

Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) Curriculum Guidance for Programs Serving 4-Year-Old Children



A checklist resource developed by the California Department of Education Early Education Division to help Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) programs choose developmentally appropriate curricula for 4-year-old children

How Should UPK Instructional Time Be Spent?

Learning Stems from Play: Considerations for Implementing UPK Instructional Time

Learning thrives in an environment that celebrates and affirms cultural and linguistic diversity, actively combats racism and pursues equity, embraces inclusion and promotes belonging for each and every child.



Our youngest learners thrive when at least 50% of instructional time relies on child-directed playful learning activities, such as those that occur in learning centers, with the remaining time spread across educator-guided or -directed playful learning activities, such as those available through whole group or small group contexts.

Introduction

In alignment with principles of the Science of Learning and Development (SoLD), children's experiences in the year before kindergarten should be developmentally appropriate and informed in content, instructional contexts, and instructional strategies. There are very few curricula that pay sufficient attention to all important domains of development for 4-year-old children, so your UPK program will likely need to comprise a combination of curricula and other learning activities and instructional approaches.

When choosing a curriculum or combination of curricula, you should ensure that there are opportunities to connect learning topics to student experience and culture, support conceptual understanding and motivation for learning, integrate social-emotional skills across content areas, and develop metacognitive abilities. These goals are best achieved through a combination of child-directed play with accompanying teacher-guided activities, where developing home language skills and building social-emotional competencies in both indoor and outdoor settings are the foundation of a child's learning experience (See *Learning Stems from Play* graphic). The presence of play does not mean there is an absence of meaningful learning and academic rigor to best prepare children for kindergarten. Creating intentional opportunities for play can spark joy, creativity, and interest in learning, *and* help children build the foundational skills in math, social-emotional, language, literacy, science, and other key skills needed to thrive in school and beyond.

This UPK Curriculum Guide is not meant to be prescriptive, nor an exhaustive description of the components of curriculum that are appropriate for 4-year-olds. Instead, we hope this guide helps you ensure developmentally appropriate and informed instruction in the skills and topics included (e.g., content areas), the format or the "how" learning opportunities are offered to children (e.g., instructional contexts), and the strategies used to develop critical thinking skills, scaffold individual children's knowledge and skill-building, and instill inclusivity and love for learning (e.g., instructional strategies).

As a disclaimer, this curriculum guide is not mandatory for CDE UPK programs; it is meant solely as guidance. If you operate a TK program, please reference *Education Code* Section 48000 (d) and (f) for specific curriculum requirements. And if you operate a California State Preschool Program, please reference Section 17703 of the *California Code of Regulations*, Title 5.

Additionally, this resource guide is not an exhaustive list of elements in a curriculum, nor is it a list of instructional resources for a UPK classroom more broadly. For example, the following are important to include in a UPK program approach, but are **not** a part of this resource:

- Guidance on physical materials or the set-up of the classroom environment to implement the curriculum
- Guidance on classroom routines and best practices for classroom management to support the implementation of a curriculum
- Guidance on family engagement activities or practices to reinforce curriculum learning goals in the home
- Guidance on achieving fidelity of implementation of the curricula, professional development, and teacher planning and reflection time
- Rich guidance on supporting multilingual learners and children with disabilities (this resource includes some guidance)

As you consider each item on this checklist, ask yourself, do the curricula I am implementing or plan to implement cover these components?

Curriculum Component 1 - Developmentally Informed Content:

It is important to support the development of all nine domains in the *California Preschool/TK Learning Foundations (PTKLF¹)*: Social Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Physical Development, Health, Visual & Performing Arts, Mathematics, Language & Literacy (including English Language Development), Science, and History-Social Science. While all domains of the PTKLF are important to integrate into children's UPK experience, a curriculum for 4-year-old children should place a major emphasis on evidence-based instruction in math, language, literacy, as well as integrated topics and activities that strengthen social-emotional learning. Throughout this checklist you will see references to other domains of the PTKLF integrated across different activities and contexts.

¹ The PTKLF will be released in early 2024

Element 1. Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning is the foundation of a UPK program experience (see *Learning Stems from Play* graphic). Opportunities for social-emotional learning may occur at designated times of the UPK program day, but ideally they are integrated across the curriculum to allow more opportunities to practice social-emotional skills across various settings and situations.

A UPK program should include social-emotional learning topics in ongoing units of study, books, or group discussions that emphasize the following:	
<p>Celebrating identity <i>Including opportunities for children to strengthen their self-awareness, reflect on aspects of their own identity—such as race, culture, and unique strengths and abilities—as well as develop recognition of similarities and respect of differences between themselves and others.</i></p>	Check if curricula includes:
<p>Strengthening emotional intelligence <i>Including opportunities to practice recognizing basic and complex emotions in oneself and others through real-life examples, as well as fictional books, puppet shows, or other story-telling experiences.</i></p>	
<p>Modeling emotion regulation and co-regulation <i>Including teacher modeling of emotion regulation that provides and demonstrates strategies to identify and cope with emotions and behaviors caused by stress or other related reactions in the classroom.</i></p>	
<p>Exercising social problem-solving skills <i>Including teacher modeling and reinforcement of how to resolve conflict during play, such as cooperation techniques, strategies for sharing, trading or taking turns, recognizing how actions affect others, showing remorse, and brainstorming solutions.</i></p>	
<p>Demonstrating empathy <i>Including teacher modeling and reminders of how to respond to others' distress and needs with care, such as providing comfort and identifying supports, whether in the classroom or through a story, like a book or puppet show.</i></p>	

Element 2. Language and Literacy Learning

Strengthening home language skills is another foundational element of a UPK program experience (see *Learning Stems from Play* graphic). While not every teacher will be able to speak the home language of every student, it is important to identify curricula, instructional practices, or community partners (e.g., volunteers) that can embed the linguistic variability of students in your community. And if more than a third of students share the same non-English home language in a classroom, it is highly recommended that a bilingual lead or assistant teacher is hired to provide instruction and support in this language.

<p>A UPK program should include a specific language and literacy curriculum that details the scope and sequence of how to teach foundational literacy skills aligned with the science of literacy <i>and</i> provides opportunity for participation in a language-rich environment that includes the following:</p>	
<p>Building vocabulary <i>Including specific discussions or modeling of how to use a variety of words, including advanced vocabulary for objects, actions, and attributes experienced in the classroom throughout the school day during play and during story time, with connections to children’s home language(s) when possible.</i></p>	<p>Check if curricula includes:</p>
<p>Increasing awareness of grammatical structures <i>Including modeling how to use common and less common word forms and sentence forms to express complex thoughts and ideas</i></p>	
<p>Advancing phonological awareness skills <i>Including opportunities for children to practice both isolating the first sound of a word and blending sounds, such as in a verbal sound substitution song, game, or word play</i></p>	
<p>Increasing knowledge of the alphabet and word and print recognition <i>Including repeated exposure to uppercase and lowercase letters, the sounds letters can represent, and exposure to recognizing some</i></p>	

<p><i>common words in the child’s environment, such as their name or other words that are meaningful to them</i></p>	
<p>Ample opportunity to practice comprehension of text <i>Including opportunity to engage in book read-alouds where children listen and are encouraged to identify key points in a story, describe characters, retell the story, and make predictions, connections and inferences</i></p>	
<p>Introducing key elements of writing <i>Including the opportunity to practice holding writing tools to develop fine motor skills, ongoing opportunity to practice writing letters and the child’s own name, and prompting the child to engage in oral storytelling where the teacher can assist by taking dictation of the child’s thoughts on paper.</i></p>	
<p>The language and literacy curriculum should also ensure inclusivity of and accessibility for all children by emphasizing:</p>	
<p>Strengthening oral language development in both English and child’s home language (if different from English) <i>Including encouraging a child to share ideas or answer/ask questions in their home language and provide definitions in a child’s home language to help them understand English vocabulary or differences in grammar. Oral language development is critical for dual language learners to benefit from evidence-based literacy instruction.</i></p>	
<p>Literacy “text” that is represented not only in printed words, but in photographs, drawings, and maps, as well as opportunities for auditory representations of text <i>For example, adding visuals to your written daily schedule as students learn the routine, and or the combination of auditory and visual signals when it is time to transition to another activity</i></p>	

Additional Resources for Language & Literacy Learning

For examples of play-based learning activities for literacy see the following videos:

- See *Integrating Play Into Literacy Instruction: Strategies For Your Classroom* developed by the Institute of Education Sciences (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fNm4aa3Hr0>)

- See videos of sample practices in *Essential Instruction Practices for Literacy: PreKindergarten* developed by the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) (<https://www.gomaisa.org/literacy-essentials/the-essentials/essential-instructional-practices-in-early-literacy-prekindergarten/>)

Element 3. Mathematics Learning

Mathematics in UPK includes a wide range of concepts and ideas that are intricately connected and should be taught through strengthening children’s problem-solving and reasoning processes. Math is everywhere in a child’s environment and it is important to capitalize on the wonder and joy children naturally bring to their learning of math, so teachers can then cultivate and extend children’s mathematical sense and interest.

<p>A UPK program should include a specific mathematics curriculum that is evidence-based, hands-on (does not use workbooks or worksheets), and aligned with the developmental learning trajectory of how children acquire the following mathematical skills and practices:</p>	
<p>Counting objects <i>Opportunities to practice counting objects using one-to-one correspondence in order to twenty or higher, and beginning to count onwards from a number other than one.</i> <i>(Children should also be provided opportunity for recite counting 1-30)</i></p>	<p>Check if curricula includes:</p>
<p>Strengthening an understanding of cardinality <i>When counting, developing an understanding that the number name of the last object counted represents the total number of objects in the group.</i></p>	
<p>Practicing numeral recognition <i>Providing multiple representations and materials demonstrating numerals so children have practice and repeated exposure to numerals 1-10 or higher.</i></p>	
<p>Observing number relationships <i>Opportunities to make observations about number quantities and compare two groups of quantities by communicating, “more,” “same as,” or “fewer”.</i></p>	

<p>Introduction to number operations <i>This may require more focused teacher-led small-group instruction demonstrating how adding one or taking away one changes the number in a small set of objects by exactly one; exposure with decomposing a set of objects or toys into two small sets in more than one way (e.g., decompose 5 into sets of 3 and 2, or 1 and 4), or combining two small sets to create a larger set (e.g., 3 and 2 to make a set of 5); Opportunities such as through math games or stories to understand addition and subtraction problems with a small number of objects (sums up to 10 or 12) and how to share objects equally between a child and their peers.</i></p>	
<p>Sorting & classifying <i>Providing activities that involve sorting and classifying objects by one or more attributes. This can be commonly integrated with topics in science content.</i></p>	
<p>Engaging in patterning and early algebraic thinking <i>Providing activities that involve children in recognizing, duplicating, extending, and creating a variety of repeating patterns (e.g., AABBAABB, ABCABC), which can easily be integrated in art projects, music, science, and social-sciences.</i></p>	
<p>Comparing & ordering <i>Providing opportunities to compare two objects by length, weight, or capacity and communicate their comparison; for example, order 4-5 objects by length or other attribute, and measure length using objects like unit cubes laid end-to-end.</i></p>	
<p>Participating in data analysis <i>Providing opportunities to use objects, tally marks, or pictographs to represent data in two or more groups; opportunities for children to engage in discussion to describe and compare the number of data points and determine which group has more or less.</i></p>	
<p>Identifying and using common shapes <i>Providing opportunities to identify, describe, and construct different shapes including variations of a circle, square, triangle, rectangle, and other shapes, as well as to describe defining properties of a shape such as the sides or vertices, and identify similarities and differences between two shapes based on these attributes; allowing children to</i></p>	

<p><i>experiment with combining different two- or three-dimensional shapes to create a picture or design; Exposure to three-dimensional shapes, such as spheres, cubes and cylinders using informal (ball, box, tube) and formal names</i></p>	
<p>Experimenting with spatial thinking <i>Including providing opportunities to engage in experimentation and group discussion about different positions in space such as in/on, under/over, up/down, inside/outside, near/far, next to, beside/between, and in front/behind; and provide exposure to puzzles or blocks at center-time that require children to rotate, flip, or slide objects to solve the puzzle.</i></p>	
<p>Emphasizing mathematical thinking <i>Through encouraging children to explain their reasoning in detail, reason abstractly, and think critically about the solutions of others.</i></p>	

Additional Resources for Mathematical Learning:

- For examples of play-based learning activities for preKindergarten math see resources available from the DREME network: <https://preschoolmath.stanford.edu/#categories>
- For professional development resources and opportunities please visit the California Early Math Initiative website: <https://www.earlymathca.org/about-1>

Element 4. Developmentally Informed Curriculum Themes

While discrete domains of development—such as literacy and math—should be included in a UPK curriculum approach, children need to make meaning of their learning and experience connections across domains. This is best achieved through organizing content across thematic units and project-based studies that are developmentally appropriate and informed.

<p>A UPK program’s curriculum content should be centered around learning topics or units of study that promote engagement from both children and families, and are culturally and linguistically responsive by considering the following:</p>	
	<p>Check if curricula includes:</p>

<p>Include themes that are intrinsically motivating and are relatable topics for children to foster their sense of belonging, purpose, and agency. Some of the most successful themes highlight social-emotional, science, and history-social science content areas that align with the California Preschool/TK Learning Foundations.</p> <p><i>For example: Friendships, home/family, neighborhood/community, animals, nature, environment, themes from books read in class, etc. Ideally your UPK program reflects on the topics that are relevant to characteristics of your unique California community that children can relate to and observe (e.g., rural/suburban, desert/forest, key landmarks in your district/program, etc.). Consider engaging in family and community engagement activities to better define these themes.</i></p>	
<p>Content and instructional materials should reflect diversity in race, ethnicity, cultural practices/beliefs, language, gender, family structure, ability, and income.</p> <p><i>It is important that culture is not just represented on a day or month (e.g., Lunar New Year, Black History Month), but authentically integrated in content areas across the UPK program year.</i></p> <p><i>For a deeper dive on culturally-responsive curriculum elements to include, see the Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard developed by Black and Latinx public school parents with the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice</i></p> <p>(https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/ejroc/services/culturally-responsive-curriculum-scorecards)</p>	

Additional Resources for Developmentally Informed Curriculum Themes

- For examples of strategies for embedding children’s language, culture and identity in early education settings, see this video on Affirming Language, Culture, & Identity from Sobrato Early Academic Language (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RPSwy0Wa9c>)

Curriculum Component 2 - Developmentally Informed Instructional Contexts:

The content of a UPK curriculum will only be effective if it is embedded in developmentally informed instructional contexts that align with principles of Universal Design for Learning, such as providing flexible learning environments and spaces that

can accommodate individual learning differences. For example, a developmentally informed context for 4-year-old children offers a diversity of learning formats for children, including indoor and outdoor experiences, learning centers and small-groups, and a balance of child and teacher-led activities to engage children in learning experiences in a joyful and inclusive way. The *Learning Stems from Play* graphic visually depicts how time can be spent in different instructional contexts in UPK classrooms serving a majority of 4-year-old children.

Element 1. Small Group

Small group consists of 3-5 children receiving individualized and responsive support and interaction with a teacher which lasts no longer than 15-20 minutes to be developmentally appropriate and informed for 4-year-old children. Small-group instruction can occur during center-time (e.g., while other children are playing a few children are pulled aside), or at designated small-group time (if a second or third teacher are available to lead multiple small groups at the same time).

A UPK curriculum or combination of curricula should include the following small-group opportunities daily:	
<p>Small-group instruction in foundational math skills <i>This could also be a part of a rotation of math centers with different math focused activities available for children to choose from, or a designated small-group math time.</i></p>	Check if curricula includes:
<p>Small-group activities that support foundational literacy skills <i>This could also be a part of a rotation of literacy centers with different literacy focused activities available for children to choose from, or a designated small-group time</i></p>	
<p>Home language support <i>An example includes reading a book in Spanish to small group of dual language learners before reading the book in English to the whole class</i></p>	

Element 2. Whole Group

Whole-group opportunities provide engagement to build community and connection with peers and to briefly introduce learning concepts or skills that will be reinforced in small group or center-time activities. Each whole-group session ideally lasts no longer than 15 minutes to be developmentally appropriate for 4-year-old children.

A UPK curriculum or combination of curricula should consider including the following whole-group opportunities:	
<p>Whole-group engagement provides opportunity for children to engage in rich discussion with peers, explain their thinking, and listen to and share ideas and personal experiences across a range of developmental domains and content areas with particular emphasis on social-emotional topics and skills (see Community Building and Teacher Modeling leaf from <i>Learning Stems from Play</i> graphic)</p>	Check if curricula includes:
<p>Whole-group read-aloud opportunity where the teacher reads a book (in some instances, the same book is read over a series of days e.g., dialogic reading) and children are able to make predictions, inferences, and connections to their world, other content areas and curriculum themes (see Read Aloud leaf from <i>Learning Stems from Play</i> graphic)</p>	
<p>Whole-group storytelling or story acting connected to the curriculum unit of study or read-aloud book (see Read Aloud leaf from <i>Learning Stems from Play</i> graphic)</p>	
<p>Whole-group introduction to content areas or units of study in science or social studies (e.g., “animals”) (see Community Building and Teacher Modeling leaf from <i>Learning Stems from Play</i> graphic), demonstration of health practices such as personal care and routines (e.g., handwashing), as well as introducing new center materials and learning opportunities (see Element 3: Learning Centers)</p>	
<p>Opportunity to participate in music, movement (physical development), and mindfulness, including the option for rest (see Music, Movement, and Mindfulness leaf on <i>Learning Stems from Play</i> graphic) <i>There is no time limit for this context as it may depend on classroom/student needs on a given day (e.g., children are distracted,</i></p>	

hyper, or tired). However, at a minimum children should be provided with at least 20 minutes, usually spread out across the day between other activities.

Additional Resources for Whole Group

- For an example of whole-group dialogic read aloud in UPK, see this video from Sobrato Early Academic Language (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty7MnprauE>)
- For an example of storytelling and story acting in whole group, see this video from the Boston Public Schools PreKindergarten Program (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kMGZ7DwdiE&t=7s>)

Element 3. Learning Centers

Centers provide an opportunity to practice independence and peer collaboration through learning activities based on children’s interests. Ideally, children choose (e.g., free choice) their center/activity rather than being assigned to centers, although it is best practice to ensure that each child has an opportunity to visit a desired center and children do not always choose the same center, which may require the teacher to place certain limits during center-time. Learning centers should make up at least 50% of a UPK Program’s curriculum (see Learning Centers leaf in the *Learning Stems from Play* graphic). Center-time (not including the introduction or debrief) should last at least 60 minutes so that children have enough time to engage in meaningful play and visit multiple centers if they choose. Depending on the length of the school day, multiple center-time play sessions can be offered in both indoor and outdoor settings.

A UPK curriculum or combination of curricula should consider the following when designing center-time learning opportunities:

Before center-time begins (in whole-group), teacher provides introductions to learning opportunities in centers (especially if a new center has opened or changed materials) and models activities when appropriate, to engage interest and confidence in children choosing their desired center and participating independently and with peers (lasts no longer than 10 minutes).

Check if curricula includes:

<p>During center-time, teacher promotes children’s choices and creativity or interest when engaging in a center-time activity <i>and</i> works to intentionally link children’s play back to the center’s objectives or goals.</p>	
<p>During center-time, teacher scaffolds children’s learning “just enough” to extend their knowledge to support in task completion (e.g., not too little or too much help or information when child is stuck).</p>	
<p>After center time (in whole-group) children can verbally or nonverbally share their “learning products” or experiences from center-time to their peers to build confidence, community, and overall pride in learning. <i>A center-time debrief does not need to happen every center-time session but could be implemented weekly or in alignment with transitions to new curriculum themes so that children have the opportunity to experience closure with the transition from one theme or project to another.</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Center areas may include the following, either indoors or outdoors (with examples of connections to a curriculum theme):</p>	
<p>Dramatic play area with materials that may connect to the curriculum theme (e.g., <i>Dramatic play area may be converted in a vet clinic if the curriculum theme is Animals</i>).</p>	
<p>Sand, water, and/or other sensory tables that may connect to the curriculum theme (e.g., <i>small animal toys available to play and build habitats with the water or sand</i>).</p>	
<p>Art materials that may connect to the curriculum theme or read-aloud book and allow for open-ended expression (e.g., <i>cut-out pictures of animals from magazines to form a collage; variety of paint available to paint animal characters or habits from a read-aloud book, items for 3-D art to make animal habitats like clay, sticks, etc.</i>).</p>	
<p>Literacy, such as a book corner, listening to audio books, matching games with letters, and writing stories (e.g., <i>“researching” their animal of choice with books; dictating a story to a teacher about an animal they would like to be and what they would do if they were that animal; animal scavenger hunt where they have to choose the first letter of the name of the animal they found</i>).</p>	

<p>Math, such as counting collections, number matching games, pattern blocks, counting board games, and sorting (e.g., <i>sorting animals by size, animal type etc.</i>).</p>	
<p>Nature/science, where children can explore and make predictions connected to the curriculum theme (e.g., <i>exploring different animal footprints</i>).</p>	
<p>Blocks (or magna tiles), with guidance for block play connected to the curriculum theme (e.g., <i>building a zoo</i>).</p>	
<p>Building and engineering, where children can experiment with different materials to construct and engineer (e.g., <i>build a bridge to help an animal cross a pretend busy road using tubes, pipe cleaners, and other STEM building materials</i>).</p>	
<p>Calm center, which can include a bean bag chair or couch, as well as calming tools (e.g., glitter jar) for children to rest, take a break, and practice self-regulation. <i>At age 4, children may be transitioning from a nap schedule and may require moments of intentional rest time, especially in a full-day UPK program. The calm center is based on child choice and should not be used for punitive purposes.</i></p>	

Additional Resources for Learning Centers

- See open-source DREME Network examples of math center-time activities: <https://preschoolmath.stanford.edu/center-time/#filters>

Curriculum Component 3 - Developmentally Informed Instructional Strategies:

While developmentally appropriate and informed instructional strategies have been woven throughout this resource guide, there are a few additional strategies to highlight that are important to embed in a UPK curriculum.

Element 1. Individualization Based on Assessment

Instruction should be based on children’s individual skills as they are guided along a learning trajectory to the next developmental milestone. Individualization of tasks and

scaffolding is most practical during center-time or small-group instruction, or in conversations while children are engaged in play.

To identify each child’s unique learning trajectory, the following should be considered:	
<p>Assessment is ongoing, embedded in observations during play and small-group instruction, and covers all domains of development to determine children’s individual learning needs (e.g., the Desired Results Developmental Profile assessment). In some cases, like literacy and math, more formal direct assessments can be used but must be developmentally informed (e.g., short in length, not stressful for children, and hands-on or game-like).</p>	<p>Check if curricula includes:</p>
<p>Assessment results are used to communicate with and engage families in their child’s learning. Families should also be welcomed to share their own observations of their child’s development – and their voice should be used in identifying children’s unique needs for individualization.</p>	
<p>Assessment can be adapted for children with disabilities, which is where observational assessments (that do not rely on print or auditory input alone) can be beneficial. Dual language learners should also have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery in skills in both English and their home language (e.g., if teacher does not speak child’s home language, the family, community volunteer, or other bilingual staff can assist in identifying individualized needs).</p>	

Additional Resources for Individualization Based on Assessment

- The *Desired Results Developmental Profile* assessment is currently being revised (for release in 2025) to be more inclusive of transitional kindergarten and include structured developmentally informed tasks for math and literacy that align with the updated California Preschool/TK Learning Foundations

Element 2. Fostering Joy in Learning

The above curriculum components described thus far can only be achieved if they successfully foster a child’s joy for learning. This element is one of the pillars of developmentally informed practice for 4-year-old children.

<p>A UPK curriculum and instructional approach should foster children’s natural curiosity, joy, and intrinsic motivation to learn by including the following:</p>	
<p>Hands-on activities with developmentally informed, concrete, manipulatives to strengthen fine motor skills and engage in sensory play, with limited or no reliance on worksheets.</p>	<p>Check if curricula includes:</p>
<p>Project-based approaches where children can build perseverance over a series of weeks on a project or idea connected to the curriculum theme or content area (e.g., “Animal Habitats”) and can work on individualized goals based on their interest during center-time.</p>	
<p>Consistent opportunity for children to exercise choice (e.g., center-time areas, books) and independence (e.g., transitions and projects) to develop self-regulation skills and foster a love for learning that comes from within.</p>	
<p>Use of open-ended questions and inquiry-based approaches to promote strategic and critical thinking skills (e.g., “How do you know?”, “How did you get to that answer?”, “Why do you think that?”, “Can you tell me more about that?”, “What do you think will happen if you do ___?” “What is another strategy to solve the problem?” “Can you see where I made a mistake?”).</p>	
<p>Ongoing opportunity for reciprocal and purposeful conversation with peers and adults, such as encouraging children to initiate and participate in increasingly long and complex back and forth conversations with adults and peers to share their ideas, joys, and wonderings, including interactions in their home language where possible.</p>	
<p>Ongoing opportunity for peer collaboration and building positive relationships such as providing ample opportunity through small group and whole-group community building time and peer play to practice nurturing relationships and recognizing the feelings and preferences of others.</p>	

Additional Resources:

- For examples of open-ended materials see the video *Using Open-Ended Materials to Spark Curiosity*, developed by Edutopia (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MQkbUKUjFI>)

Element 3. Inclusivity

A UPK curriculum is only effective if all children can participate in the content and contexts offered to them to learn.

Based on Universal Design for Learning – all children – regardless of home language or ability – can access and participate in learning that is meaningful and challenging, including the following:	
Children are provided with multiple representations of concepts (e.g., manipulatives, video, audio, picture).	Check if curricula includes:
Children are invited to engage and demonstrate knowledge across multiple means of action, expression, and language (e.g., in child’s home language, verbally, non-verbally).	
Activities are easily adaptable when necessary so that children with disabilities can participate (e.g., adapted materials, environment, learning goal, and rest breaks).	