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 3, 4, & 5 Star Ratings
Activity Planning for Preschool

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 Early Learning and Development Standards. 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.

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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.

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.

Learning progression – A defined series or developmental pathway of skills, knowledge, or behaviors; a continuum of a specific area of development.

Scaffolding – A strategy for supporting a child's development and learning by offering just the right help at just the right time in just the right way to allow the child to solve a problem or carry out a task that is beyond his or her current abilities. Teachers provide assistance and/or add support to enable each child to master a challenge just beyond his or her current level. The teacher gradually reduces the support as the child is able to proceed independently.

Included information Refer to Program standards and requirements	3 star	4/5 star
<u>**Teacher name, name of group, timeframe for plan**</u>	✓	✓

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 extention of the am or additional/different than the morning?

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.

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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?

Best practice *includes changing activities on a regular basis to support children, and planning a variety of activities as well as opportunites 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.*

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 as part of the instructional time and should be documented in the plan?

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 demonstrates 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?

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Best practice is to plan developmentally appropriate activities that build on current child development to help him or her 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 the Early Learning and Development 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 and curriculum objectives are taught directly by the activity?
- How can I use the ELDS 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?
- Have the teachers read the alignment tool for a better understanding of how the curriculum is aligned to the standards and assessment?
- What changes might need made in the environment, routines, interactions and planned learning opportunities to support the standards and curriculum?

Planning process includes alignment to standards, curriculum, and assessment | ✓ | ✓

If using more than one curriculum, documentation for each curriculum must be included. A code (e.g., color, letters, numbers) can be used to show alignment to the different curricula.
Lead teacher must be able to explain the process covering all developmental domains for curriculum and assessment.

Think about
- How do the standards align to the curriculum and how does the program assesses each standard?
- How do you include assessment in activity planning can help keep track of what has been assessed, and any adjustments or groupings that need created?
- How are the individual child goals incorporated in weekly plans?
- What documentation supports the planning process?
- What tools do you use to plan overall lessons? How is it incorporated in your activity plan?

Best practice is that teachers should show adjustments for groupings of children based on developmental level and assessment information (e.g., AM vs. PM, small group, etc.) considering the learning progressions that children typically follow.

Best practice is that the standards and curriculum framework is referred to along with what teachers know about the children's knowledge, interests, progress, languages, and learning needs in order to plan activities and any curriculum tools the teacher uses.

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Intentional and purposeful activities/experiences should be noted for a group or individual child based on needs, interests, or abilities for all hours of instructional time		✓

Adaptations noted, child names/initials included in activity, all domains included.
Code for groups of students or different standards for a specific activity.
Taking into account all areas of development of the children, including individual needs of the children in each group.
If not noted on the activity plan, supporting documentation would be reviewed to show purposeful planning for all children.

Think about
- How do you ensure that activities meet individual children's developmental, educational needs and interests?
- Which group(s) of children are the focus for the week or activity?
- How is the staff scaffolding to provide the right level of support for each child to be more successful?
- Do you have a system or way track to ensure you are meeting children's individual needs?
- What observations are used to show how the children learn best?
- Do you have a specific standard/objective/child's observed need in mind when planning and/or implemeting the activity?

Best practice *is to note child interests and/or individualization on the activity plan by noting child's initials next to a specific activity, note reflection or observation to adjust activity, or code for groups of students.*

Make, adjust and refine activities based on assessment results		✓

Note which students an activity or small group is created for based on assessment results.
Note reflection or observation on current or previous activity plan to adjust activity.
Use assessment results, child interest, and developmental/educational goals to plan activities (e.g., adjust students in the small group or adjust the activity based on assessment results).

Think about
- How do you use reflections from previous lessons (i.e., What worked and what didn't work)?
- How can the staff provide scaffolding to help children build knowledge and master skills?
- Which students need grouped based on informal and formal assessment information?
- How do you reflect on what assessments were completed and what needs to happen next?
- How do you use the assessment results you collected?
- How are individual child goals assessed and adjusted to monitor progress?

Best practice *is to use the activity plan as a working document and note what changes need made based on assessment results (e.g., Did you have to change anything in the moment? Did you extend learning or have to make it easier? What will happen next?).*

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