms, catalogs, and syllabi addressing the following standards and requirements delineated below for initial early childhood professional preparation programs, as well as the applicable standards delineated in GaPSC Rule [505-3-.03, FOUNDATIONS OF READING, LITERACY, AND LANGUAGE](#). The standards are adapted from standards published in 2019 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the standards published in 2017 by the Council for Exceptional Children- Initial Specialty Set in Early Childhood and cross-walked with the Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Educator national standards developed by the Council for Exceptional Children (2020).

1. Child Development and Learning in Context and Individual Learning Differences: Birth Through Kindergarten candidates are grounded in an understanding of the developmental period of early childhood from birth through kindergarten across developmental domains. They understand each child as an individual with unique developmental variations. They understand that all children develop within relationships; that learning is constructed by adults and children together; and that learning occurs within the context of families, languages, communities, and society. Candidates use this multidimensional knowledge to make evidence-based decisions to carry out their responsibilities. They understand how exceptionalities may interact with development and learning, and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for children with unique learning needs. Indicators are as follows:

- (i) Candidates know and understand early childhood development based on:
 - (I) Knowledge of developmental theories, coursework, and observation across domains and areas such as physical, cognitive, and linguistic; and
 - (II) Understanding variability in early development of young children with unique learning needs, such as children with disabilities or children who are bilingual, and the impacts of variability on development and learning.
- (ii) Candidates know and understand the biological and environmental factors, both social and physical, that affect pre-, peri-, and postnatal development and learning;
- (iii) Candidates know, understand, and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, agencies, strengths, interests, challenges, approaches to learning, experiences and abilities;
- (iv) Candidates know and understand the impact of medical conditions and related care on development and learning, as well as on family concerns, resources, and priorities;
- (v) Candidates know and understand the ways that development and the learning process for children with unique learning needs occur within multiple contexts, including family, language, and community as well as within a larger societal context of structural inequities; and

- (vi) Candidates use multidimensional knowledge of early development (including developmental period of early childhood; etiology, characteristics, and classification of common disabilities in infants and young children; and individual child, development and learning) to make evidence-based decisions that support each child.
2. Family and Community Partnerships: Birth Through Kindergarten candidates understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with young children's families. They know about, understand, and value the importance of family and community characteristics. They use this understanding to create respectful and linguistically responsive, reciprocal relationships and to engage as partners with families in young children's development and learning. They use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support families as they also support partnerships with early learning settings, schools and community organizations and agencies. Indicators are as follows:
- (i) Candidates know about, understand, and value the differences among families and communities;
 - (ii) Candidates engage as partners with families in young children's development, and learn through respectful and reciprocal relationships;
 - (iii) Candidates use community resources to support families and young children, as well as work to support the community; and
 - (iv) Candidates partner with families and other professionals to develop individualized plans and support the various transitions that occur for the young child and their family throughout the birth through kindergarten.
3. Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment: Birth Through Kindergarten candidates understand that the primary purpose of assessment (formal and informal, formative and summative) is to inform instruction and planning for children with unique learning needs in early learning settings. They understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know how to use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment approaches and technically sound tools that minimize discrepancies, and use knowledge of measurement principles and practices to interpret assessment results and guide educational decisions for individuals with unique learning needs. They are responsible and ethical in their use of assessment and assessment results. In partnership with families and professional colleagues, they document individual children's progress, and plan learning experiences that promote positive outcomes for each child. Indicators are as follows:
- (i) Candidates understand that assessment (formal and informal, formative and summative) is conducted to make informed choices and for planning in early learning settings;
 - (ii) Candidates know a wide range of types of assessments, their purposes, and their associated methods and tools;
 - (iii) Candidates align assessment with curriculum; content standards; and local, state, and federal regulations;

- (iv) Candidates practice assessment that is ethically and legally grounded and developmentally and linguistically appropriate to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child;
 - (v) Candidates build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues, including, assisting families in identifying their concerns, resources, and priorities, and integrating family priorities and concerns in the assessment process;
 - (vi) Candidates assess progress in the five developmental domains, play, and temperament using a variety of materials and contexts to maintain the interests of young children and the assessment process; and
 - (vii) Candidates emphasize the child's strengths and needs in assessment reports that focus on functional concerns, and participate as a team member to integrate assessment results in the development and implementation of individualized plans.
4. Learning Environments: Birth Through Kindergarten candidates create safe, developmentally responsive learning environments, so that children with unique learning needs become active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination. They collaborate with other colleagues to create safe learning environments to engage all children in meaningful learning activities and social interactions. Birth Through Kindergarten candidates use motivational and instructional interventions to teach children with unique learning needs how to adapt to different environments. They know how to intervene safely and appropriately with all children. Indicators are as follows:
- (i) Candidates select, develop, and evaluate developmentally responsive and functionally appropriate materials, equipment, and environments;
 - (ii) Candidates organize space, time, materials, peers, and adults to maximize progress in natural and structured environments;
 - (iii) Candidates embed learning opportunities in everyday routines, relationships, activities, and places;
 - (iv) Candidates structure social environments, using peer models and proximity, and responsive adults, to promote interactions among peers, parents, and caregivers;
 - (v) Candidates provide a stimulus-rich indoor and outdoor environment that employs materials, media, and adaptive and assistive technology responsive to individual differences;
 - (vi) Candidates implement basic health, nutrition, and safety management procedures for infants and young children; and
 - (vii) Candidates use evaluation procedures and recommend referral with ongoing follow-up to community health and social services.
5. Developmentally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching Strategies: Birth Through Kindergarten candidates understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages, characteristics, and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. They understand and use positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation for their work with young children. They are able to differentiate instruction for individual children and for groups. They use a broad repertoire of developmentally responsive and linguistically relevant, and

evidence-based teaching approaches that reflect universal design for learning principles. They understand the importance of play and inquiry in young children's learning and development, and how to support play in early education. They develop and sustain reflective, responsive and intentional practice. They use technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for children with unique learning needs, and are familiar with augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of children with disabilities. Birth Through Kindergarten candidates use strategies to enhance language development and communication skills of children with unique learning needs. They develop and implement a variety of education and transition plans across a wide range of settings and different learning experiences in collaboration with individuals, families and teams, and teach to mastery and promote generalization of learning. Indicators are as follows:

- (i) Candidates understand positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation of early childhood educators' work with young children, and understand how to support child-initiated development and learning in classroom and home settings;
 - (ii) Candidates understand that the science of learning and child development indicates the need for distinct teaching skills and strategies appropriate to early childhood (such as teacher-scaffolded and -initiated instruction to complement child-initiated learning), along with differentiated instruction to support children's individual needs, including those of bilingual children and children with developmental delays or disabilities;
 - (iii) Candidates use a broad repertoire of developmentally responsive and linguistically relevant, and evidence-based and evidence-informed teaching skills and strategies that reflect universal design for learning principles;
 - (iv) Candidates develop and sustain reflective, responsive, and intentional practice;
 - (v) Candidates link development, learning experiences, and instruction to promote educational transitions, implementing processes and strategies that support transitions, and assisting the family in planning for transition; and
 - (vi) Candidates design intervention strategies incorporating information from multiple sources and supportive of children's independent functioning in natural environments.
6. Content Knowledge in Early Childhood Curriculum: Birth Through Kindergarten candidates have and apply a solid understanding of the content of the academic disciplines. They understand content knowledge about the central concepts, methods, inquiry and application tools, and structures in each academic discipline. They understand pedagogical content knowledge about how young children learn and process information in each discipline including the learning trajectories for each discipline. They apply this knowledge in using early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about spontaneous and planned teaching practices, and about curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation that will be stimulating, challenging, and meaningful to each child. Birth Through Kindergarten candidates understand the central concepts, structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry of the content areas they teach and can organize this knowledge, integrate cross-disciplinary skills, and develop meaningful learning progressions for children with unique learning needs. They understand and use general and specialized content knowledge for teaching across curricular content areas to

individualize learning for children with unique learning needs and can modify general and specialized curricula to make them accessible to all children. Indicators are as follows:

- (i) Candidates understand content knowledge and resources, including the central concepts, methods, inquiry and application tools, and structures of the academic disciplines in an early education curriculum;
 - (ii) Candidates understand pedagogical content knowledge regarding how young children with unique learning needs learn in each discipline, and how to use the teacher knowledge and practices described in Standards 1 through 4 (e.g., universal design for learning, embedded and differentiated instruction) to support young children's learning in each content area;
 - (iii) Candidates apply, expand, integrate, and update their content knowledge in the disciplines, knowledge of curriculum content resources, and pedagogical content knowledge to their teaching practice;
 - (iv) Candidates apply current research to the five developmental domains, play, temperament, and address challenging behavior in learning situations; and
 - (v) Candidates plan, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate curricula, instruction, and adaptations based on knowledge of individual children, the family, and the community.
7. Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator: Birth Through Kindergarten candidates identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession and serve as informed advocates for young children, families, and the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other early childhood professional guidelines. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early childhood education to inform their practice. They have strong communication skills that effectively support their relationships and work with young children, families and colleagues. They understand that differences are a part of families and schools, and that complex human issues can interact with the delivery of special education services. Indicators are as follows:
- (i) Candidates identify and involve themselves with the early childhood field and serve as informed advocates on behalf of infants and young children and their families, including awareness of trends and issues (legal, ethical, policy) in early childhood education, early childhood special education, and early intervention. This includes participation in activities of professional organizations relevant to early childhood education, early childhood special education, and early intervention;
 - (ii) Candidates know about the historical, philosophical foundations and legal basis of services for infants and young children with and without disabilities, and know about and uphold ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines (e.g., recognizing signs of emotional distress, neglect, and abuse; following reporting procedures; and implementing family services consistent with due process safeguards);
 - (iii) Candidates engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice;
 - (iv) Candidates integrate knowledgeable and critical perspectives on early childhood education and develop the habit of intentional, reflective practice, including, applying evidence-based and Council for Exceptional Children Division for Early Childhood

recommended practices for infants and young children including those from a variety of backgrounds;

- (v) Candidates use strong communication skills to effectively support young children's learning and development and work with families and colleagues, including integrating family systems theories into practice; and respecting families' choices and goals; and
 - (vi) Candidates advocate for professional status and working conditions for those who serve infants and young children, and their families.
8. Collaboration: Birth Through Kindergarten candidates collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in responsive ways to address the needs of all children across a range of learning experiences. They use the theory and elements of effective collaboration, serve as a collaborative resource to colleagues, and use collaboration to promote the well-being of all children across a wide range of settings and collaborators. Indicators are as follows:
- (i) Candidates know and apply models and strategies of consultation and collaboration, and the roles of families, school and community personnel in planning individualized programs;
 - (ii) Candidates understand the concerns of families of children with disabilities and strategies to help address these concerns;
 - (iii) Candidates know responsive factors that promote effective communication and collaboration among families, school personnel, and community members;
 - (iv) Candidates understand the structures supporting inter-agency collaboration, including interagency agreements, referral, and consultation;
 - (v) Candidates collaborate with caregivers, professionals, and agencies to support children's development and learning, including involving families in evaluation of services;
 - (vi) Candidates implement family-oriented services based on the family's identified resources, priorities, and concerns; and
 - (vii) Candidates provide consultation and coaching in settings serving infants and young children, including use of adult learning principles when consulting with and coaching family members and service providers.
9. Teaching of Reading, Literacy, and Language: The program shall prepare candidates to meet the Birth Through Kindergarten standards specified in GaPSC Rule 505-3-.03, FOUNDATIONS OF READING, LITERACY, AND LANGUAGE.
10. Birth Through Kindergarten Field Experiences: Field experiences and clinical practice are planned and sequenced so that Birth Through Kindergarten candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to promote the development and learning of young children across the entire developmental period of birth through kindergarten. Field experiences must occur in all three age groups (0 - 2, 3 - 4, and 5) and in at least two early childhood education program settings. Indicators are as follows:
- (i) Candidates observe and participate under the supervision of qualified professionals in a variety of settings, including Pre-K, K, licensed childcare programs, Head Start,

preschool special education, and grade levels in which children are served according to the Birth Through Kindergarten program grade bands;

- (ii) Candidates work effectively over time with children of a variety of ages, with children with varied abilities, and with children reflecting a variety of family systems;
- (iii) Candidates demonstrate ability to work effectively during full-time supervised residency and field experiences in at least two different settings, serving children of three different groups (infant/toddler: Birth-2 years; preschool/pre-k: 3-4 years, and Kindergarten: 5 years) and with varying abilities; and
- (iv) Candidates analyze and evaluate field experiences, including supervised experiences working with parents, and supervised experiences working with interdisciplinary teams of professionals.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200