Ohio Department of Education, Early Learning and School Readiness
Step Up To Quality
25 S. Front Street Columbus OH 43215

Program Resource Guidance for Step Up to Quality 1 and 2 Star Ratings
Activity Planning for Preschool and SACC

Purpose: To help program staff understand how to think about using their identified curriculum, the Early Learning and Development Standards, and assessment to design developmentally appropriate activities for children based on the program's requested star rating.

Why: Planning is an essential component for any high-quality early childhood program and shows how the classroom environment and activities are linked to curriculum implementation. Setting aside time to plan allows teachers to be more organized, prepared and accountable for implementing the curriculum in a meaningful way. Plans are a classroom roadmap of what children need to learn, how it will be done, and how it supports intentional instruction. When teachers are planning, they should have a clear understanding of curriculum expectations in order to meet identified objectives. This ensures that learning objectives are well defined, materials are available, and activities are appropriate and meaningful to children's needs, interests, learning and development. Part of curriculum expectations includes analyzing how standards are tied to specific activities and measuring the growth of your students. Planning contributes to teachers reflecting on lesson delivery and assessing the students in their care. With thoughtful and intentional planning teachers will have created an effective lesson plan that meets the developmental needs and interests of the children and is available for all to review.

Definitions: *These definitions are based on the activity plan process for Step Up to Quality*

Activity plan – The detailed written plan of daily activities, experiences and/or opportunities to support children's development. It may be called a lesson plan. Programs can build their own activity plan template, use a curriculum template, or use any form that includes all required information for the requested or desired star level. Sample form JFS 01513 is available for use.

Curriculum - A plan providing guidance on what and how to teach. It must be written, research-based, comprehensive, and aligned to the ELDS, Ohio K-12 Standards or K-12 Resources Guide. Based on ODE preschool licensing rule, 3301- 37-01-(G), "Curriculum" means an organized framework that describes those components of developmentally appropriate practice necessary to support optimum development and learning including the following: (1) classroom environment; (2) concepts and skills in all content areas and developmental domains; (3) learning experiences; (4) instructional strategies to help children achieve their goals; and (5) assessment processes to inform instruction to monitor progress.

Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) - Programs, activities, and environments that are designed based on knowledge of how children develop and learn; knowledge of the strengths, needs, and interests of individual children; and knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live.

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Domains - Term used by professionals to describe areas or categories of skills and concepts that children develop or learn over time. Domains typically include the following areas of development: social, emotional, cognitive, language and literacy, physical (large motor, fine motor, perceptual/ sensory), and creative.

Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) – Ohio's standards provide key concepts and skills that children develop from birth through age 5. The standards are appropriate no matter what kind of setting children attend.

Individual child plan – A document that may be used in place of a group activity plan at any level for each child in the class to document individual learning. It is most often used for infants and toddlers and may also be used for children with special needs. Sample form JFS 01592 is available for use.

Observation - A process used by early childhood educators to watch, listen to, and record children's actions, facial expressions, body language, sounds, words, and gestures that help teachers get to know children.

Included information Refer to Program standards and requirements	1 star	2 star
Teacher name, name of group, timeframe for plan	✓	✓
A current activity plan must be available for each group of children. An activity plan is different than a daily schedule. ***Think about****:* *- How do you access the plan during the day?* *- Do you have more than one group of students to plan for?* *- Do you have a plan for the afternoon (full-day programs)? Is it an extension of the am or additional/different than the morning?* *-For SACC programs, how do plans balance the academic emphasis of the regular school day?* ***Best practice*** *is that plans should be written ahead of time in order to be prepared each day.* *Teachers/programs set aside planning time to ensure plans are completed for the next week.*		
Planned activities, including description of the activity	✓	✓
Activities are the observable actions you see children doing. *Written information should include enough of a description to identify the actual activity and intent of the activity (i.e., "collect and classify nature items from our walk" instead of "nature walk").* ***Think about:*** *- The objective of the activity; what do you want the children to be able to do after completing the lesson?* *- How will the child(ren) be an active part of the lesson?* *- What materials and resources are needed for the activities?* *-For SACC programs, what activities are planned to support the philosophy and goals of the program, including but not limited to, academic focus, social and emotional development, recreational skills, health and safety skills, etc.* ***Best practice*** *includes changing activities on a regular basis to support children and planning a variety of activities as well as opportunities for play and child-directed activities. There should be enough information for anyone to teach any activity using the activity plan as the guide in the classroom.*		

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Included information (Continued) Refer to Program standards and requirements	1 star	2 star
Plan reflects current activities in the classroom for all hours of instructional time	✓	✓
Classroom evidence/environment should match activities described on the current and/or previous activity plan(s) (i.e., Art work and materials on the wall, centers set up, books in the library, etc.). ***Think about:*** *- Would anyone who comes into your classroom have a clear understanding of children's interests and learning?* *- Is the environment set up to support the instructional time and documented on the plan?* *-For SACC programs, are the morning activities different from the afternoon activities?* ***Best practice*** *is to use the activity plan as a working document to note changes in activities, extended activities, and reflections. A schedule and plan should allow for flexibility.*		
Plan supports learning and development for all children in the program	✓	✓
Activity plans provide activities that are developmentally appropriate and demonstrate how activities meet the needs of children in the class. *Teachers should use information collected from families, observations, and interests of the children to inform the activity plan.* ***Think about****:* *- How are the developmental and educational needs of the children in the class and the learning that needs to occur reflected?* *- Does your program have a system in place to collect observations used to support child development and document children's interests; how are those observations used to create activities?* ***Best practice*** *is to plan developmentally appropriate activities that build on current child development to help them reach their goals. Activities provided should be age appropriate and include all developmental domains. Teachers consider how children learn best, use reflection and notes from the previous week and student interests to plan.*		
Activities are aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards or K-12 standards and identified curriculum		✓
The standards listed on the activity plan should be directly related to the current activities being implemented. Coding can be used to show alignment (e.g., letters, numbers, colors, etc.) with a key to indicate the code used. ***Think about****:* *- What standards are taught directly during the activity?* *- How can you use the ELDS or K-12 standards to inform planning?* *- How often do you reflect upon the standards being used; are there standards used more often; or do you have a system for ensuring you are using all standards at some point?* *- If you have adopted a curriculum, have the teachers read the alignment tool for a better understanding of how the curriculum is aligned to the standards?* *- What changes might need made in the environment, routines, interactions, and planned learning opportunities to support the standards and children's development?*		