



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Georgia Curriculum Review and Approval Process FY20 CRITERIA DOCUMENTATION (Form B)

Title of Curriculum:	Connect4Learning®: The Pre-K Curriculum
Publisher:	Kaplan Early Learning Company

In the fields on the right, please list where reviewers can find documentation in the curriculum that addresses each criterion. Each entry should not exceed 1000 characters (including spaces). Each document should be submitted using a specific naming convention. For example, this document should be named: PublisherName_TitleofCurriculum_FORMB

Section I. Instructional Approach (41 points):

- (A). Includes a philosophy statement that reflects the basic principles of developmentally appropriate instructional practices, and indicates the curriculum 1) is based on theoretical and/or research-based knowledge of how children's development and learning progresses (that is, knowing what is typical for each age/stage); 2) promotes instructional practices that are responsive to individual differences among children; 3) promotes hands-on learning experiences and a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated learning experiences; 4) emphasizes the importance of children forming close relationships with caring adults.

Connect4Learning® is inspired by and synthesizes research-based approaches in four learning domains: mathematics, science, literacy, and social-emotional. Its underlying philosophy encompasses these key principles: a) play and academic instruction can work synergistically in early childhood; b) early academic skills are essential to later school success; c) current approaches too often provide superficial math and science experiences that don't support the richness or interconnectedness between these domains; d) a multifaceted, intentional approach to social-emotional, language, and literacy development is critical to school readiness, and e) the teacher's relationship and interactions with children are highly influential to learning. Details of the approach are found on p. ix and pp.1-9 of the Teacher's Handbook. The Formative Assessment description on pp.15-16 shares the curriculum's philosophy and strategies for addressing individual differences in children's learning needs.

- (B). Provides guidance and specific strategies/suggested activities that: 1) include opportunities for children to observe, explore, experiment, question, and build conceptual understanding in meaningful contexts; 2) include concrete, hands-on learning experiences with real materials commonly found in a classroom; 3) encourage children to explore, think about concepts, and/or solve problems; 4) address all of children's senses and are suited for different learning styles (auditory, visual, spatial, musical, bodily kinesthetic, and tactile); 5) promote different types of play (physical play, pretend play, games with rules); 6) utilize daily care routines as opportunities for learning.

Connect4Learning® takes a spiraled approach to children's learning by introducing, practicing, applying, communicating, and ultimately learning new skills and concepts. Its explicit inclusion of 10 thinking processes (e.g., Observing, Reasoning and Problem Solving), found on p. 14 of the Teacher's Handbook, is a unique and powerful feature. Through daily lessons, engaging centers, and projects, all senses and different types of play are incorporated. Board games with rules, such as "Get Goldilocks Home" (Unit 1, pp. 152-153), are included. See pp.19-25 of the Teacher's Handbook for descriptions of typical activities. Use of learning centers is described on pp. 38-45. Daily routines and explicit teacher prompts to help children take on greater responsibilities and independence also promote growth and development. Teacher guidance on use of daily routines, transitions, and visual supports to promote learning and independence are described on pp. 33, 36, and 37, respectively.

- (C). Provides specific guidance and strategies for how teachers can support children with disabilities, including 1) an explicit statement affirming inclusion of children with disabilities; 2) general guidance on how to include children with disabilities in classroom activities through modifications in the classroom environment, the schedule and/or activities; 3) specific suggestions for adapting and/or modifying individual/specific activities to include children with disabilities.

Connect4Learning® can accommodate children with special learning needs and has a number of built-in supports for this purpose. We believe every child should have equitable opportunities for learning, growth, and joy and design our products to help make that possible. Each lesson in Connect4Learning® includes strategies to provide more support or more challenge, based on the teacher's observations of a child's needs. A detailed description of how to use formative assessment to adapt and modify instruction is shown on p.15-16 of the Teacher's Handbook. See pp. 47-48 of the Teacher's Handbook for a description of strategies to adapt Connect4Learning® for children with special learning needs. In addition, Kaplan Early Learning Company offers comprehensive, full-day training on this topic for programs who request it.

- (D). Provides guidance for and examples of a daily schedule that 1) emphasizes the importance of a predictable schedule and routines; 2) includes provisions for a variety of types of activities (including large-group, small-group, center-based, and individual activities); 3) incorporates opportunities for small-group, center-based, and free play activities across the course of the day, with a large proportion of the schedule dedicated to small-group, center-based and free play activities.

Connect4Learning® stresses a fairly predictable but not overly rigid schedule. On p. 33 of the Teacher's Handbook is a discussion of the importance of a daily schedule, for the teachers and for children. Connect4Learning® promotes the use of high-interest learning centers and four types of lessons each day, along with ample time for outdoor, child-directed free play. The authors recommend that children not sit for more than 20 minutes, top of p. 34 of the Teacher's Handbook. Small-group learning during center time is suggested. This way, three to five children can meet with a teacher and delve into a topic more deeply. The teacher can gather information about each child's skills, while other children are actively engaged in learning centers. Fast Focus lessons are 5-10 minutes and can be moved around in the schedule as needed. See pp. 25-29 for descriptions of the four lesson types, and pp. 31-32 for sample full-day and half-day schedules.

- (E). Includes both teacher-led activities and child-initiated activities with specific provisions for children to choose activities they participate in and provisions for activities to be planned based on teachers' observations of children's development, interests and current skills/knowledge. Directs teachers to include child-initiated activities daily.

A remarkable feature of Connect4Learning® is its respect for and encouragement of young children's capabilities. Teachers are strongly encouraged to adapt lessons and activities based on children's needs, preferences, and abilities. Unit projects can be completely changed based on children's interests or the teacher's ideas on what will be most instructive and engaging for them (p.7 of Teacher's Handbook). Teachers are also strongly encouraged to add their own ideas and materials to centers, based on children's needs and interests (Unit 1 guide, top of p. 9). Throughout the unit guides there are prompts for the teacher to observe children's skills and plan subsequent activities accordingly (e.g., Unit 1 guide, p. 74, p. 75). Throughout each unit teachers have opportunities to choose Fast Focus lessons based on children's needs, e.g., Unit 1 guide, p. 101. Sample schedules on pp. 31-32 of the Teacher's Handbook demonstrate ample free time for child choice of activities.

- (F). Includes guidance and specific tools/strategies to support planning for individual, small group, and large group activities, with individualized and small group activities comprising most planned activities.

Connect4Learning® provides excellent guidance for teachers to support planning of individual and group activities. Each unit guide includes overviews for centers, key vocabulary, and weekly schedules, learning objectives, and materials lists (e.g., Unit 1, pp. 3-26). Each daily lesson provides tips and prompts in boxes on the right side of the page, to help teachers grasp instantly key concepts and organizational tips for more effective instruction (e.g., Unit 1, p. 29). Teachers are frequently prompted to observe children's skills, taking note of their needs for future activities and for formative assessment documentation (e.g., Unit 1, p. 30). Lessons are sequenced and structured to provide instruction according to research-based developmental trajectories and effective modeling and scaffolding.

- (G). Explicitly helps teachers promote children's independence by providing guidance and specific strategies to 1) help children learn to carry out self-care and classroom routines independently; 2) set up the physical environment and materials in a manner that children can use independently; 3) incorporate child-initiated and/or planned activities in centers and small group activities so that children learn to make decisions and carry out self-directed activities.

Connect4Learning® demonstrates a fundamental belief that prekindergarteners are highly capable, and with appropriate structure and guidance, can grow significantly in their independence with self-care and routines. On pp. 33, 36, and 37 of the Teacher's Handbook are descriptions of using a schedule, transitions, and visual supports to encourage self-management and independence. The inclusion of thinking processes (e.g., Persisting, Attending, and Self-Regulating, and Reasoning and Problem Solving, p. 14 of Teacher's Handbook) as an explicit focus also supports teachers in promoting children's development of these critical skills. The use of centers is another outstanding feature of Connect4Learning®, designed in part to foster independence (general description on pp. 38-42 in the Teacher's Handbook, and greater detail in the Unit 1 guide, pp. 7-19). Each unit guide includes a detailed description of center materials and activities specific to its learning objectives and activities.

- (H). Explicitly promotes sensitivity to and respect for diversity by: 1) providing guidance that helps teachers interact with children and families from different gender, linguistic, ethnic, age, and social groups in a respectful, positive and unbiased manner; 2) including guidance on how to create a classroom environment that reflects the diverse backgrounds of the children served by the program (e.g., use of materials, activities, etc.); 3) promoting an individualized approach to instruction that includes experiences that are respectful of and familiar to children from diverse backgrounds.

Connect4Learning® was built with equity for all children as a central tenet. The curriculum includes ample books, materials, strategies, and lessons that reflect, teach and promote interest in and respect for each child's unique background and experiences, and understanding of a multi-cultural perspective. See p. 49 of the Teacher's Handbook on engaging families, who are strongly encouraged to communicate, visit, and participate by sharing important symbolic materials from home for use in lessons and centers. Unit 1 focuses on individual identity and connecting with others in the classroom (see pp. 3-4, Unit 1 guide). Examples of diverse, multi-cultural lessons include Unit 1, p. 155 (Yo? Yes!), Unit 2, p. 28 (Life in the City), and Unit 6, p. 46 (Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx).

- (I). Offers guidance and specific strategies for how teachers can support children who are dual language learners, including 1) support for dual language learners to continue to use their home language while they are learning English; 2) guidance on how to set up the classroom environment in a manner that supports dual language learners (such as using pictures and labels in the home language of dual language learners); 3) suggestions for modifying activities to teach concepts in a manner that is more accessible to dual language learners (such as using objects to illustrate concepts that are being taught); 4) suggestions for supporting the social development of dual language learners (such as pairing a dual language learner with another child who speaks their home language).

Connect4Learning® fosters both home and English language development in DLL children. See pp. 45-47 for a description of its DLL philosophy and strategies. Key tenets include: 1) language-rich environment; 2) active participation; 3) vocabulary expansion; and 4) predictable routines. Lessons provide repeated, varied exposure to vocabulary in authentic language contexts to help close DLL children's language gaps. Nonverbal communication is supported and encouraged when appropriate. The 10 thinking processes also help teachers think about ways to assist DLL children in expanding and expressing their knowledge. Liberal use of visual supports to convey meaning, including key words in both languages, photos, images, and objects, appears throughout the curriculum. The explicit focus on social-emotional skill development, based on the Pyramid Model, in particular provides rich teaching and visual supports that help DLL children and their peers to have positive interactions.

(J). Includes research related to the effectiveness of the curriculum. (Use Research Summary Form C).

Connect4Learning® was built with National Science Foundation funding, following rigorous research by authors Drs. Doug Clements, Julie Sarama, Nell Duke, Mary Louise Hemmeter, and Kimberley Brenneman. The authors have hundreds of peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals, and have received millions of dollars in federally-funded research. Connect4Learning's® structure, content, and instructional strategies derive from this extensive body of research, making it the most evidence-based comprehensive preschool curriculum on the market today. The authors collected further empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the curriculum, with children representing a range of socio-economic status. Children in pre-K classrooms that implemented Connect4Learning® outperformed children in control classrooms in math, science, and literacy, demonstrating the curriculum produces positive child outcomes. https://www.connect4learning.com/pdfs/C4L_White_Paper_URC_FINAL_REV_10_16_1.pdf.

(K). Provides sufficient resources and guidance to help teachers plan and implement activities that address different content and various types of activities (large-group, small-group, center-based, and individual activities) across the course of a program year.

Connect4Learning® is an incredibly in-depth curriculum that makes it easy for teachers to plan and implement engaging, developmentally appropriate activities across each day and for an entire school year. There are 5 units, each 6 weeks long, plus a 2-week Unit 6, with detailed lesson plans and guidance for large- and small-group instruction, centers, and free choice play each day. Four main lesson types are included: Welcome and Read Aloud; Connect; Small Group; and Fast Focus, along with specific features (e.g., "At a Glance, etc.) that help teachers organize materials and focus on key learning objectives (Teacher's Handbook, pp. 25-30). Each unit guide has a unit overview (e.g., Unit 2, pp. 6-20), followed by overviews of activities, learning objectives, and materials for each week (e.g., Unit 2, pp. 23-27). Content is varied to inspire children's curiosity, creativity, and confidence in what they know, and organized by research-proven developmental learning trajectories.

(L). On a daily basis, facilitates children's learning and skill development through a variety of different types of activities that explicitly integrate experiences and/or content related to multiple domains (for example, activity goals or purposes target multiple domains, instructions to the teacher to address multiple domains, etc.).

Connect4Learning® excels in providing integrated experiences and learning content across lessons and activities, as it was specifically designed for this purpose (see pp. 5-8 of Teacher's Handbook). Most activities include content and learning objectives from multiple domains. For example, a lesson on watching bean sprouts grow incorporates social-emotional skills (collaborative problem solving), science (how living things grow, observing and comparing), math (measuring, sizes), language and literacy (drawing and writing observations, communicating findings). The 10 thinking processes also cut across content domains and thus serve to integrate instruction in additional important ways. See Unit 2, pp. 32-33 for an example. Suggestions for learning center materials and activities further connect instructional content to authentic contexts and multiple learning domains.

- (M). Includes guidance or an explanation of scaffolding and strategies that promote teachers' ability to extend or gradually advance children's understanding of concepts, their ideas and their play (i.e., helps teachers know how to scaffold children's learning).

Connect4Learning® provides tremendous guidance and explanation on sequencing and scaffolding learning to promote each child's development. All learning objectives are based on and sequenced according to proven developmental learning trajectories, which in turn are linked to classroom instructional activities. The very structure of the curriculum helps teachers understand how early math and science concepts, for example, develop in young children, knowledge which research has shown is often deficient in preK teachers. Concepts are presented first in basic, concrete terms, and gradually move to more advanced, abstract presentation. Activities then go further, with children's application and communication of new knowledge. Lesson plans have many prompts to observe children's skills and tips to follow up with more support or more challenge. Daily small-group instruction supports individualized teaching and formative assessment of each child's skill development and needs.

- (N). Contains a process for sequencing of content and learning experiences that is logical and consistent with the typical progression of children's learning and development, and provides for individualized planning to sequence learning experiences based on the developmental level and progress of individual children.

Connect4Learning® has 136 stated learning objectives (Teacher's Handbook, pp. 81-88) that are covered in lessons sequenced according to content difficulty, as proven by child development research. A more detailed Math Trajectories chart is on pp.89-101 of the Teacher's Handbook. Each unit guide contains a grid summarizing learning objectives by week that "map" to specific instructional activities (e.g., Unit 2, pp. 24-25). Frequent prompts for child observation and built-in formative assessment opportunities insure the teacher knows where each child is in key skills and can adapt instructional activities accordingly. See Unit 2 guide, p. 145 for an example.

- (O). Includes intentional planning to promote children's learning in outdoor settings by: 1) including outdoor time as part of the daily schedule; 2) providing specific guidance regarding the outdoor physical environment (i.e. playground safety rules, supervision of children outdoors, selection of outdoor equipment and materials that are appropriate for the size of children being served; supplementing outdoor equipment with a variety of materials and toys, etc.),3) providing guidance on how to intentionally plan for children's outdoor experiences and lead outdoor activities when age appropriate, as well as facilitate free play.

Connect4Learning® values outdoor activities as essential for exploring and making learning connections to real-world contexts. It includes many outdoor walks and scavenger hunts that extend learning from indoor activities. The Connect4Learning® sample schedule builds in outdoor exploration time each day, and children have the opportunity to use learning centers every day to play games and be physically active; both of these provide children with many opportunities to practice object control. Unit 1 of Connect4Learning® also includes many themes and activities to help children increase their understanding and control over their bodies. See Unit 2 (Our Environment), Week 1 activities, pp. 26-58, for many specific examples of connected teaching and related outdoor activities.

Section II. Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards - GELDS (20 points)

In Section II, list where the curriculum contains the following: (1). A description of and/or guidance related to the domain (i.e., narrative that describes what is included in the domain, why it is important, etc.). (2). Learning goals/objectives for each sub-domain/strand (3). Learning activities that are provided on a regular basis for each sub-domain/strand, as addressed within the GELDS.

(A) GELDS Domain: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Strands:

- Receptive Language**
- Expressive Language**
- Early Reading**
- Early Writing**

Communication, Language, and Literacy – See pp. 62-68 of the Teacher’s Handbook for narrative information on Connect4Learning®’s Communication, Language, and Literacy domain, and pp. 45-47 for a description of its approach for DLL children. Learning objectives for all subdomains in this category are on pp. 87-88 of the Teacher’s Handbook. A Welcome and Read Aloud activity occurs daily throughout the school year, as an essential tool for building communication, language, and literacy skills (example Unit 1, pp. 107-108, Unit 3, pp. 28-29) At least one Fast Focus activity each day is devoted to a literacy skill, along with many Connect and Small-Group lessons (Examples Unit 3, p. 31 and p. 34, Unit 4, p. 37-39). The first thinking process, Communicating and Representing, also emphasizes the importance of attending to children’s verbal communication skills, both spoken and written, and comprehension and expression (p. 14, Teacher’s Handbook).

(B). GELDS Domain: Cognitive Development - MATHEMATICS

Strands:

- Number and Quantity**
- Measurement and Comparison**
- Geometry and Spatial Thinking**
- Mathematical Reasoning**

Cognitive Development – Mathematics – See pp. 52-59 of the Teacher’s Handbook for narrative information on Connect4Learning®’s Mathematics domain. This is a major strength of the curriculum, which leads with math and science content. Learning objectives for all math subdomains are on pp. 83-84, and extensive information on math learning trajectories is on pp. 89-101, both in the Teacher’s Handbook. Each day there are math activities, with many Welcome and Read Aloud books focused on mathematical content (Examples Unit 1, pp. 74-75, Unit 3, pp. 112-113). At least one Fast Focus each day pertains to a specific math skill (Examples Unit 3, p. 118, 180). In addition, 3 thinking processes, Comparing and Classifying, Reasoning and Problem Solving, and Using Tools Strategically involve mathematical reasoning skills (p. 14, Teacher’s Handbook).

(C). GELDS Domain: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND MOTOR SKILLS

Strands:

- Health and Well-Being**
- Use of Senses**
- Motor Skills**

Physical Development and Motor Skills – Although this is not a domain focus within Connect4Learning®, these skills are incorporated daily into all activities. Projects for each unit require much movement and various fine-motor skills. Fast Focus lessons often involve gross-motor skills such as jumping. Health topics such as the importance of hand washing and nutrition are included in lessons on food (Example Unit 3, pp. 136-137). The thinking process, Observing (p. 14 of Teacher’s Handbook) includes using one’s senses to take in information (Examples Unit 1, pp. 111-112, 147-148, pp. 201-205). Each day includes opportunities for outside play that builds motor skills as well.

(D). GELDS Domain: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strands:

- Developing a Sense of Self**
- Self-Regulation**
- Developing a Sense of Self with Others**

Social and Emotional Development – This is one of four focus domains within Connect4Learning®. The philosophy is based on the Pyramid Model and is described on pp. 69-73 of the Teacher’s Handbook. Learning objectives for all subdomains are included on pp. 81-82 of the Teacher’s Handbook. The thinking processes, Cooperating and Persisting, Attending and Self-Regulating, also demonstrate how the curriculum prioritizes these social and emotional skills in prekindergarteners. Many lessons and books selected for the curriculum focus on key social and emotional skill development (Examples Unit 1, pp. 46-47, pp. 194-195, pp. 206-207, Unit 3, pp. 129-133, pp. 168-172, pp. 247-251).

(E). GELDS Domain: APPROACHES TO PLAY AND LEARNING

Strands:

- Initiative and Exploration**
- Attentiveness and Persistence**
- Play**

Approaches to Play and Learning – Connect4Learning® incorporates 10 thinking processes into its units and lessons that focus on approaches to learning (p. 5 and p. 14, Teacher’s Handbook). Through these thinking processes, with prompts throughout the curriculum, teachers encourage children to be curious, observe, compare, reason, problem solve, and make sense of what they are experiencing. In addition, much effort focuses on helping children develop strong confidence in their knowledge and express their knowledge and feelings through words, drawings, and writing. Descriptions of the 10 thinking processes provide implicit learning objectives (p. 14). A description of the value of play is found on p. 4 of the Teacher’s Handbook. The structure and content of centers, connected with concepts and skills introduced through daily lessons, are highly intentional and expand children’s play options and ability to self-direct their learning in meaningful ways (Unit 1, pp. 7-19).

(F). GELDS Domain: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: SCIENCE

Strands:

- Scientific Skills and Methods**
- Earth and Space**
- Living Creatures**
- Physical Science**
- Interaction with Environment**

Connect4Learning® leads with math and science, such that there is a heavy focus on science content and scientific processes. See pp. 59-62 for a narrative description of the science content and philosophy for this curriculum. Learning objectives for all subdomains in the science category are found on pp. 85-86 of the Teacher’s Handbook. Several of the 10 thinking processes also focus intentionally on key scientific processes, e.g., Observing, Curiosity, Comparing and Classifying, Reasoning and Problem Solving, and Making Sense (p. 14, Teacher’s Handbook). Every day in Connect4Learning has science content, often deriving from Welcome and Read Aloud books specifically chosen or created to showcase science. Examples in Unit 3, pp. 234, pp. 236-237, p. 262, and Unit 5, pp. 3-4, pp. 68-71.

(G). GELDS Domain: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: SOCIAL STUDIES

Strands:

- Family**
- People and Community**
- History and Events**

Social Studies – Connect4Learning® includes many social studies topics in its books and lessons, broadly included in the science description on pp. 59-62 of the Teacher’s Handbook. Learning objectives for all subdomains in this category are included within the science section, pp. 85-86. Several of the 10 thinking processes also focus intentionally on key scientific processes, e.g., Observing, Curiosity, Comparing and Classifying, Reasoning and Problem Solving, and Making Sense (p. 14, Teacher’s Handbook). Examples within the curriculum include: Unit 1, pp. 10, 13, 14, 20, 30, 58, 125; Unit 3 p. 45, 70; Unit 4 pp. 12, 14, 15, 16, 21; Unit 5 p. 12; Unit 6 pp. 9.

(H). GELDS Domain: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Strands:

- Creative Movement and Dance
- Visual Arts, Music

(Examples Unit 1, pp. 46-47, pp. 194-195, pp. 206-207, Unit 3, pp. 129-133, pp. 168-172, pp. 247-251). Creative Development – Connect4Learning® emphasizes creative development through each of the culminating projects for each unit of instruction. Children plan, organize, create, and implement these projects over several weeks (p.7 of Teacher’s Handbook). Learning centers specifically focus on creative opportunities of many types (pp. 38-42 of Teacher’s Handbook, pp. of Unit 1 guide). Development of creative abilities are woven into learning objectives for the 4 domains within Connect4Learning®, as well as some of the 10 thinking processes, e.g., Communicating and Representing, and Creating, Imagining, and Innovating (p. 14 of Teacher’s Handbook). Examples of activities include: • Unit 1, p. 19, 32, 33, 58, 115; Unit 2 p. 116, 247; Unit 3 p. 9, 12, 15, 16, 54, 83, 100, 170, 199; Unit 4, p. 124, 143, 184.

(I). GELDS Domain: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: COGNITIVE PROCESSES

Strands:

- Thinking Skills
- Problem-Solving Skills

Cognitive Processes -- Connect4Learning® includes 10 thinking processes (p. 14 of Teacher’s Guide), which extensively address the subdomains included in this category. While there aren’t explicitly labeled learning objectives for these processes, the list of subskills on p. 14 essentially provides such objectives. Activities each day include prompts to incorporate thinking process principles and examples, and weekly lessons and units are meant to interweave learning from all domains. For example, children will engage in diverse activities to communicate their ideas, including drawing, writing, taking pictures, and using tools to build and observe. Children practice cooperation as they take photos and record stories for each other. They compare and classify objects and animals, using the internet to further research animals or explore dinosaurs in the Dinosaur Field Guide. In their explorations, children use their senses (sight, touch, smell, sound) and a variety of tools.

Section III. Classroom and Behavior Management (12 points):

- (A). Provides guidance that helps teachers promote children's social-emotional development and teach positive behavior management skills by doing each of the following: 1) interact with children consistently and in a way that helps children develop trusting relationships with the adult and the ability to self-soothe and control their emotions; 2) establish clear expectations for behavior (e.g., development of classroom rules, system/plan for children choosing activities during center time) and respond consistently; 3) be proactive/preventative in behavior management by anticipating situations that might present challenges for children and taking steps to help children develop self-regulation skills (e.g., room arrangement to prevent behavior issues, sufficient materials to minimize conflicts among children, consistent schedule and rules so children know what to expect, visual cues such as labels and pictures to manage behavior, etc.); 4) model appropriate behavior (following rules, problem solving with others, etc.).

The social-emotional component of Connect4Learning® is based on research and practice as described in The Pyramid Model for Promotion of Social Emotional Competence (Fox et al., 2003; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, and Fox, 2006; Hemmeter, Fox, and Snyder, 2013.) The Pyramid model provides a framework of practices to promote children's social-emotional competence, including the development of self-esteem, self-control, and independence, using positive guidance techniques. In the first three units of Connect4Learning®, children are taught behaviors and interactional skills, with later units providing review and support for previously introduced concepts. See pp. 69-73 of the Teacher's Handbook for a description of strategies for the social-emotional component of Connect4Learning®.

- (B). Explicitly provides proactive strategies that help teachers 1) teach children social skills to help them to interact with each other (e.g., problem solve with other children, resolve conflicts with and without assistance from the teacher; identify and express feelings, etc.); 2). correct misbehaviors or negative behaviors with a positive approach (such as redirection, stating the rules clearly, avoiding negative comments, using natural consequences, etc.). Does not promote use of punitive behavior management strategies such as time out or punishments.

Many of the activities in Connect4Learning® focus on or include opportunities to address social-emotional development. The curriculum promotes a positive climate for learning by providing numerous opportunities for children to work collaboratively with others and to socially construct knowledge as well as to develop social skills. The importance of kind words, sharing, respect, and cooperation are emphasized through teacher instruction, all group interactions, and are highlighted in the curriculum's Classroom Expectations, which are introduced in Unit 1.

- (C). Stipulates through guidance and/or sample floor plans the logical arrangement and location of equipment, materials, and supplies to ensure materials are easily accessible and encourage children to explore and develop independence and self-reliance by including: 1) defined areas for centers with quiet activities separated from noisy activities and sufficient space for several children to work or play in each center; 2) a floor plan that promotes movement between areas/centers without a significant amount of open space and allows for close supervision of all areas of the room; 3) recommendations for storage of supplies near the area where they will be used and available for children to access independently as age appropriate.

The Teacher's Handbook (especially pp. 37-51) provides suggestions on establishing a supportive classroom environment, setting expectations, and using planned transitions and other brain-compatible strategies. The lessons in Connect4Learning® use a variety of instructional practices, including cooperative learning; think, pair, share; and collaborative relationships. These instructional practices are clearly outlined for teachers in the text of the lesson plans as well as in the Teacher's Handbook.

Section IV. Assessment (12 points):

(A). Provides guidance and a process for collecting observational data about children by specifying how to observe children, examples of what to focus on within observations, and how to record observations so that they can be used for planning instruction.

For every small-group lesson featuring science, math, or social-emotional learning objectives, the Connect4Learning® Formative Assessment book is organized in chronological order by unit, week, and day, so teachers can record observational data as they move through the curriculum. Because literacy weaves throughout the Connect4Learning® lessons and many learning objectives are covered outside of small-group learning, the literacy formative assessment works a bit differently and is organized by literacy objectives: alphabetic knowledge and vocabulary. Chapter 3 of the Teacher's Handbook (pp. 19–25) as well as our Connect4Learning® training outlines expectations and how developmentally appropriate learning takes place in all domains during a Connect4Learning® day.

(B). Provides guidance and a process for utilizing results from authentic assessments and teacher observations in planning for the entire group, for small groups of children, and individual children. Describes how teachers can use results from authentic assessments and observational data to plan learning experiences.

Connect4Learning® was written with differentiation in mind. Each unit, week, and lesson includes an “At a Glance” that allows teachers to view the big idea of the instructional goals. Additionally, there is time each week in the curriculum for teachers to use assessment data to plan to review and support children, meeting their individual needs. This allows teachers to use big idea planning to match instructional strategies with the specific needs of each of the children in their classroom: adjusting the pace of the lesson, connecting with children's interests, and matching the developmental level of the group. All small-group learning activities provide specific ideas and support to differentiate for children who are performing below or above developmental, cognitive, and academic expectations.

Section V. Family Engagement (12 points):

(A).Promotes positive relationships with families by providing guidance that 1) encourages sensitivity to families' home language and culture; 2) addresses respectful and supportive attitudes toward parents'/families' role in children's learning and development (within the home and classroom settings); 3) stresses the importance of open, two-way communication with parents/families.

Children learn better and teachers are more effective when respectful relationships with children's families are established from the start. Connect4Learning® provides information and resources on how to build connections with families. Connect4Learning® emphasizes the importance of teachers and families agreeing on their roles in helping children succeed and the importance of families feeling welcome in classroom. The Teacher's Handbook (p. 49) includes specific suggestions to help families feel welcome in the classroom, such as labeling classroom items in children's home languages, encouraging children to make posters about their families to hang in the classroom, and including books in the book nook that reflect children's families and communities.

(B).Promotes open communication with parents/families through 1) curriculum tools that support daily or weekly communication with parents/families regarding classroom activities); 2) guidance for parent/family-teacher conferences and/or home visits.

Effective family engagement and positive family/school partnership are important facets of Connect4Learning®. Opportunities to invite families into the classroom (e.g., open houses), share what children are learning and experiencing in the classroom, bridge family and home through activities and objects, as well as opportunities to continue the learning through at-home activities are embedded throughout the curriculum. Connect4Learning® includes templates of letters that teachers can send home at the beginning of each of the six units, so families can understand the learning that is happening in the classroom. The letters encourage families to support that learning by asking children daily about what they are doing in the classroom and by looking for opportunities to build on that learning at home. Letters also encourage families to share important information with teachers about their children's activities at home and out in the community.

(C).Provides specific strategies for including families in children's learning on an on-going basis, such as 1) materials regarding child development and classroom activities that can be shared with families; 2) process to include families in planning for individual children's learning experiences; 3) materials that support families in providing learning experiences within the home setting that are coordinated with and support the learning experiences provided in the classroom.

Additionally, the Connect4Learning® Online Portal is a valuable tool to build connections between the classroom and children's homes. The online portal allows families to engage in the computer math activities at home with their children and to view documentation of their children's learning to collaborate with the teacher to best support their children's learning. When families have up-to-date knowledge of what their children are exploring at school, they are more likely to continue the learning at home. Training on how to establish regular communication is provided as part of the initial curriculum training and during set-up of the online portal. It can be reinforced during follow-up trainings.

- (D). Provides guidance on how to establish positive relationships with non-English speaking families, support for communication, and suggestions or tools teachers can use to involve these families in the classroom and/or their own child's learning experiences, such as translated materials.

The Teacher's Handbook (pp.45–47) provides clear direction to classroom teachers on the importance of supporting DLLs and how to support DLLs in both their home languages and in English. Research indicates that supporting the home language is important for later academic and social achievement. If children lose their home language, they may not become proficient in either their home language or English. But, supporting young children in their home languages actually helps them learn English (Office of Head Start, 2008). Children who are bilingual have an academic advantage. Research has shown that they have an increased ability to reason by analogy, form new concepts, and achieve strong language skills (Castro et al., 2011). The early childhood years are a critical time for developing mastery of the sounds, structure, and functions of language and are an ideal time to expose children to the benefits of two languages (Conboy and Kuhl, 2011).

Section VI. Professional Development (3 points):

- (A). Materials describing professional development that supports curriculum implementation 1) address all components/ areas of the curriculum and all age levels addressed by the curriculum; 2) is available to all providers in Georgia who select and use the curriculum; 3) has at least a beginner and a more advanced option available to promote on-going professional development for providers who have received the initial training and are experienced using the curriculum.

The primary objective for each professional-development session is to provide all teachers and administrators using the curriculum with accurate information, effective instructional strategies, and the resources and materials needed to affect teaching and learning to improve achievement. Our recommended training approach to support new providers of Connect4Learning® begins with a two-day, onsite, instructor-led group training. This event is supplemented by self-paced online modules introducing each of the units. We also recommend a one-day, midyear training the first year of implementation. Ongoing professional development is offered to support a deeper knowledge of the curriculum. Topics include, but are not limited to, deeper dives into instructional strategies; effective read-alouds; scaffolded writing; responsive teaching; Pyramid model essentials; math trajectories; and adapting the curriculum for children with special learning needs.