

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: More at Four Pre-kindergarten Curricula Recommendations

Type of Executive Summary:

- Action
- Action on First Reading
- Discussion
- Information

Policy Implications:

- Constitution _____
- General Statute # _____
- SBE Policy # _____
- SBE Policy Amendment
- SBE Policy (New)
- APA # _____
- APA Amendment
- APA (New)
- Other More at Four Guidelines and Requirements

Presenter(s): Mr. John Pruette (Executive Director, Office of School Readiness)

Description:

More at Four, the state-funded pre-kindergarten program housed within the Office of School Readiness, requires the use of a research-based curriculum in all funded classrooms across the state. In an effort to define an approved list of curricula from which programs must choose, the Office of School Readiness convened a Curricula Review Committee to conduct a thorough analysis of all pre-kindergarten curricula submissions. The resulting recommendations of the Committee are submitted for State Board approval and subsequent inclusion in the More at Four Guidelines and Requirements for the 2009-2010 school year.

Resources:

State

Input Process:

Expert committee with representation from Institutes of Higher Education, Community Colleges, Department of Public Instruction, independent research organizations, preschool teachers and program directors

Stakeholders:

More at Four programs, families and children to be served

Timeline For Action:

This item is being presented to the State Board for discussion in August and approval in September.

Recommendations:

The State Board is asked to approve a list of curricula for use in More at Four classrooms across the state. The list will become effective in the 2009-10 program year.

Audiovisual equipment requested for the presentation:

- Data Projector/Video (Videotape/DVD and/or Computer Data, Internet, Presentations-PowerPoint preferred)
Specify: _____
- Audio Requirements (computer or other, except for PA system which is provided)
Specify: _____
- Document Camera (for transparencies or paper documents – white paper preferred)

Motion By: _____ **Seconded By:** _____
Vote: Yes _____ No _____ Abstain _____

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Postponed _____ Revised _____

*Person responsible for SBE agenda materials and SBE policy updates: Jamie Woodlief, 919-981-5300

North Carolina Curriculum Review Committee
Definition and Criteria for Curricula

A curriculum is a written set of materials that provides an integrated framework to guide decisions adults make about experiences provided for children and includes the following:

- a theoretical, philosophical and/or research basis to guide the approach to nurturing and facilitating children’s development
- goals and objectives for children’s learning and development that the curriculum seeks to foster
- experiences that will be provided to support diverse learners and facilitate each child’s progress toward the expressed goals and objectives (including features of the physical environment, scheduling, specific experiences, and adult-child interactions)
- a process through which adults will plan and implement experiences to facilitate each child’s progress toward the goals and objectives, including avenues for collaboration with families and members of the larger community to guide decisions made about children’s experiences
- a means to assure that the environment, activities and interactions children experience are appropriate for individual children by collecting on-going information on individual children that is used to gauge how each child is making progress toward the curriculum’s stated goals and objectives for children’s development and learning, and to plan experiences that facilitate individual children’s growth and development.

Curricula submitted to the committee would be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- 1) **Evidence based:** The curriculum must articulate a theoretical and/or research-base for the approach and clearly demonstrate how the curriculum utilizes the theory and/or research as a basis for making decisions about experiences provided for children. The curriculum may also have empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum collected with sound research methodology.
- 2) **Planning process:** The curriculum must have a process to guide adults in making decisions about experiences provided for children. The curriculum describes the intent or developmental goals of given experiences and the environment. The curriculum includes an on-going process for observing and documenting information related to individual children’s level of development, current skills, and interests, and using that information to develop plans. Experiences provided for children should be derived from each child’s needs, abilities and interests with appropriate teacher/caregiver input and facilitation. The curriculum should include plans for a variety of types of experiences and activities, including large group, small group, individual, child-initiated, and teacher-initiated activities.

- 3) **Areas of children’s development and learning:** The curriculum must include a balance of experiences that address all areas of children’s development and learning—physical, social and emotional, approaches toward learning, language and communication, and cognitive development and general knowledge, integrating content areas such as early literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, creative arts, and technology as appropriate for the age of children in the group. Preschool curricula must provide opportunities for children to develop the knowledge, behaviors, and competencies defined in North Carolina’s early learning standards.
- 4) **Scheduling and routines:** The curriculum must include a schedule that is age appropriate, predictable but flexible, and responsive to the needs of individual children. The schedule must include an appropriate balance of teacher/caregiver initiated and child-initiated experiences, and large blocks of time for play and exploration with appropriate facilitation from the adult. Routines such as feeding and toileting should be age appropriate and included as an integral part of children’s experiences.
- 5) **Physical environment:** The curriculum must provide appropriate guidance for teachers and caregivers on the physical environment, including guidance on room/home space arrangement, furnishings, equipment, and other aspects of the physical environment that reflects an understanding of child development and supports children’s learning and development.
- 6) **Social environment:** The curriculum must provide appropriate guidance on how teachers/caregivers can facilitate children’s social-emotional development, including guidance on adult-child interactions, promoting children’s peer relationships, and managing children’s behavior.
- 7) **Materials and experiences:** The materials and experiences used in the curriculum must be appropriate for the age and developmental level of children targeted and should include both child-directed and teacher/caregiver-directed activities. They should be engaging for children, play-based, and present concepts that are concrete and relevant to children’s everyday experiences. The materials and experiences should be flexible enough to promote each child’s development and learning in both indoor and outdoor settings, and provide a variety of experiences that support children in making choices, exploring and demonstrating independence. Materials and experiences must be free of bias, violent and otherwise unacceptable content.
- 8) **Diversity:** The curriculum should support the development and learning of children from diverse backgrounds and explicitly address 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 diverse developmental/ability levels:** The curriculum should include provisions for modifications/adaptations as appropriate to include children with varying developmental/ability levels, including children with disabilities, children who speak languages other than English, gifted children, etc.

- 10) **Family involvement:** The curriculum must include a plan for how teachers/caregivers will collaborate with families in a shared decision-making process and promote two-way communication between teachers/caregivers and families. Collaboration with families should be an integral part of the curriculum at the classroom/group level, and families should be included as collaborators in planning individualized experiences for their own children.
- 11) **Implementation guides:** Curricula must provide adequate and appropriate explanatory materials for adults to support implementation of the curriculum. The materials should include guidance on the how to set up the environment, how to plan individualized and group instruction, how to implement activities, and how to interact with children. The curriculum may include resources or tools that facilitate teacher/caregivers' ability to assess the extent to which they are implementing the curriculum as it is designed.

The following DRAFT Guidelines include the seven curricula being recommended to the State Board of Education for approval.

DRAFT

D. Instructional Components and Standards

Early Learning Standards

Local More at Four programs are expected to provide developmentally appropriate, high-quality pre-kindergarten experiences for children. Such experiences are supported by *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success*. These expectations define the areas of child growth and development that should be the focus of daily activities. See <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/success/downloads/foundations.pdf>

Curricula for More at Four Pre-K Programs

Curricula and daily activities are the tools used by instructional staff to provide opportunities for children's learning as described in the widely held expectations of *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success*.

Curricula that have been reviewed and approved for use include:

- [The Creative Curriculum for Preschool \(fourth edition, 2002\)](#)
- [Educating Young Children: Active Learning Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs \(second edition 2002\)](#)
- [Empowered Child \(copyright 2005\)](#)
- [Explorations with Young Children: A Curriculum Guide from the Bank Street College \(copyright 1992\)](#)
- [LifeSmart \(copyright 2005\)](#)
- [Opening the World of Learning \(copyright 2005\)](#)
- [Passports \(copyright 2007\)](#)