Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) Overview
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I. Background
Background

Georgia’s background:

- Pioneered efforts to improve the availability and quality of early childhood education
- Adopted high quality early learning and development standards to provide a solid foundation for the early childhood education system and services:
  - Georgia Pre-K Content Standards – Pre-K
  - Georgia Early Learning Standards – 0-3
  - Georgia Performance Standards – K-12
  - Common Core Performance Standards - K-12
Background

Georgia’s Background:

- 2010 - American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding became available
- Common Core Georgia Performance Standards were under development for K-12
- Revision of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework was underway

End Goal: One set of standards for birth – age 5 called the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards (GELDS) seamlessly aligned with the K-12 standards.
Background

Georgia’s Considerations:

• How to increase the quality and rigor and improve alignment?

• How to strengthen early learning programs and create durable linkages between standards, curriculum, and assessment that would help with transitioning children to the K-3rd grade years?

• How to come to consensus within our agency?
  ▪ Developmental vs. Disciplinary Content?
  ▪ How to honor the learning and development of young children while building a bridge to Kindergarten?
II. Research Process
Research Process

• Georgia explored what other states had done
  ▪ Pennsylvania, a state that had undergone a similar revision

• Commissioned top experts in the field
  ▪ Catherine Scott-Little, Ph.D, from University of North Carolina-G
Research Process

The research team conducted a sophisticated analysis of the following documents:

- Georgia’s Pre-K Content Standards
- Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELS) for birth through age three
- Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) for Kindergarten-3rd Grade
- Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCDELF)
- Work Sampling System (WSS)
Research Process

The research team asked the following questions regarding CONTENT and RIGOR:

What content has been addressed in the GELS, the Pre-K Content Standards, and the CCGPS for K-3?

Are some domains emphasized more in one document (i.e., age group) than in another?
Do the documents emphasize the different domains sufficiently?
Does the level of difficulty of indicators in the documents match?
Do the documents represent a general progression of difficulty across age/grade levels?
Research Process

The research team asked the following questions regarding VERTICAL ALIGNMENT:

To what extent are the three-year-old GELS, the Pre-K Content Standards, and the Kindergarten CCGPS aligned?

To what extent are the GELS aligned across the age levels from birth through three?

To what extent are Georgia’s Kindergarten through 3rd grade CCGPS aligned across the grade levels?
Research Process

The research team asked the following questions regarding HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT:

To what extent are Georgia’s Pre-K Content Standards aligned with the Work Sampling System?

To what extent are Georgia’s Pre-K Content Standards aligned with the Head Start Framework?
III. The Findings and Recommendations
The Findings

• Developmental/Disciplinary Content:
  ▪ The GELS were more developmental
  ▪ Pre-K Content Standards were more disciplinary

• Areas that need attention:
  ▪ Approaches toward Learning (GELS/Pre-K)
  ▪ Cognitive Processes (GELS/Pre-K)
  ▪ Specific Areas (GELS: early literacy; Pre-K: relationships with peers and adults)

• Age Appropriateness and rigor:
  ▪ GELS: Some standards need a progression in difficulty
  ▪ Pre-K: Need more rigor in some areas
Recommendations

• Consider aligning developmental and disciplinary orientations more closely.

• Consider developing common domains across the standards.

• Consider adding a domain that addresses approaches toward learning in the Pre-K Content Standards.

• Consider adding standards and indicators to address English language development and cognitive thought processes across the GELS and Pre-K standards.
Recommendations

• Focus on alignment across the ages, so that all indicators build on those that have preceded them and build toward those that follow.

• Consider the Head Start Framework and the Work Sampling Assessment and the degree to which revised standards should comport with them.

• Consider the Common Core Standards and the degree to which revised Georgia standards should comport with them.
IV.
The Revision Process
The Revision Process

- Formed a revision team of about 40 stakeholders:
  - Pre-K Specialists, DOE Specialists, Head Start representatives, Pre-K teachers, Infant/Toddler teachers, Infant/Toddler specialists, University professors, Inclusion specialists, Technical college instructors
  - Group convened in July 2010 for 3 days under the leadership of both Kagan and Scott-Little.

- Completed a draft of the new Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) for review
The Revision Process

• Feedback was positive and most of the researchers’ recommendations from the last review involved only the indicators

• The actual domains, sub-domains, strands, standards, and age-appropriate indicators were in place by early 2011

• Next step was to take the researchers’ new recommendations and start making final revisions to the GELDS

• Internal GELDS revision team made these revisions

• Team included members of each division of the agency: Pre-K, Infant/Toddler, Inclusion, Child Care Services, and Nutrition
The Revision Process

Where we are now:

• Revised GELDS and indicators were submitted back to the researchers on November 1, 2012
• The second of three deliverables from the research team came in early January 2013.
  ▪ They conducted an age/balance analysis on the GELDS to determine how well-balanced the revised standards are across all domains (age groups)
• The final deliverable will be an analysis of our new standards with the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for Kindergarten
The Revision Process

Where we are now:

Standards:
GELDS

Curriculum
Curriculum review starting this Spring

Assessment
Working with Pearson to collaborate on revision of WSO indicators
GELDS: Language Review

**DOMAIN**
Large, overarching category or discipline

**SUB-DOMAIN**
A smaller grouping within a Domain; Only found in Cognitive Development Domain

**STRAND**
A grouping of similar standards within a Learning Domain or Sub-Domain

**STANDARD**
A general statement of knowledge within a Strand

**INDICATORS**
Specific, measurable, and observable statements under each standard that are used to assess the skills children should demonstrate

**EXAMPLES**
Ideas of appropriate activities to build the skills for each indicator
The GELDS have 5 domains of learning:

- **Physical Development and Motor Skills (PDM)**
  - Health and Well Being
  - Use of Senses
  - Motor Skills

- **Social and Emotional Development (SED)**
  - Developing a Sense of Self
  - Self-Regulation
  - Developing a Sense of Self with Others

- **Approaches to Play and Learning (APL)**
  - Initiative and Exploration
  - Attentiveness and Persistence
  - Play

- **Communication, Language, and Literacy (CLL)**
  - Receptive Language (Listening)
  - Expressive Language
  - Early Reading
  - Early Writing

- **Cognitive Development (CD)**
  - Sub-Domains:
    - Math
    - Social Studies
    - Science
    - Creative Development
    - Cognitive Processes
GELDS Structure:

Learning Domain:
Communication, Language, and Literacy - CLL
(Strand 3 - Early Reading)

Standard CLL6:
The child will develop early phonological awareness (awareness of the units of sound).

Age-Appropriate Indicators

- **CLL6.0a**
  - Listens to simple rhymes and chants
  - 0-12 months

- **CLL6.1a**
  - Participates in rhyming games
  - 12-24 months

- **CLL6.2a**
  - Orally experiments with rhyming words
  - 24-36 months

- **CLL6.3a**
  - Identifies and produces rhyming words with adult guidance.
  - 36-48 months

- **CLL6.4a**
  - Identifies and produces rhyming words.
  - 48-60 months (Pre-K)
V. Roll Out Plan
Welcome to The Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)

The GELDS are the product of an alignment study and revision project that began in 2010. The project stemmed from the need for higher-quality standards for birth through age 5 and a better alignment with the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) for K-12. The GELDS will take the place of the Georgia Early Learning Standards for birth through three and the Pre-K Content Standards.

The purpose of the GELDS is to outline what children should know and be able to do before kindergarten entry. These research-based standards should be used to guide teachers, parents, and all practitioners in the intentional integration of developmental knowledge with the skills and concepts children need to make progress in all learning areas.

This website serves as a portal for information and resources related to the GELDS. We welcome your comments and feedback as we approach the final stages of completion.

GELDS Website:

www.gelds.decal.ga.gov
GELDS Roll Out:

- **Spring 2013:**
  - Produce webinars with teacher modeling footage/interviews across the state.
  - Develop GELDS training modules.
  - GELDS posted for public comment on www.gelds.decal.ga.gov

- **Conduct Focus Groups**

- **June 2013:** GELDS finalized with learning-in-action examples

- **Fall 2013:** Roll-out with support and professional development

- **Fall 2014:** Full implementation
VI. Feedback
GELDS Feedback: Please take some time in your groups to respond to the following questions.

1. What are your initial thoughts/feedback about the new GELDS?
2. How are you currently using early learning standards?
3. How do you use standards to individualize instruction?
4. What types of resources would be helpful for special education preschool teachers to go along with the GELDS?
5. What types of GELDS training would be most effective/helpful as we roll out the GELDS?
VII. Questions/Comments

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
Contact Information:

Laura Evans, Ed.S.
DECAL Standards Coordinator
Laura.Evans@decal.ga.gov
(404) 656-4711

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