Selecting Curriculum & Instructional Assessment Tools
Prepared by ND Child Care Resource & Referral

Definition of “curriculum”
Curriculum is a set of written materials that describe a particular approach to providing learning experiences for children. Curriculum guides the decisions an adult makes about experiences provided for children including all of the following:

- The theoretical and/or research base to use as a basis for making decisions about the experiences provided for children
- The goals and objectives for children’s learning and development
- The experiences that children will have to facilitate their progress toward the goals and objectives (including specification of features of the physical environment, scheduling, specific learning activities, and adult-child interactions)
- The process through which adults plan and carry out learning experiences to facilitate children’s progress toward the goals and objectives

Guidelines for Reviewing Curriculum
When reviewing curriculum, you may want to consider the following guidelines:

1. Evidence based: The curriculum clearly demonstrates how theory and/or child development research is used as a basis for making decisions about experiences provided for children. The curriculum has materials that describe the existing research or research that is in process to demonstrate the curriculum’s positive effects on program quality or child outcomes.

2. Goals and objectives for children’s development and learning: The curriculum provides developmentally appropriate goals and objectives that align with the North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines.

3. Planning process: The curriculum includes an ongoing process for observing and documenting information related to individual children’s level of development, current skills, and interests, and then using that information to develop plans.

4. Scheduling and routines: The curriculum includes guidance on developing an age-appropriate schedule that is predictable but flexible to take advantage of “teachable moments” and is responsive to the needs of individual children. Routines such as feeding or toileting are included as an integral part of the children’s schedule and learning as age appropriate.

5. Physical environment: The curriculum describes the link between the physical environment and the goals and objectives for children’s development and learning. The curriculum provides appropriate guidance to set up the physical environment, including: room/home space arrangement; furnishings; and equipment.

6. Social –Emotional environment: The curriculum provides appropriate guidance on how adults can facilitate children’s social-emotional development through interactions; peer relationships; and guiding children’s behavior.

7. Materials and experiences: The materials and experiences used in the curriculum are
   - Linked to the goals and objectives for children’s development and learning
   - Include a variety (3 or more) of instructional formats and strategies (example: child-initiated, adult-initiated, large group, small group, activities, and learning centers).
   - Include a variety of the children’s senses (sight, touch, smell, taste, hear)
   - Play-based
   - Present concepts that are concrete and relevant to children’s everyday lives.
   - Flexible enough to promote learning in both indoor and outdoor settings
   - Support children in making choices

8. Diversity: The curriculum supports the development and learning of children from diverse backgrounds and explicitly addresses how adults can provide experiences that are culturally relevant and sensitive for children and families who reflect a variety of cultures, languages, socio-economic status, and structures.

9. Inclusion of children with varying ability levels: The curriculum includes provisions for modifications/adaptations as appropriate to include children with varying developmental/ability levels, including children with special needs, children who speak languages other than English, gifted children, etc.

10. Family involvement: The curriculum includes a plan for how adults will collaborate with families in a shared decision making process and promote two-way communication.

11. Implementation guides: The curriculum provides explanatory materials for adults to implement the curriculum. The curriculum may include resources or tools to assess the extent to which the curriculum is implemented as designed.
**Definition of “instructional assessment”**

A systematic on-going procedure to evaluate children’s progress and plan appropriate learning experiences by:

- Observing, documenting, and evaluating children’s development, knowledge, skills, behaviors, and accomplishments from naturalistic observations, supplemented with information from other sources
- Evaluating the information using early childhood or pre-kindergarten expectations, developmental guidelines, or other standards of comparison
- Providing two-way communication with families regarding children’s interests, development and learning

**Guidelines for Instructional Assessment Tools**

When reviewing instructional assessment tools, you may want to consider the following guidelines:

1. **Goals and objectives for children’s development and learning:** The instructional assessment tool provides developmentally appropriate goals and objectives that align with the North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines.

2. **Evidence-based:** The instructional assessment tool has materials that describe existing research or research that is in process to demonstrate the effectiveness of the tool. Existence of reliability and validity data is preferred.

3. **Connected to curriculum:** Designed to be linked to curriculum planning. There is an on-going process for observing and documenting information related to individual children’s level of development, current skills, and interests, and then using that information to develop plans.

4. **Uses multiple sources over time:** The instructional assessment uses multiple sources of evidence to demonstrate children’s growth and development over time. (i.e. observation notes, work samples, video, photos, recorded speech, sample art work, etc..). Procedures are included for evaluating children’s progress.

5. **Informs families of children’s growth and development:** The instructional assessment includes provisions for reporting to parents.

6. **Strength-based:** The instructional assessment allows all children to be able to show what they know and are able to do. It is flexible enough to accommodate children with disabilities, children from different cultures, and children learning English as a second language.

**Curricula and Instructional Assessments**

This list of curriculum and instructional assessment options is intended for use in child care and early learning programs serving children birth through age five. This list has been adapted from Minnesota, North Carolina, Illinois, New Jersey, Georgia, New Mexico, Tennessee, Arkansas, Michigan, Missouri, Vermont, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Alabama. **ND CCR&R does not endorse any particular curriculum or instructional assessment tool.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>婴儿/托儿所课程和评估工具（按字母顺序）</th>
<th>评估工具选项</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos</strong>&lt;br&gt;第2版修订版&lt;br&gt;教学策略Inc, 2010 <a href="http://www.teachingstrategies.com">www.teachingstrategies.com</a>&lt;br&gt;推荐使用：&lt;br&gt;• Volume 1: The Foundation&lt;br&gt;• Volume 2: Routines &amp; Experiences&lt;br&gt;• Volume 3: Objectives for Development &amp; Learning</td>
<td><strong>教学策略金</strong>&lt;br&gt;教学策略Inc, 2010 <a href="http://www.teachingstrategies.com">www.teachingstrategies.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>High Reach Learning</strong>&lt;br&gt;高接触学习Inc, 2009 <a href="http://www.highreachlearning.com">www.highreachlearning.com</a>&lt;br&gt;推荐使用：&lt;br&gt;• Reaching and Relating: A Guide for Early Learning Programs&lt;br&gt;• High Reach Curriculum for Toddlers and/or&lt;br&gt;• High Reach Curriculum for Twos</td>
<td><strong>HRL-GRO with the High Reach Learning Objectives</strong>&lt;br&gt;高接触学习Inc, 2009 <a href="http://www.highreachlearning.com">www.highreachlearning.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>High/Scope for Infants and Toddlers</strong>&lt;br&gt;高/范围Infants and Toddlers&lt;br&gt;高/范围Press, 2000 <a href="http://www.highscope.org">www.highscope.org</a>&lt;br&gt;推荐的程序使用Infant-Toddler High/Scope curriculum and the supplemental books titled:&lt;br&gt;• Tender Care and Early Learning: Supporting Infants and Toddlers in Child Care, 2nd Edition&lt;br&gt;• Multicultural Programs&lt;br&gt;• I Belong</td>
<td><strong>高/范围Infant Toddlers Child Observation Record (COR)</strong> High/Scope Press, 2000 <a href="http://www.highscope.org">www.highscope.org</a></td>
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<td><strong>Montessori Infant and Toddler</strong>&lt;br&gt;蒙台梭利Infant and Toddler&lt;br&gt;推荐教师已参加蒙台梭利培训课程以获得蒙台梭利方法的认证。&lt;br&gt;蒙台梭利培训课程提供了适当的表格来观察儿童的学习。</td>
<td><strong>蒙台梭利Scale for Infants and Toddlers</strong>&lt;br&gt;蒙台梭利早期学习，2003&lt;br&gt;www.pearsonassessments.com/haiweb/cultures/en-us/productdetail.htm?pid=PAaOunce&amp;Community=CA_Ed_AL_Early</td>
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<td><strong>Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC)</strong>&lt;br&gt;婴儿/托儿所护理项目（PITC）&lt;br&gt;WestEd <a href="http://www.pitc.org">www.pitc.org</a>&lt;br&gt;如果供应商必须完成PITC模块I - IV&lt;br&gt;与认证培训师一起完成WestEd</td>
<td><strong>The OUNCE Scale for Infants and Toddlers</strong>&lt;br&gt;蒙台梭利早期学习，2003&lt;br&gt;www.pearsonassessments.com/haiweb/cultures/en-us/productdetail.htm?pid=PAaOunce&amp;Community=CA_Ed_AL_Early</td>
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### Family or Group Child Care Curricula and Instructional Assessment Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curricula Options</th>
<th>Instructional Assessment Tool Options</th>
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| **Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care**, 2nd Edition  
Teaching Strategies Inc, 2010 [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com)  
Recommended that programs use:  
• Volume 1: The Foundation  
• Volume 2: Routines & Experiences  
• Volume 3: Objectives for Development & Learning | **Teaching Strategies Gold**  
Teaching Strategies Inc, 2010 [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com) |

### Preschool Curricula and Instructional Assessment Tools (alphabetical order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curricula Options</th>
<th>Instructional Assessment Tool Options</th>
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| **Core Knowledge**  
The Core Knowledge Foundation, 2010 [http://coreknowledge.org](http://coreknowledge.org)  
Recommended use:  
• Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence and Teacher Handbook  
• Snapshot: Implementation and Observation Checklists | **Core Knowledge Preschool Assessment Tool (CK-PAT)**  
The Core Knowledge Foundation, 2010 [http://coreknowledge.org](http://coreknowledge.org) |
| **Creative Curriculum for Preschool**, 5th Edition  
Teaching Strategies Inc, 2010 [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com)  
Recommended that programs use:  
• Volume 1: The Foundation  
• Volume 2: Interest Areas  
• Volume 3: Literacy  
• Volume 4: Mathematics  
• Volume 5: Objectives for Development & Learning | **Teaching Strategies Gold**  
Teaching Strategies Inc, 2010 [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com) |
| **High Reach Learning**  
High Reach Learning Inc, 2009 [www.highreachlearning.com](http://www.highreachlearning.com)  
Recommended use:  
• Reaching and Relating: A Guide for Early Learning Programs  
• High Reach Curriculum for Threes and/or  
• High Reach Curriculum for Pre-K | **HRL-GRO with the High Reach Learning Objectives**  
High Reach Learning Inc, 2009 [www.highreachlearning.com](http://www.highreachlearning.com) |
| **High/Scope for Infants and Toddlers**  
High/Scope Press, 2000 [www.highscope.org](http://www.highscope.org) | **High-Scope for Infant Toddlers**  
Child Observation Record (COR)  
High/Scope Press, 2000 [www.highscope.org](http://www.highscope.org) |
| **Montessori**  
Recommended that teachers have attended a Montessori training program to become certified in the Montessori approach. | Montessori training programs provide appropriate forms to use to observe children’s learning. |
| **Opening World of Learning (OWL)**  
Pearson Early Learning, 2005 [www.pearsonschool.com](http://www.pearsonschool.com)  
Recommended that full year programs have a plan to supplement or extend the curriculum, since OWL is designed for a 9 month school year. | **Work Sampling Developmental Guidelines, Preschool 3 or Preschool 4**  
Pearson Early Learning, Year [www.pearsonschool.com](http://www.pearsonschool.com) |
| **Passports: Experiences for Pre-K Success**  
High Reach Learning Inc, 2009 [www.highreachlearning.com](http://www.highreachlearning.com)  
Recommended that programs use:  
• Compass of Reaching and Relating  
  A Guide for Early Learning Programs  
• At least one set of the study/theme materials | **HRL-GRO with the High Reach Learning Objectives**  
High Reach Learning Inc, 2009 [www.highreachlearning.com](http://www.highreachlearning.com) |
| **The Project Approach**  
[www.projectapproach.org](http://www.projectapproach.org) | |
### Preschool Curricula “Bundles”

There are multiple commercially available, published curricula that do not individually represent content from all of the North Dakota Early Learning Guideline Domains, that can be “bundled” together with other curricula to establish a comprehensive curriculum and instructional assessment system.

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<th>Curricula Options</th>
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<tr>
<td>Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning</td>
<td>Work Sampling System for Preschool 3 or Preschool 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conscious Discipline by Dr. Becky Bailey</td>
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<td><a href="http://consciousdiscipline.com">http://consciousdiscipline.com</a></td>
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<td>Doors to Discovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everyday Mathematics</td>
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<td><a href="http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/teachers/pre-k/f">http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/teachers/pre-k/f</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preschool Guides</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://lhsgems.org">http://lhsgems.org</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/teachers/pre-k/f">http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/teachers/pre-k/f</a></td>
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<td>Handwriting without Tears Pre-K</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.hwtears.com/hwt">http://www.hwtears.com/hwt</a></td>
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<td>Literacy Express</td>
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### References: