THE HEAD START CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Promoting Positive Outcomes in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children 3–5 Years Old

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Head Start

This document was prepared under Contract no. HHSP233201000415G of the Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, by the Head Start Resource Center, 1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1000, Arlington, VA 22209.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of Head Start
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20024

December 2010

Dear Head Start Colleague,

I am pleased to share this revision of the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, renamed The Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework: Promoting Positive Outcomes in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children 3–5 Years Old. The changes to the revised Framework are designed to provide more clarity to the domains and domain elements of the original Framework and do not create new requirements for Head Start grantees.

The original Framework, published in 2000, was a groundbreaking document reflecting early childhood research at the time, as well as requirements of the 1998 Head Start Act. Its release created a wave of activity that focused Head Start grantees on key elements of school readiness and moved many states to develop early learning standards that mirrored elements of the Framework.

The early childhood field has changed dramatically. The population of children served by Head Start and other early childhood programs continues to grow more diverse. New research has improved our understanding of school readiness, and the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 has increased the Framework's role in Head Start programs. In addition, almost every state now has early learning standards. Also, new reporting systems have emerged at the state level and through the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) within the U.S. Department of Education. The Framework is revised in light of these realities.

We expect the revised Framework to be used by programs in curriculum and assessment decisions just as the original Framework was intended to be used. It should also continue to be used to connect child assessment data to aspects of Head Start program design, including school readiness goals consistent with state and local expectations, if appropriate. Additionally, we expect it will guide the collection of child assessment data for other early childhood reporting systems, if locally required. When used in these ways, the revised Framework will provide data for program self-assessment and promote continuous quality improvement in programs and child well-being and success.

The Office of Head Start is pleased to lead the field with this work. We hope that the revised Framework will continue to guide all programs serving 3 to 5 year old children, including children who are dual language learners and children with disabilities, on the key elements of school readiness.

Thank you for the work you do every day for children and families.

Sincerely,

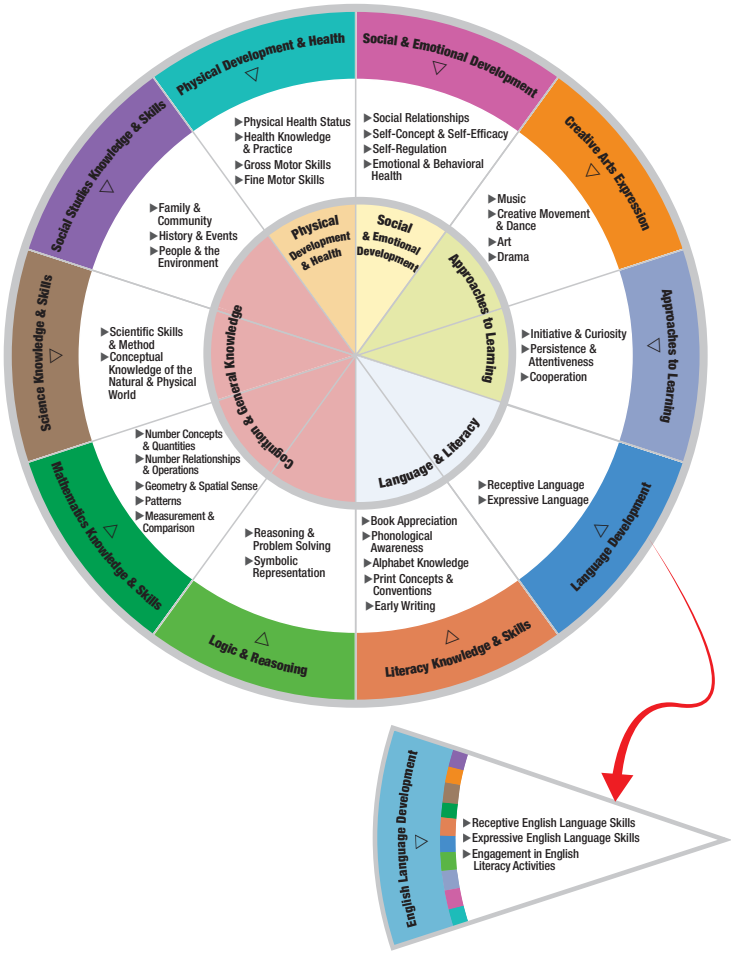
/ Yvette Sanchez Fuentes /

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes
Director
Office of Head Start

THE HEAD START CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Promoting Positive Outcomes in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children 3–5 Years Old

The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework provides Head Start and other early childhood programs with a description of the developmental building blocks that are most important for a child's school and long-term success. Head Start children, 3 to 5 years old, are expected to progress in all the areas of child development and early learning outlined by the Framework. Head Start programs also are expected to develop and implement a program that ensures such progress is made. The Framework is not appropriate for programs serving infants and toddlers. (The Framework appears below and full-size on page 6.)



THE ROLE OF *THE HEAD START CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK* IN HEAD START PROGRAMS

The Framework outlines the essential areas of development and learning that are to be used by Head Start programs to establish school readiness goals for their children, monitor children's progress, align curricula, and conduct program planning. It does not provide specific benchmarks or levels of accomplishment for children to achieve during their time in Head Start.

The Framework reflects the legislative mandates of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 and current research in child development and learning. The Framework also reflects Head Start's core value to promote all aspects of child development and learning in early childhood programs.

This Framework is a revision of the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework* that was issued in 2000. The original Framework was created to guide programs in curriculum implementation and the ongoing assessment of children's progress. However, the Head Start Act of 2007 makes the Framework significantly more prominent in the operations of programs serving 3 to 5 year olds. The Act requires programs to align program goals and school readiness goals for children to the Framework. Also, their curricula, assessments, and professional development activities are to align with the Framework. In this new context, the elements of the Framework act as beacons that guide all key aspects of Head Start program implementation.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE HEAD START CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK?

The Framework is organized into 11 **Domains**, 37 **Domain Elements**, and over 100 **Examples**. The domains and domain elements are organized in a similar way to the original Framework to facilitate a transition to the revised one.

The organization of the Framework into domains and domain elements does not imply that Head Start programs are to compartmentalize learning or learning activities, or organize the daily schedule by the specific domains. Head Start programs are to address the domains in an integrated way, using intentional instruction and scaffolded learning throughout the day. For example, dramatic play can promote language development, literacy, and math skills. And children can learn about science and social studies concepts through literacy activities, as well as through creative arts and outdoor play.

The Domains

The 11 **Domains** represent the overarching areas of child development and early learning essential for school and long-term success. The eight domains of the original Framework, listed below, are retained and in some cases renamed. The domains in the revised Framework are:

- Physical Development & Health
- Social & Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Language Development
- Literacy Knowledge & Skills
- Mathematics Knowledge & Skills
- Science Knowledge & Skills
- Creative Arts Expression

Three additional domains have been added:

- △ Logic & Reasoning
- △ Social Studies Knowledge & Skills
- △ English Language Development

While 10 of the 11 domains apply to all children, one domain—English Language Development—applies only to children who speak a language other than English at home, also referred to as children who are dual language learners.

In the Framework, each domain begins with a short definition and an explanation of why the domain is important for children's development and learning. Figure 1 on page 6 represents all the domains, indicating that they are interrelated and represent the "whole child."

The Domain Elements

Each domain includes **Domain Elements** that more specifically define its components. The domain of Science Knowledge & Skills, for example, is composed of two domain elements: Scientific Skills & Method and Conceptual Knowledge of the Natural & Physical World. The domain elements included in the original Framework have been revised, and domain elements have been created for the new domains.

The areas of child development and early learning included in the Framework are developmentally appropriate across the 3 to 5 year old age range. Children's knowledge and skills within a domain element will vary by age. For example, a 3-year-old's early writing ability may be demonstrated by scribbles and letter-like forms, whereas a 5-year-old nearing kindergarten may be writing letters, his or her name, and short words.

Additionally, within any age group, children will show variation in their abilities and skills. Some 4-year-olds may be making letter-like forms and others writing their names. Head Start programs can expect progress within each domain element, recognizing that the rate of progress and the form it takes will vary depending on factors that affect individual children.

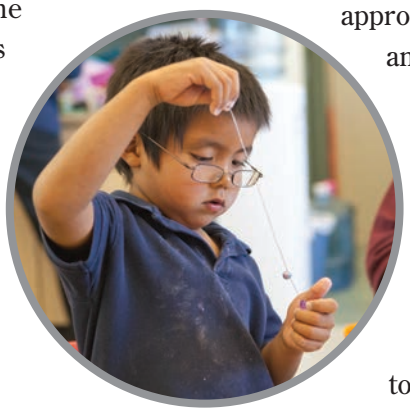
Finally, a number of domain elements in the Framework are closely associated with executive function. Although there is not a standard definition, executive function in young children is used to describe cognitive processes that support a child's ability to regulate attention and behavior and in turn, develop greater social, emotional, and cognitive competence. Executive function is believed to include inhibitory control (the ability to regulate attention and emotion), working memory (the ability to hold and manipulate information in the mind), and cognitive flexibility (the ability to shift attention and modify responses based on new situations and information).

The development of executive function lays the foundation for adaptive, goal-directed thinking and behavior that enables children to override more automatic or impulsive actions and reactions. Research suggests that executive function is strongly correlated with positive developmental and academic outcomes. The Framework does not include a separate executive function domain. However, several domain elements, such as self-regulation and attention, are closely related to executive function. Most domain elements include behaviors or skills that are affected by a child's executive functioning.

The Examples

Finally, a number of **Examples** are included under each domain element to provide more information about the key knowledge, behaviors,

or skills within each element. The examples are not designed to be comprehensive, and there may be other skills and behaviors that also reflect the respective domain element. Equally important, the examples themselves are *not* to be used to assess the progress of children on the domain elements. The Framework is not a checklist to evaluate a child's development and learning. Rather, the Framework guides the choice of assessment instruments and serves as a way to organize the data collected from those instruments.



THE ROLE OF THE FRAMEWORK IN CURRICULUM DECISIONS

A Head Start program needs to make curriculum decisions that take into account a number of factors. A program is required to use a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, research-based, and aligned to the Framework. Given that the Framework addresses all areas of child development and learning, the requirement to align is meant to ensure that Head Start programming is not narrowly focused on certain domains, or that lesser attention is paid to some domains. In fact, programs may find that curriculum adaptations or additional curricula are necessary to address all the domains or to be culturally and linguistically responsive to children, families, and communities.

Teaching needs to be intentional and focus on how preschool children learn. Investigation and exploration; purposeful, engaged play; and intentional, scaffolded instruction based on the developmental level of each child are essential elements of appropriate practice in Head Start programs. Programs conduct ongoing child assessment throughout the year to determine if instructional strategies need to be adapted to meet children's specific needs.

THE ROLE OF THE FRAMEWORK IN ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

Programs are required to choose child assessment instruments that are reliable and valid; developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate for the population served; and aligned with the Framework. Programs utilize the Framework in determining which child assessment instruments to use and which types of child data to collect. The Framework serves as a lens for analyzing data in order to understand child progress and to identify areas that need additional resources and attention. Multiple assessment tools or procedures may be needed to fully understand children's progress across all areas of child development and early learning.

USING THE FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING OF CHILDREN WHO ARE DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Children who speak a language other than English at home—recognized as dual language learners (DLLs)—represent a significant proportion of the children served in Head Start. Programs use the Framework to guide curriculum, assessment, and other programming decisions, keeping in mind that they are serving children who need to continue to develop their first language while they acquire English. Programs are to ensure that children who are DLLs progress on each of the domain elements in the Framework. Also, programs are to ensure that children have opportunities to interact and demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

At the same time, Head Start programs need

to promote the acquisition of English for children who are DLLs. The domain of English Language Development applies only to these children and contains domain elements that focus on their receptive and expressive language skills and their participation in literacy activities. Children's progress in learning English will vary depending upon their past and current exposure to English, their temperament, their age, and other factors.

Finally, when assessing children who are DLLs, staff needs to understand that the purpose of assessment is to learn what a child knows and is able to do. With the exception of assessing a child's English language development, assessment does not depend on a child's understanding or speaking abilities in English, but on the specific knowledge, skills, or abilities that the assessment measures. For example, a child can demonstrate an understanding of book knowledge or science concepts in the home language. Assessing a child who is a DLL only in English will rarely give an accurate or complete picture of what the child knows or can do.

Programs need to choose assessment instruments, methods, and procedures that use the language or languages that most accurately reveal each child's knowledge, skills, and abilities. The assessment data gathered in the home language can be used to inform instructional practices and curriculum decisions to maximize the child's learning. Programs are to use culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments to capture what children who are DLLs know and can do in all areas of the Framework.

USING THE FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Framework is designed to support the development and learning of children with disabilities. Programs are to use the Framework to support the development of a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and to guide the assessment of the child's progress. Developing the IEP is done in close collaboration with the special educators and related service providers identified on the IEP. Some children may need more individualized or intensive instruction in order to make progress on the domain elements in the Framework. Some may require accommodations in the environment or adaptive or assistive technology in order to participate in learning experiences that promote progress.

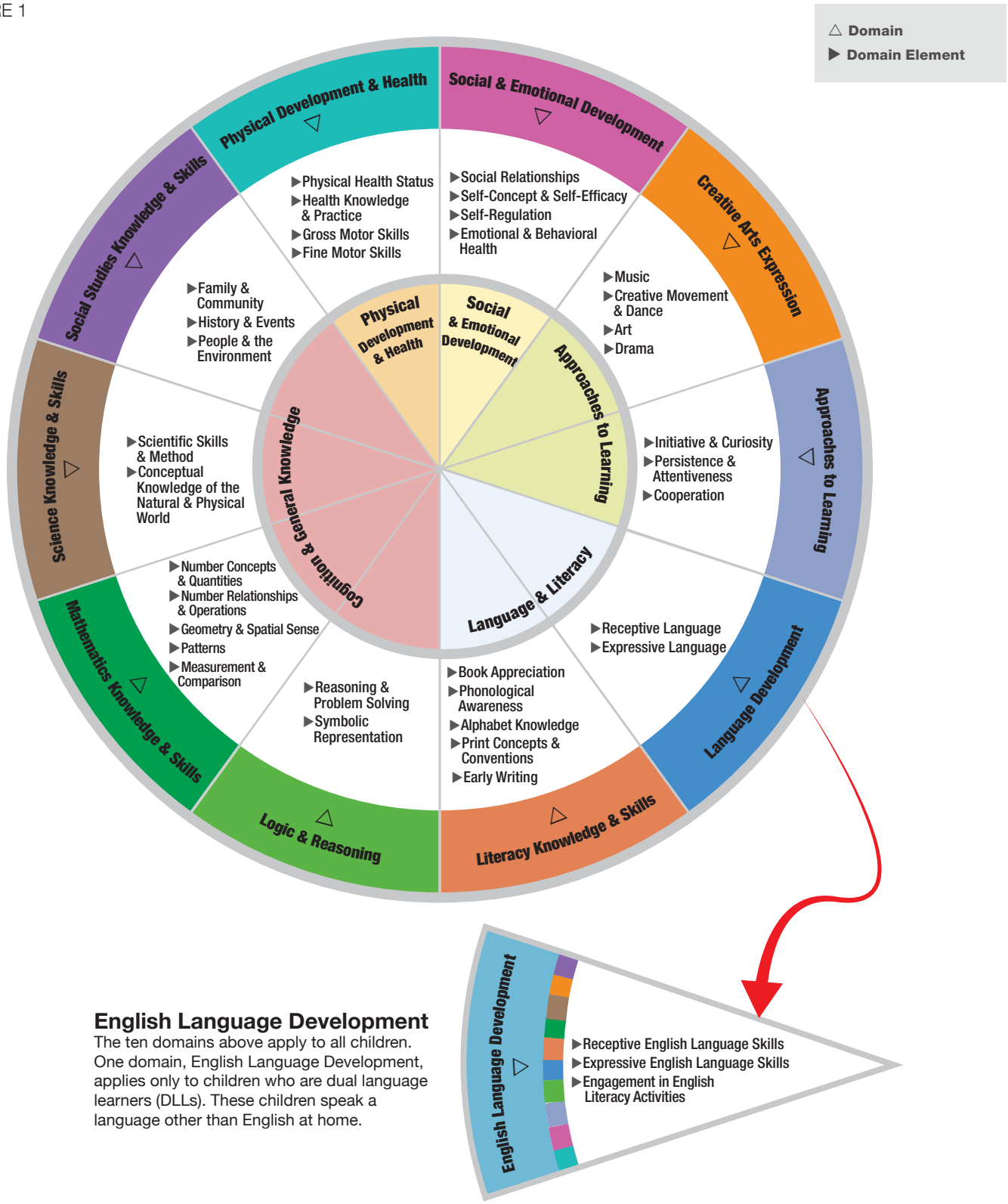
Staff needs to understand that children with disabilities can demonstrate what they know and can do in various ways. Children can make use of individual modifications or assistive technology while being assessed. In some cases, an assessment instrument may not be sensitive enough to detect small changes in development and learning, and the child may not appear to be making progress on a specific domain element. It is important to document small, incremental progress that may not be reflected on a particular assessment instrument. By monitoring the progress of children with disabilities, programs can decide if different or more intensive learning experiences and adaptations are needed.

The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

Promoting Positive Outcomes in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children 3-5 Years Old

The *Framework* represents the foundation of the Head Start Approach to School Readiness. It aligns with and builds from the five essential domains of school readiness identified by the National Education Goals Panel (see inner circle) and lays out essential areas of learning and development. The *Framework* can be used to guide curriculum, implementation, and assessment to plan teaching and learning experiences that align to school readiness goals and track children's progress across developmental domains. The domains △ and domain elements ▶ apply to all 3 to 5 year olds in Head Start and other early childhood programs, including dual language learners and children with disabilities.

FIGURE 1



English Language Development

The ten domains above apply to all children. One domain, English Language Development, applies only to children who are dual language learners (DLLs). These children speak a language other than English at home.

△PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH

Physical Development & Health refers to physical well-being, use of the body, muscle control, and appropriate nutrition, exercise, hygiene, and safety practices. Early health habits lay the foundation for lifelong healthy living. Equally important, physical well-being, health, and motor development are foundational to young children's learning. Motor skills permit children to fully explore and function in their environment, and support development in all other domains. Health problems, delays in physical development, and frequent illnesses interfere with children's ability to learn and are associated with a range of poor developmental and educational outcomes. In the domain of Physical Development & Health, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for Physical Health & Development for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ PHYSICAL HEALTH STATUS

The maintenance of healthy and age appropriate physical well-being.

- Possesses good overall health, including oral, visual, and auditory health, and is free from communicable or preventable diseases.
- Participates in prevention and management of chronic health conditions and avoids toxins, such as lead.
- Maintains physical growth within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended ranges for weight by height by age.
- Gets sufficient rest and exercise to support healthy development.

▶ HEALTH KNOWLEDGE & PRACTICE

The understanding of healthy and safe habits and practicing healthy habits.

- Completes personal care tasks, such as dressing, brushing teeth, toileting, and washing hands independently from adults.
- Communicates an understanding of the importance of health and safety routines and rules.
- Follows basic health and safety rules and responds appropriately to harmful or unsafe situations.
- Distinguishes food on a continuum from most healthy to less healthy.
- Eats a variety of nutritious foods.
- Participates in structured and unstructured physical activities.
- Recognizes the importance of doctor and dentist visits.
- Cooperates during doctor and dentist visits and health and developmental screenings.

…Continued on next page

△PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH

…Continued from previous page

▶ GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

The control of large muscles for movement, navigation, and balance.

- Develops motor control and balance for a range of physical activities, such as walking, propelling a wheelchair or mobility device, skipping, running, climbing, and hopping.
- Develops motor coordination and skill in using objects for a range of physical activities, such as pulling, throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing or hitting balls, and riding a tricycle.
- Understands movement concepts, such as control of the body, how the body moves (such as an awareness of space and directionality), and that the body can move independently or in coordination with other objects.

▶ FINE MOTOR SKILLS

The control of small muscles for such purposes as using utensils, self-care, building, and exploring.

- Develops hand strength and dexterity.
- Develops eye-hand coordination to use everyday tools, such as pitchers for pouring or utensils for eating.
- Manipulates a range of objects, such as blocks or books.
- Manipulates writing, drawing, and art tools.

△SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Social & Emotional Development refers to the skills necessary to foster secure attachment with adults, maintain healthy relationships, regulate one's behavior and emotions, and develop a healthy concept of personal identity. Positive social and emotional development provides a critical foundation for lifelong development and learning. In early childhood, social and emotional well-being predicts favorable social, behavioral, and academic adjustment into middle childhood and adolescence. It helps children navigate new environments, facilitates the development of supportive relationships with peers and adults, and supports their ability to participate in learning activities. Children with emotional or behavioral challenges are likely to receive less adult support for development and learning and to be more isolated from peers. In the domain of Social & Emotional Development, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for Social & Emotional Development for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The healthy relationships and interactions with adults and peers.

- Communicates with familiar adults and accepts or requests guidance.
- Cooperates with others.
- Develops friendships with peers.
- Establishes secure relationships with adults.
- Uses socially appropriate behavior with peers and adults, such as helping, sharing, and taking turns.
- Resolves conflict with peers alone and/or with adult intervention as appropriate.
- Recognizes and labels others' emotions.
- Expresses empathy and sympathy to peers.
- Recognizes how actions affect others and accepts consequences of one's actions.

▶ SELF-CONCEPT & SELF-EFFICACY

The perception that one is capable of successfully making decisions, accomplishing tasks, and meeting goals.

- Identifies personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts, and feelings.
- Demonstrates age-appropriate independence in a range of activities, routines, and tasks.

…Continued on next page

△SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

...Continued from previous page

- Shows confidence in a range of abilities and in the capacity to accomplish tasks and take on new tasks.
- Demonstrates age-appropriate independence in decision making regarding activities and materials.

▶ SELF-REGULATION

The ability to recognize and regulate emotions, attention, impulses, and behavior.

- Recognizes and labels emotions.
- Handles impulses and behavior with minimal direction from adults.
- Follows simple rules, routines, and directions.
- Shifts attention between tasks and moves through transitions with minimal direction from adults.

▶ EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

A healthy range of emotional expression and learning positive alternatives to aggressive or isolating behaviors.

- Expresses a range of emotions appropriately, such as excitement, happiness, sadness, and fear.
- Refrains from disruptive, aggressive, angry, or defiant behaviors.
- Adapts to new environments with appropriate emotions and behaviors.

△APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Approaches to Learning refers to observable behaviors that indicate ways children become engaged in social interactions and learning experiences. Children's approaches to learning contribute to their success in school and influence their development and learning in all other domains. Children's ability to stay focused, interested, and engaged in activities supports a range of positive outcomes, including cognitive, language, and social and emotional development. It allows children to acquire new knowledge, learn new skills, and set and achieve goals for themselves. Many early learning experts view approaches to learning as one of the most important domains of early childhood development. In the domain of Approaches to Learning, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for Approaches to Learning for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ INITIATIVE & CURIOSITY

An interest in varied topics and activities, desire to learn, creativeness, and independence in learning.

- Demonstrates flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness in approaching tasks and activities.
- Demonstrates eagerness to learn about and discuss a range of topics, ideas, and tasks.
- Asks questions and seeks new information.

▶ PERSISTENCE & ATTENTIVENESS

The ability to begin and finish activities with persistence and attention.

- Maintains interest in a project or activity until completed.
- Sets goals and develops and follows through on plans.
- Resists distractions, maintains attention, and continues the task at hand through frustration or challenges.

▶ COOPERATION

An interest and engagement in group experiences.

- Plans, initiates, and completes learning activities with peers.
- Joins in cooperative play with others and invites others to play.
- Models or teaches peers.
- Helps, shares, and cooperates in a group.

△LOGIC & REASONING

Logic & Reasoning refers to the ability to think through problems and apply strategies for solving them. Logic and reasoning skills are an essential part of child development and early learning and a foundation for competence and success in school and other environments. Children's ability to think, reason, and use information allows them to acquire knowledge, understand the world around them, and make appropriate decisions. In the domain of Logic & Reasoning, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for Logic & Reasoning for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ REASONING & PROBLEM SOLVING

The ability to recognize, understand, and analyze a problem and draw on knowledge or experience to seek solutions to a problem.

- Seeks multiple solutions to a question, task, or problem.
- Recognizes cause and effect relationships.
- Classifies, compares, and contrasts objects, events, and experiences.
- Uses past knowledge to build new knowledge.

▶ SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION

The use of symbols or objects to represent something else.

- Represents people, places, or things through drawings, movement, and three-dimensional objects.
- Engages in pretend play and acts out roles.
- Recognizes the difference between pretend or fantasy situations and reality.

△LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Language Development refers to emerging abilities in receptive and expressive language. This domain includes understanding and using one or more languages. Language development is among the most important tasks of the first five years of a child's life. Language is the key to learning across all domains. Specific language skills in early childhood are predictive of later success in learning to read and write. Also, children who are skilled communicators are more likely to demonstrate social competence. In the domain of Language Development, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for Language Development for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

The ability to comprehend or understand language.

- Attends to language during conversations, songs, stories, or other learning experiences.
- Comprehends increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
- Comprehends different forms of language, such as questions or exclamations.
- Comprehends different grammatical structures or rules for using language.

▶ EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

The ability to use language.

- Engages in communication and conversation with others.
- Uses language to express ideas and needs.
- Uses increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
- Uses different forms of language.
- Uses different grammatical structures for a variety of purposes.
- Engages in storytelling.
- Engages in conversations with peers and adults.

△LITERACY KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Literacy Knowledge & Skills refers to the knowledge and skills that lay the foundation for reading and writing, such as understanding basic concepts about books or other printed materials, the alphabet, and letter-sound relationships. Early literacy is the foundation for reading and writing in all academic endeavors in school. It is considered one of the most important areas for young children's development and learning. Early literacy learning provides children with an opportunity to explore the world through books, storytelling, and other reading and writing activities. It is a mechanism for learning about topics they enjoy and acquiring content knowledge and concepts that support progress in other domains. It is critical for supporting a range of positive outcomes, including success in school and other environments. In the domain of Literacy Knowledge & Skills, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for Literacy Knowledge & Skills for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ BOOK APPRECIATION AND KNOWLEDGE

The interest in books and their characteristics, and the ability to understand and get meaning from stories and information from books and other texts.

- Shows interest in shared reading experiences and looking at books independently.
- Recognizes how books are read, such as front-to-back and one page at a time, and recognizes basic characteristics, such as title, author, and illustrator.
- Asks and answers questions and makes comments about print materials.
- Demonstrates interest in different kinds of literature, such as fiction and non-fiction books and poetry, on a range of topics.
- Retells stories or information from books through conversation, artistic works, creative movement, or drama.

▶ PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

An awareness that language can be broken into words, syllables, and smaller pieces of sound.

- Identifies and discriminates between words in language.
- Identifies and discriminates between separate syllables in words.
- Identifies and discriminates between sounds and phonemes in language, such as attention to beginning and ending sounds of words and recognition that different words begin or end with the same sound.

Continued on next page…

△LITERACY KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

…Continued from previous page

▶ ALPHABET KNOWLEDGE

The names and sounds associated with letters.

- Recognizes that the letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.
- Recognizes that letters of the alphabet have distinct sound(s) associated with them.
- Attends to the beginning letters and sounds in familiar words.
- Identifies letters and associates correct sounds with letters.

▶ PRINT CONCEPTS & CONVENTIONS

The concepts about print and early decoding (identifying letter-sound relationships).

- Recognizes print in everyday life, such as numbers, letters, one's name, words, and familiar logos and signs.
- Understands that print conveys meaning.
- Understands conventions, such as print moves from left to right and top to bottom of a page.
- Recognizes words as a unit of print and understands that letters are grouped to form words.
- Recognizes the association between spoken or signed and written words.

▶ EARLY WRITING

The familiarity with writing implements, conventions, and emerging skills to communicate through written representations, symbols, and letters.

- Experiments with writing tools and materials.
- Recognizes that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes, such as giving information, sharing stories, or giving an opinion.
- Uses scribbles, shapes, pictures, and letters to represent objects, stories, experiences, or ideas.
- Copies, traces, or independently writes letters or words.

△MATHEMATICS KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Mathematics Knowledge & Skills refers to the conceptual understanding of numbers, their relationships, combinations, and operations. Mathematics also includes shapes and their structure; reasoning; measurement; classification; and patterns. Because math is also about generalizations and abstractions, math skills during the early years help children to connect ideas, develop logical and abstract thinking, and to question, analyze, and understand the world around them. Math knowledge, interest, and skills are basic to children's success in school and later life. Early math skills are highly predictive of later academic achievement in multiple subject areas. In the domain of Mathematics Knowledge & Skills, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for Mathematics Knowledge & Skills for 3 to 5 year-olds are:

▶ NUMBER CONCEPTS & QUANTITIES

The understanding that numbers represent quantities and have ordinal properties (number words represent a rank order, particular size, or position in a list).

- Recognizes numbers and quantities in the everyday environment.
- Recites numbers in the correct order and understands that numbers come "before" or "after" one another.
- Associates quantities and the names of numbers with written numerals.
- Uses one-to-one counting and subitizing (identifying the number of objects without counting) to determine quantity.
- Uses the number name of the last object counted to represent the number of objects in the set.

▶ NUMBER RELATIONSHIPS & OPERATIONS

The use of numbers to describe relationships and solve problems.

- Uses a range of strategies, such as counting, subitizing, or matching, to compare quantity in two sets of objects and describes the comparison with terms, such as more, less, greater than, fewer, or equal to.
- Recognizes that numbers (or sets of objects) can be combined or separated to make another number through the grouping of objects.
- Identifies the new number created when numbers are combined or separated.

Continued on next page…

△MATHEMATICS KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

…Continued from previous page

▶ GEOMETRY & SPATIAL SENSE

The understanding of shapes, their properties, and how objects are related to one another.

- Recognizes and names common shapes, their parts, and attributes.
- Combines and separates shapes to make other shapes.
- Compares objects in size and shape.
- Understands directionality, order, and position of objects, such as up, down, in front, behind.

▶ PATTERNS

The recognition of patterns, sequencing, and critical thinking skills necessary to predict and classify objects in a pattern.

- Sorts, classifies, and serializes (puts in a pattern) objects using attributes, such as color, shape, or size.
- Recognizes, duplicates, and extends simple patterns.
- Creates patterns through the repetition of a unit.

▶ MEASUREMENT & COMPARISON

The understanding of attributes and relative properties of objects as related to size, capacity, and area.

- Compares objects using attributes of length, weight and size (bigger, longer, taller, heavier).
- Orders objects by size or length.
- Uses nonstandard and standard techniques and tools to measure and compare.

△SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Science Knowledge & Skills refers to the emerging ability to gather information about the natural and physical world and organize that information into knowledge and theories. Young children are often called natural scientists. Their inclination to be curious, explore, ask questions, and develop their own theories about how the world works makes science an important domain for enhancing learning and school readiness. Science learning during the early childhood years encourages children to discover the world around them and refine their understanding of it. It provides opportunities for rich vocabulary learning and collaboration with peers. It fosters a sense of curiosity and motivation to learn. In the domain of Science Knowledge & Skills, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for Science Knowledge & Skills for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ SCIENTIFIC SKILLS & METHOD

The skills to observe and collect information and use it to ask questions, predict, explain, and draw conclusions.

- Uses senses and tools, including technology, to gather information, investigate materials, and observe processes and relationships.
- Observes and discusses common properties, differences, and comparisons among objects.
- Participates in simple investigations to form hypotheses, gather observations, draw conclusions, and form generalizations.
- Collects, describes, and records information through discussions, drawings, maps, and charts.
- Describes and discusses predictions, explanations, and generalizations based on past experience.

▶ CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE NATURAL & PHYSICAL WORLD

The acquisition of concepts and facts related to the natural and physical world and the understanding of naturally-occurring relationships.

- Observes, describes, and discusses living things and natural processes.
- Observes, describes, and discusses properties of materials and transformation of substances.

△CREATIVE ARTS EXPRESSION

Creative Arts Expression refers to participation in a range of activities that allow for creative and imaginative expression, such as music, art, creative movement, and drama. The creative arts engage children's minds, bodies, and senses. The arts invite children to listen, observe, discuss, move, solve problems, and imagine using multiple modes of thought and self-expression. The creative arts provide ways for young children to learn and use skills in other domains. In the domain of Creative Arts Expression, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements of Creative Arts Expression for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ MUSIC

The use of voice and instruments to create sounds.

- Participates in music activities, such as listening, singing, or performing.
- Experiments with musical instruments.

▶ CREATIVE MOVEMENT & DANCE

The use of the body to move to music and express oneself.

- Expresses what is felt and heard in various musical tempos and styles.
- Moves to different patterns of beat and rhythm in music.
- Uses creative movement to express concepts, ideas, or feelings.

▶ ART

The use of a range of media and materials to create drawings, pictures, or other objects.

- Uses different materials and techniques to make art creations.
- Creates artistic works that reflect thoughts, feelings, experiences, or knowledge.
- Discusses one's own artistic creations and those of others.

▶ DRAMA

The portrayal of events, characters, or stories through acting and using props and language.

- Uses dialogue, actions, and objects to tell a story or express thoughts and feelings about one's self or a character.
- Uses creativity and imagination to manipulate materials and assume roles in dramatic play situations.

△SOCIAL STUDIES KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Social Studies Knowledge & Skills refers to understanding people and how they relate to others and the world around them. Social studies helps children to understand themselves, their families, and communities. Through learning experiences related to history, culture, and the environment, children enhance their self-identity and expand their experiences beyond the walls of their home and early childhood setting. In the domain of Social Studies Knowledge & Skills, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for Social Studies Knowledge & Skills for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ SELF, FAMILY & COMMUNITY

The understanding of one's relationship to the family and community, roles in the family and community, and respect for diversity.

- Identifies personal and family structure.
- Understands similarities and respects differences among people.
- Recognizes a variety of jobs and the work associated with them.
- Understands the reasons for rules in the home and classroom and for laws in the community.
- Describes or draws aspects of the geography of the classroom, home, and community.

▶ PEOPLE & THE ENVIRONMENT

The understanding of the relationship between people and the environment in which they live.

- Recognizes aspects of the environment, such as roads, buildings, trees, gardens, bodies of water, or land formations.
- Recognizes that people share the environment with other people, animals, and plants.
- Understands that people can take care of the environment through activities, such as recycling.

▶ HISTORY & EVENTS

The understanding that events happened in the past and how these events relate to one's self, family, and community.

- Differentiates between past, present, and future.
- Recognizes events that happened in the past, such as family or personal history.
- Understands how people live and what they do changes over time.

△ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

English Language Development is the development of receptive and expressive English language skills for children who speak a home language other than English. This domain only applies to these children, often referred to as dual language learners (DLLs). Learning English lays the foundation for a successful start as children transition to public school. When children are able to understand and speak some English, they are better prepared to learn from teachers and engage with peers in English-speaking environments. Because the home language serves as a foundation for learning English, ongoing development of the home language also is essential.

Children who are DLLs typically go through several stages of English language development prior to becoming proficient. The receptive skills usually emerge before the expressive skills. There may be an extended period of time when the child understands some English but relies on the home language as well as gestures and nonverbal means to communicate. During this time, the child is attending to and listening to the English language used in the learning environment and beginning to grasp the fundamentals of the language. Gradually, the child begins to use more English words and phrases, often interspersed with the home language. Over time, the child develops more complex vocabulary and grammar, moving toward English language proficiency.

How much time this process takes will vary. It may take several months or several years, depending on the individual child, the home and school language environments, motivation, and other factors. Children will be at different stages in the process when they enter a program, and therefore, the developing path of their receptive and expressive abilities will not be the same.

The examples represent behaviors individual children may demonstrate in the process of learning English.

KEY △ = **Domain** ▶ = **Domain Element** • = **Example**

The domain elements for English Language Development for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ RECEPTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

The ability to comprehend or understand the English language.

- Participates with movement and gestures while other children and the teachers dance and sing in English.
- Acknowledges or responds nonverbally to common words or phrases, such as "hello" "good bye" "snack time" "bathroom", when accompanied by adult gestures.
- Points to body parts when asked, "Where is your nose, hand, leg…?"

Continued on next page…

△ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

...Continued from previous page

- Comprehends and responds to increasingly complex and varied English vocabulary, such as "Which stick is the longest?" "Why do you think the caterpillar is hungry?"
- Follows multi-step directions in English with minimal cues or assistance.

▶ EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

The ability to speak or use English.

- Repeats word or phrase to self, such as "bus" while group sings the "Wheels on the Bus" or "brush teeth" after lunch.
- Requests items in English, such as "car," "milk," "book," "ball."
- Uses one or two English words, sometimes joined to represent a bigger idea, such as "throwball."
- Uses increasingly complex and varied English vocabulary.
- Constructs sentences, such as "The apple is round." or "I see a fire truck with lights on."

▶ ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLISH LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Understanding and responding to books, storytelling, and songs presented in English.

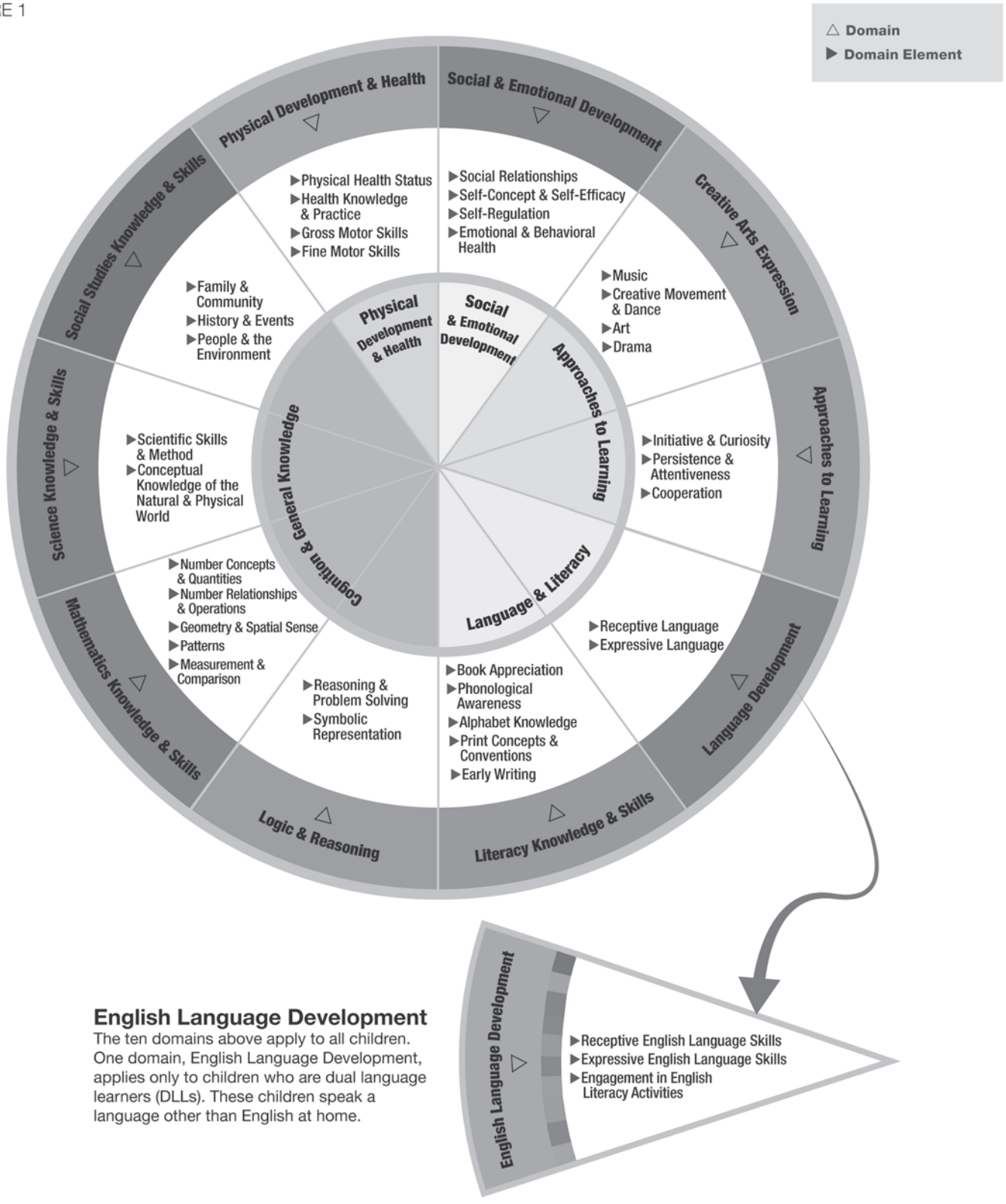
- Demonstrates eagerness to participate in songs, rhymes and stories in English.
- Points to pictures and says the word in English, such as "frog," "baby," "run."
- Learns part of a song or poem in English and repeats it.
- Talks with peers or adults about a story read in English.
- Tells a story in English with a beginning, middle, and end from a book or about a personal experience.

The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

Promoting Positive Outcomes in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children 3-5 Years Old

The *Framework* represents the foundation of the Head Start Approach to School Readiness. It aligns with and builds from the five essential domains of school readiness identified by the National Education Goals Panel (see inner circle) and lays out essential areas of learning and development. The *Framework* can be used to guide curriculum, implementation, and assessment to plan teaching and learning experiences that align to school readiness goals and track children's progress across developmental domains. The domains △ and domain elements ▶ apply to all 3 to 5 year olds in Head Start and other early childhood programs, including dual language learners and children with disabilities.

FIGURE 1



English Language Development

The ten domains above apply to all children. One domain, English Language Development, applies only to children who are dual language learners (DLLs). These children speak a language other than English at home.