



Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines

Importance of the Guidelines

- Research suggests that young children are **capable of learning** more than previously thought.
- Early learning experiences are **important in shaping the success of children.**
- Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines provide **expectations for what children should know** and be able to do based on research so that everyone who cares for young children can provide learning experiences to **prepare children for successful outcomes.**

Purpose of the Guidelines

- Improve families' and professionals' **knowledge of child development**;
- Guide families and professionals working with children in planning and implementing **developmental and learning activities**;
- Inform or guide developmental support, instruction, assessment, and intervention; and
- Provide **unifying guidelines** that are embraced by and embedded in programs and services (e.g. early care and education, home visitation, medical homes, early intervention) across the comprehensive early childhood service delivery system.

Guiding Principles

- **Inclusive of ALL children**
- Aligned with current Colorado early learning guidelines and standards including Common Core and the Head Start framework
- Ensure vertical alignment birth to age 8
- Include all early learning domains
- Build from the advances in early learning practices recently produced at the state and national levels

Messages 101

SE2

The power of the message

A message is a factual statement delivered in a persuasive way.

A message is

- Compelling/ persuasive
- Clear/ simple/ concise
- Memorable/ supported by evidence and/ or illustration

A message isn't

- Technical/jargon/acronyms
- Bland or longwinded
- The same for every audience
- Your mission statement

Why messages matter

Messages...

- Ensure you make the most essential points
- Ensure consistency across various spokespeople, agencies and communities
- Support your strategic objectives
- Help you make the most of opportunities to communicate with key audiences (and connect with their values)
- Show outcomes, not process. Show sustainable impact.
- Encourage a desired action and/ or build support over time

Strong messages are your home base

Write your own headline.

- Know what you want to say, regardless of what questions are asked
- Be prepared to answer numerous questions with answers derived from the same essential messages

Keep coming home to your message.

- “The bottom line is...”
- “Keep in mind that...”
- “The key point is...”

Audiences for The Guidelines

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Key Audiences

- Parents and caregivers
- Early childhood professionals (children birth through five)
- Kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers
- Early learning professionals
- Health care providers, home visitors and early interventionists, family educators and those who work with children and families
- Higher education personnel
- **Anyone who spends time with young children**

Messages for This Campaign

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Top Messages

1. **The early years** (from a child's birth to age eight) are **critically important** for all areas of learning and development. That means health and physical development, emotional and behavioral development, logic and reasoning, and academic development. This lays the foundation for future academic achievement and a successful and happy future for Colorado's kids.

Top Messages

2. No matter how we interact with children from birth to age eight -- whether we're experts, first-time parents, or involved friends and neighbors -- **we all can play a role** in giving kids a healthy start.
3. The Guidelines' **straightforward step-by-step directions** bring together widely embraced strategies to help children from birth to age eight develop successfully.

Top Messages

4. These are guidelines, **not rigid standards** that dictate a one-size-fits-all approach to a child's development.
5. Identifying quality childcare providers can help a caregiver **ensure their children are getting the support they need** for their development and learning.

Help Spread the Word

SE2

Are you an ambassador?

- Giving a presentation to a group outside the organization
- Participating in a coalition about your issue
- Working with community-based organizations to advance policy/ public education
- Talking with the media
- Talking with decision-makers/ testifying in a hearing

How to Be a Good Messenger

- Keep it simple
- Don't get into the weeds
- Stick to the script
- Weave the messages into what you're doing
- Remember your audience

Ways to Share the Guidelines

- Talk with people in your community about the Guidelines and why they are important.
- Reach out to your local media.
- Talk with early childhood providers, educators and service providers about the Guidelines.
- Talk with parents about the Guidelines.
- Share information about the Guidelines on social media.
- Gather stories that show families and early childhood providers using the Guidelines.

Tools to Share the Guidelines

- The new Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines website has a number of tools to help you:
 - Talking Points
 - Webinar
 - Template letter to the editor
 - Template cover letter
 - Social media content
 - Story ideas
 - Customizable materials

Customizable Materials

- EarlyLearningCO.org
 - Customizable materials are available in the Providers & Educators section