



Creative Arts Guidance

Introduction

Families, caregivers, and early educators all work together to help children grow and learn. This guidance is intended to be a resource for educators to support and enhance children's learning and development while using the Foundations, Indiana's Early Learning Development Framework. While this is not an exhaustive list, this guidance is meant to serve as a suggestion for practice from birth to age five including the transition into kindergarten. It can be used to support a child's development at different levels of learning and promotes fluid movement between developmental stages. The Foundations are not intended to be a curriculum, but what children should know and be able to do throughout developmental stages. Curricula is content that children should learn and methods to teach the content whereas lesson plans are intended to demonstrate how the content is conveyed to children. This guidance is a resource for educators to use while developing an intentional lesson plan.

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

High quality early experiences help a child become ready for kindergarten and beyond. The Foundations show early educators the developmental progression that typically developing young children should experience as they grow toward kindergarten readiness. In 2014, Indiana's Early Learning Advisory Committee approved the following definition of kindergarten readiness: "In Indiana, we work together so that every child can develop to his or her fullest potential socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively, and academically. Through growth in all of these domains, the child will become a healthy, capable, competent, and powerful learner."

Family Engagement

Indiana's Early Learning Advisory Committee (2016) has approved the following definition for family engagement:

- Families actively supporting their children's learning and development, and sharing the responsibility with early care and education providers who are committed to engaging with families in meaningful, culturally respectful ways;
- Continuous across a child's life, beginning in infancy and extending through college and career preparation programs;
- Occurring across the various early care and learning settings where children play and grow."

Children develop in the context of their environments, which includes family, culture, and community. Family engagement is a strong predictor of children's development, wellness, educational attainment, and success later in school and life. Early educators can use the Family Engagement sections and the Powerful Practices throughout this guidance for strategies that they can encourage family members to use at home. Children and their families also face a number of complex challenges and situations. Communities are strengthened when there are strong partnerships between organizations. Educators and program administrators are encouraged to refer families to agencies that have the most in depth knowledge to meet their needs.

Special Populations

The Indiana Core Knowledge and Competencies encourage educators to see children as unique individuals within a family and community and to be sensitive to individual developmental needs. This guidance supports special populations including dual language (DLL), exceptional, and high ability learners; however, many of the recommended strategies are appropriate and beneficial to all children. It's encouraged that educators use a flexible approach when designing curriculum and keep the needs of all children in mind. The use of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone (See Appendix B for additional information). Additionally, with family/parental consent, we encourage educators to engage and collaborate with other professionals in closely related sectors supporting the child and family to further inform and align services. This could include professionals from education, health, and social services (e.g. First Steps/Early intervention, public schools, therapists, and physicians).



CA Foundation 1: Music

Early learners develop foundational skills that support creative expression through voice, instruments, and objects.

CA1.1 Demonstrate creative music expression

Even before birth, children respond to music as a soothing mechanism. Children use **creative music expression** to process feelings, complex emotions, and life experiences. Musical skills develop when children are exposed to musical concepts, instruments, and a variety of music and sounds.

The development of creative music expression leads to:

- Understanding concepts such as rhythm, counting, patterns, and cause and effect
- Auditory processing skills
- Language development
- Collaboration
- Gross and fine motor development (e.g. using various parts of the body to play instruments)

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Starting in kindergarten and throughout first and second grade, students will work to understand music's expressive qualities (such as softer/louder, higher/lower, faster/slower, same/different) using music vocabulary (K-2 LR.5.2.1). Students will sing simple songs with expressive qualities, varied tonalities, and meters (K-2 P.7.2.2). Additionally, they will begin to audiate and accurately speak or sing familiar and unfamiliar rhymes and songs with varied forms, tempi, meters, and/or tonalities (K-2 LR.4.2.1). Students will also accurately play a variety of classroom instruments alone and with others using appropriate technique (K-2 P.8.2.1).

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Identify sounds during everyday activities (e.g. sounds while going for a walk).
- Attend opportunities in the community to see live music when possible.
- Create musical instruments using flexible thinking (e.g. pots and pans as drums).
- Engage with their child in familiar songs and chants.

Special Populations¹

Educators can:

- Provide opportunities and materials that are accessible to all children (e.g. ensuring the musical instruments are accessible to children with varying mobility or provide adaptations).
- Consider the use of visual supports throughout the environment.
- For DLL, engage with families to incorporate music that reflects their language and culture.

¹ With familial consent, we encourage early educators to collaborate with other service providers.

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' creative music expression:

CA1.1: Demonstrate creative music expression

Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Play a variety of appropriate music daily in an environment that encourages expression (e.g. music from various cultures).
- Intentionally select and play music at times throughout the day (i.e. avoid having music on all day as “background noise”).
- Call attention to various sounds in the environment (e.g. “ I hear birds chirping outside!”).
- Provide diverse options of noise making materials in various centers throughout the environment (e.g. home made simple instruments, rhythm sticks, bells, etc.).
- Model and encourage the use of music as a language to express thoughts, ideas and emotions.
- Sing with children at various times of the day (e.g. during transitions, washing hands, routine care for infants, etc.).
- Use consistent songs and fingerplays so that children can become familiar with them.
- Expose children to books that have lyrics or musical patterns (e.g. *Wheels on the Bus*).
- Look for opportunities to expose children to live music (e.g. inviting parents in to play guitar).

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Model responding to music and incorporate fingerplays throughout the day</p> <p>Demonstrate simple movements (e.g. clapping, patting legs, stomping, etc.)</p> <p>Imitate vocalizations playfully with infants (i.e. responding to sounds infants make)</p> <p>Make sounds for movements (e.g. “Wee!” when a child goes down the slide)</p> <p>Explain environmental sounds to infant (e.g. “Oh! That was loud. The door slammed shut.”)</p>	<p>Model responding to music and incorporate fingerplays throughout the day</p> <p>Use body parts to make sounds and music (e.g. clapping, patting the legs, stomping, snapping fingers, etc.)</p> <p>Make sounds for movements (e.g. “Wee!” when a child goes down the slide)</p> <p>Intentionally point out when sounds are similar or different (e.g. “This is really quiet, and this one is REALLY LOUD!”)</p>	<p>Model responding to music and incorporate fingerplays throughout the day</p> <p>Use body parts to make sounds and music (e.g. clapping, patting the legs, stomping, snapping fingers, etc.)</p> <p>Make sounds for movements (e.g. “Wee!” when a child goes down the slide)</p> <p>Acknowledge and encourage participation in sound play (e.g. rhyming songs and songs with patterns)</p>	<p>Provide materials for children to make their own instruments</p> <p>Encourage children to create their own songs and use their voice in different ways</p> <p>Consider “field trips”² or guests to play live music for children (e.g. parent comes in to play guitar)</p> <p>Play music with a variety of qualities (e.g. loud/soft) and ask children what emotions they experience</p> <p>Explain musical choices throughout the day and provide opportunities for children to select (e.g. “We play slow music at nap time to help us fall asleep!”)</p>	<p>Provide materials for children to make their own instruments</p> <p>Encourage children to create their own songs and use their voice in different ways</p> <p>Consider “field trips”³ or guests to play live music for children (e.g. parent comes in to play guitar)</p> <p>Play music with a variety of qualities (e.g.. loud/soft) and ask children what emotions they experience</p> <p>Explain musical choices throughout the day and provide opportunities for children to select (e.g. “We play slow music at nap time to help us fall asleep!”)</p>

²Please refer to any applicable licensing laws, rules, and related policies regulated by the Family and Social Services Administration and the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning. Additional information can be found here:

<https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/2734.htm>

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CA Foundation 2: Dance

Early learners develop foundational skills that support creative expression through movement.

CA2.1: Demonstrate creative movement expression

Our bodies naturally respond to sounds and music. Movement is natural for children at a young age. **Creative movement expression** provides the opportunity to process emotions in a way that creates body awareness and control.

Creative movement expression leads to:

- Body awareness, strength, and control (e.g. balance and coordination)
- Ability to cross the body's midline
- An understanding of rhythm, movements and patterns
- Spatial awareness
- Ability to follow directions and patterns
- Creating relationships with others

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

In kindergarten, students will begin to respond in movement to a variety of sensory stimuli using different body parts and the whole body (DA:Cr1.1.Ka) and explore different ways to do basic locomotor and non-locomotor movement (DA:Cr1.1.Kb). Additionally, students will isolate and move body parts in relation to other body parts and repeat and recall movements upon request (DA:Pr5.1.Kc). Students will also be able to Recognize and name an emotion that is experienced when watching, improvising or performing dance, and relate it to a personal experience or feelings (DA:Cn10.1.Ka).

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Play music and move with their children (e.g. sway/twirl with infant).
- Encourage and positively acknowledge creative movements.
- Provide time and materials for children to move when possible (e.g. paper plates, scarves, ribbon, etc.).
- Experience live creative movement opportunities in the local community when possible.

Special Populations⁴

Educators can:

- Collaborate with other service providers when appropriate and with parental/familial consent (e.g. implementing activities recommended by a child's OT/PT/Developmental Therapist).
- Plan and provide opportunities, space, and materials that are accessible to all children including those with varying mobility.
- For DLL, engage with families to incorporate music that reflects their language and culture.

⁴ With familial consent, we encourage early educators to collaborate with other service providers.

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' creative movement expression:

CA2.1: Demonstrate creative movement expression

Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Provide adequate space and time for children to move and dance safely throughout the environment.
- Provide time and space for children to move creatively both indoors and outdoors.
- Provide a variety of props to encourage children to move in a variety of ways (e.g. paper plates, hoops, scarves, etc.).
- Provide opportunities for children to move and dance freely during various activities (e.g. putting on music and encouraging children to move and reflect on emotions while painting).
- Model and encourage the use of body movement as a language to express thoughts, ideas and emotions.
- Encourage the use of creative movement expression to process emotions and life experiences (e.g. processing the arrival of a new sibling, moving to a new house, family separation, etc.).
- Play a variety of appropriate music daily in an environment that encourages movement (e.g. Freeze Dance, Hokey Pokey, etc.).
- Seek opportunities to promote body and spatial awareness (e.g. to promote spatial awareness - using specific terms such as up/down, low/high, fast/slow, etc.).
- Intentionally use vocabulary related to creative movement expression (e.g. spinning, twirling, jumping, swaying, etc.).
- Seek opportunities to expose children to live dance.
- Consider using dance and creative movement to teach other concepts (e.g. patterning and movement in music, how the body responds to those changes/patterns, etc.).

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
Use routine care opportunities to sing songs (e.g. <i>This Little Piggy</i> or singing during caregiving routines)	Respond to the children's verbal and non-verbal cues to dance and move	Respond to the children's verbal and non-verbal cues to dance and move	Observe and ask children questions to name movements and/or the thoughts, feelings, and ideas associated with them	Observe and ask children questions to name movements and/or the thoughts, feelings, and ideas associated with them
Dance and move freely with infants throughout the environment with or without music (potentially using as a calming technique)	Model and name physical movements	Encourage children to name physical movements (e.g. "I'm spinning!")	Provide opportunities for children to act out stories with their movements as you tell a story	Provide opportunities for children to act out stories with their movements as you tell a story
Model and name physical movements				



CA Foundation 3: Visual Arts

Early learners develop foundational skills that support creative expression through the process, production, and appreciation of visual art forms.

CA3.1: Demonstrate creative expression through the visual art process

The **visual art process** is the experience of manipulating materials and interacting with art. Engaging in the visual art process provides children the opportunity to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. Art process allows for children to experience cause and effect using a wide variety of materials.

The ability to understand the visual art process leads to:

- Sense of space
- Understanding of cause and effect
- Fine motor control
- Sensory processing
- Understanding of shapes and colors and how they interact

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

In kindergarten, students will be able to identify safe and non-toxic art materials, tools, and equipment (VA:Cr2.2.Ka) and engage in exploration and imaginative play with materials (VA:Cr1.1.Ka). Students will also engage collaboratively and/or individually in creative art making in response to an artistic problem (VA:Cr1.2.Ka). Lastly, students will be able to explain the process of making art while creating (VA: Cr3.1.Ka).

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Engage with their child in the art process at home.
- Ask probing questions (“What would happen if you use this brush instead? What does that feel like?”).
- Consider the use of household materials to engage in the art process (e.g. recyclable materials, kitchen utensils, shaving cream, etc.).

Special Populations⁵

Educators can:

- Provide adaptations or larger handles for art tools (e.g. paint brushes, etc.).
- Provide opportunities and materials that are accessible to all children (e.g. ensuring the art materials are accessible to children with varying mobility).
- For exceptional learners and DLL, ensure communication devices and visual supports include words related to the art process.

⁵ With familial consent, we encourage early educators to collaborate with other service providers.

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' creative expression through the visual art process:

CA3.1: Demonstrate creative expression through the visual art process

Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Plan for and focus on the creative art process rather than an expected product.
- Provide a wide variety of open-ended art materials that are appropriate for the age of the child (e.g. blank pieces of paper that are different colors, sizes and of varying weight, toilet paper rolls, etc.).
- Provide consistent opportunities for open-ended child-directed art experiences throughout the day.
- Provide creative materials throughout all centers to support creative expression (e.g. providing materials for children to create or design in the block area).
- Provide indoor and outdoor materials for children to engage in the art process (e.g. weaving in a fence with fabric pieces, colored bubbles on butcher paper, putting an easel or chalkboard outside).
- Provide opportunities to produce temporary art (e.g. using a stick to draw in the mud or sand, painting with water on playground surfaces, etc.).
- Expose children to various types of materials (e.g. fabrics, papers, etc.) from a variety of cultures.
- Model the use of art related vocabulary (lines, shapes, colors, textures, etc.).
- Consider providing opportunities to engage families in the art process (e.g. setting out materials in a common area for families to create with their children).

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Provide opportunities for infant to use their whole body to explore simple and safe art and sensory materials (e.g. using non-toxic paint and butcher paper on the floor or outside)⁶</p> <p>Create environments that support exploration and curiosity (i.e. limit the use of “baby containers” or equipment that restricts an infant’s movement such as bouncy seats, swings, etc.)</p>	<p>Provide a variety of simple and safe art and sensory materials (e.g. non-toxic clay or play dough)</p>	<p>Provide safe art and sensory materials (e.g. variety of materials including large craft sticks and non-toxic glue sticks)</p>	<p>Provide safe art and sensory materials (e.g. materials including water color paint, paint mixed with sand, fabric, yarn, collage materials, etc.)</p>	<p>Provide safe art and sensory materials (e.g. materials including water color paint, paint mixed with sand, fabric, yarn, collage materials, etc.)</p> <p>Consider field trips⁷ to local museums, visiting sculptures and ask questions about process, materials and techniques used</p>

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CA Foundation 3: Visual Arts

Early learners develop foundational skills that support creative expression through the process, production, and appreciation of visual art forms.

CA3.2: Demonstrate creative expression through visual art production

Visual art production is the creation of art with an end product in mind. It is providing opportunities to plan then produce something unique and original. The ability to create art and reflect on original products encourages young children to use art as a creative way to express their thoughts and process emotions.

Creative expression through visual art production leads to:

- Problem solving skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Project planning skills
- Confidence
- Ability to follow a plan (i.e. child follows their own plan for project)
- Fine motor skills
- Understanding healthy outlets for expression

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

Kindergarten students will create art that tells a story about a life experience (VA:CN.10.1.Ka) as well as art that represents natural and constructed environments (VA: Cr2.3.Ka). Lastly, students will work towards the ability to explain the process of making art while creating (VA: Cr3.1.Ka).

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Support self-directed creative expression at home.
- Provide appropriate space and materials (when possible) for the creative production.
- Use household materials for children to engage in creating art (e.g. paper plates, paper towel rolls, newspaper, magazines, etc.).

Special Populations⁸

Educators can:

- Provide adaptations or larger handles for art tools (e.g. paint brushes, etc.).
- Provide opportunities and materials that are accessible to all children (e.g. ensuring the art materials are accessible to children with varying mobility).
- Ensure communication devices and visual supports include words related to art production.

⁸ With familial consent, we encourage early educators to collaborate with other service providers.

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' creative expression through visual art production:

CA3.2: Demonstrate creative expression through visual art production

Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Encourage the use of visual art production to process emotions and life experiences (e.g. processing the arrival of a new sibling, moving to a new house, family separation, etc.).
- Provide creative materials throughout all centers to support creative expression (e.g. providing materials for children in the block center to draw a potential building or structure).
- Display the artwork of children throughout the environment and at children's eye level.
- Provide opportunities for and engage with children as they safely explore materials through art production (i.e. get messy and engaging children in clean up efforts).
- Provide a wide variety of open-ended art materials appropriate for the age of the child (e.g. blank pieces of paper that are different colors, sizes and of varying weight, avoiding the use of coloring sheets).
- Provide indoor and outdoor opportunities for children to engage in the art process (e.g. weaving in a fence with fabric pieces, colored bubbles on butcher paper, putting an easel or chalkboard outside).
- Use art as a mechanism for the processing and identifying emotions (e.g. encourage children to express emotions and help the child to associate feelings with colors, shapes, etc.).
- Expose children to various types of visual arts (e.g. pottery, painting, watercolor) from a variety of cultures.
- Provide consistent opportunities for open-ended, child-directed art experiences throughout the day (i.e. not mandated participation).
- Ask open ended and extension questions while children are engaged in art creation.
- Model the use of art related vocabulary (lines, shapes, colors, textures, etc.).
- Consider providing opportunities to engage families in the art production within the program (e.g. setting out materials in a common area for families to create with their children).

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Provide opportunities for infant to use their whole body to explore simple and safe art/ sensory materials (e.g. using non-toxic paint, pudding, jello, or cool whip and butcher paper on the floor or outside)⁹</p> <p>Create environments that support exploration and curiosity (i.e. limit the use of "baby containers" or equipment that restricts an infant's movement such as bouncy seats, swings, etc.)</p> <p>Display artwork at children's eye level</p>	<p>Provide a variety of simple and safe art and sensory materials (e.g. non-toxic clay or play dough)</p> <p>Display artwork at children's eye level</p>	<p>Provide safe art and sensory materials (e.g. variety of materials including large craft sticks, non-toxic glue sticks)</p> <p>Display artwork at children's eye level and provide descriptions</p>	<p>Provide safe art and sensory materials (e.g. materials including water color paint, paint mixed with sand, fabric, yarn, collage materials, etc.)</p> <p>Display artwork at children's eye level and provide descriptions</p>	<p>Provide safe art and sensory materials (e.g. materials including water color paint, paint mixed with sand, fabric, yarn, collage materials, etc.)</p> <p>Display artwork at children's eye level and give children the opportunity to provide descriptions and display (e.g. providing painter's tape and allowing children to display their own artwork or designating a shelf for 3D artwork)</p>

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CA Foundation 3: Visual Arts

Early learners develop foundational skills that support creative expression through the process, production, and appreciation of visual art forms.

CA3.3: Demonstrate creative expression through art appreciation

People all over the world create art as a communication tool to express themselves as a culture and as an individual. **Art appreciation** provides the opportunity to reflect and understand the effort and emotion put into pieces of art. When young children are exposed to various pieces and types of art, they gain insight into their own preferences around art as well.

Art appreciation leads to the ability to:

- Recognize art in the environment
- Understand art's role in culture and history
- Compare/contrast
- Use of different techniques to create art with various media
- Distinguish between images and real objects

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

In kindergarten, students will begin to identify the purpose of an artwork (VA:Cn11.1.Ka) and interpret art by identifying subject matter and describing relevant details (VA:Re8.1.Ka). Students will also be able to describe what an image represents (VA:Re7.2Ka).

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Engage with art created in the program and ask extended questions to their children about what they have created.
- Point out colors, shapes, and symmetry in indoor and outdoor environments (e.g. acknowledging leaves turning colors during the fall).
- When possible, consider visiting works of art in the local community (e.g. statues, murals, etc.).

Special Populations¹⁰

Educators can:

- Expose children with visual disabilities to various textures so they can “feel” the art (e.g. art that includes clay, shells, sandpaper, sand, etc.).
- Plan and provide opportunities, space, and art that are accessible to all children including those with varying mobility.

¹⁰ With familial consent, we encourage early educators to collaborate with other service providers.

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners’ creative expression through art appreciation:

CA3.3: Demonstrate creative expression through art appreciation

Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Expose children to various types of visual arts (e.g. pottery, painting, watercolor, fabrics) from a variety of cultures.
- Display the artwork of children throughout the environment and at children’s eye level.
- Model the use of art related vocabulary (lines, shapes, colors, textures, etc.).
- Notice specific attributes of children’s artwork or the artwork they’re experiencing (e.g. “I noticed how you used large and small paint brushes to create this piece!”).
- Consider providing opportunities for families to reflect on opportunities to discuss art created in the program.
- Provide consistent opportunities for children to think about and respond to original works of art (e.g. “See, Think, Wonder”).

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
Display artwork at children’s eye level	Display artwork at children’s eye level	Display artwork at children’s eye level and provide descriptions	<p>Display artwork at children’s eye level and provide descriptions</p> <p>Provide children opportunities to share and display their artwork with others in ways that are meaningful to them</p> <p>Consider field trips¹¹ to places in the community or museums where children can reflect on various types of art (statues, murals, paintings, etc.)</p>	<p>Display artwork at children’s eye level and give children the opportunity to provide descriptions and display (e.g. providing painter’s tape and allowing children to display their own artwork or designating a shelf for 3D artwork)</p> <p>Provide children opportunities to share and display their artwork with others in ways that are meaningful to them</p> <p>Consider field trips¹² to places in the community or museums where children can reflect on various types of art (statues, murals, paintings, etc.)</p>

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CA Foundation 4: Dramatic Play

Early learners develop foundational skills that support creative expression through dramatic play.

CA4.1: Demonstrate creative expression through dramatic play

Creative expression through dramatic play

provides children the opportunity to practice life and develop empathy through engaging in various roles in society and family structures in a safe environment. Dramatic play gives young children an opportunity to explore the world, process feelings, emotions, thoughts, ideas, and assume various roles.

Creative expression through dramatic play leads to:

- Positive communication skills
- Sense of self and confidence
- Empathy
- Problem solving and flexible thinking
- Cultural appreciation
- Understanding and appreciation for dramatic plays and theater experiences

Looking Ahead to Kindergarten

With prompting and support, in dramatic play or guided drama experiences, kindergarten students will invent and inhabit an imaginary place/environment (Th:Cr.1.1.K.a) and use available materials to create props, puppets, and costume pieces (Th:Cr.1.1K.b). Students will also interact with peers and contribute to dramatic play or guided drama experiences (Th:Cr2-K.a). Lastly, students will identify characters (Th:Pr4.1.k) and name and describe settings (Th:Re8.1.k) in dramatic play or guided drama experiences.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to:

- Engage in dramatic play alongside children, following their lead as dramatic play unfolds.
- Support children's self-expression and discovery varied interests.
- Provide space and time for children to engage in dramatic play and encourage the flexible use of materials (e.g. boxes, scarves, etc.).

Special Populations¹³

Educators can:

- Ensure that real objects are available to children in the dramatic play area.
- Ensure that materials are accessible to all children regardless of mobility (e.g. children in brace or wheelchair)
- For exceptional learners and DLL, acknowledge and respond to verbal and non-verbal contributions of all children during play.

¹³ With familial consent, we encourage early educators to collaborate with other service providers.

Powerful Practices

Examples of ways adults can support young learners' creative expression through dramatic play:

CA4.1: Demonstrate creative expression through dramatic play

Across all developmental stages, educators can:

- Encourage the use of dramatic play to process emotions and life experiences (e.g. processing the arrival of a new sibling, moving to a new house, family separation, etc.).
- Provide materials that reflect the cultures and communities of children, families, and staff within the environment.
- Provide open ended materials that are easily accessible to provide links to other concepts and topics (e.g. materials that are relevant to children's daily experiences).
- Be flexible in adapting the schedule to focus on children's interests and meaningful learning opportunities.
- Provide materials that reflect the diversity of age, ability, family structure, gender, employment/job roles, etc (e.g. providing dresses, ties, suit coats, hats, and encouraging children to use all materials).
- Support fluid movement of materials throughout the indoor and outdoor environment (i.e. dramatic play not just confined to the dramatic play center).
- Ensure materials are available that encourage problem solving, creative thinking, and flexibility (e.g. cloth, scarves, cardboard boxes, etc.).
- Engage in dramatic play alongside children, following their lead as dramatic play unfolds.
- Follow verbal and non-verbal cues of children during dramatic play and expand on topics (e.g. educator asks to write down the recipe of a child making spaghetti in the dramatic play center).
- Use dramatic play opportunities to enrich vocabulary and expand children's thinking by asking open ended and meaningful questions to expand.

Infant	Younger Toddler	Older Toddler	Younger Preschool	Older Preschool
<p>Acknowledge and respond to infants imitating actions and expressions of caregivers (e.g. infant comes up to educator with a spoon and educator pretends to eat it)</p> <p>Play games with predictable responses and outcomes (e.g. Peek-A-Boo)</p> <p>Provide materials that prompt infants to imitate actions of others (e.g. baby dolls, pots/pans, etc.)</p> <p>Responding to verbal and non-verbal cues using props (e.g. infant brings up and a piece of food and educator "bites" it)</p> <p>Create environments that supports onlooker play (e.g. place infant on the floor and in close proximity to peers throughout the day)</p>	<p>Provide open ended materials and encourage children to freely explore materials indoors and outdoors (e.g. creating mudpies outside, using natural materials as "food", etc.)</p> <p>Model the use of objects as symbols for other things (e.g. using a block as a phone, putting a bowl on head as a "hat")</p> <p>Read and make accessible books that include characters and animals (e.g. while reading books about a farm, asking "What does the cow say?")</p> <p>Sing songs and fingerplays that include characters and animals (e.g. <i>Old McDonald</i>, <i>Animal Action</i>, etc.)</p> <p>Create environments that supports solitary and parallel play (e.g. have duplicates of similar objects and space where children can play independently or side by side)</p>	<p>Provide open ended materials and encourage children to freely explore materials indoors and outdoors (e.g. using cloth to become a superhero, animal, family member, etc.)</p> <p>Model taking on characteristics of people, characters, or animals (e.g. educator puts on a cape to become a superhero)</p> <p>Create environments that supports parallel play (e.g. have duplicates of similar objects and space where children can play alongside each other)</p>	<p>Provide open ended materials and encourage children to freely explore materials indoors and outdoors (e.g. using acorns or other natural materials as "food" or people)</p> <p>Provide extended opportunities for children to engage in child-directed dramatic play, following the cues of children (i.e. Child approaches educator and says, "Can I take your order?" and educator responds, "What are my options?")</p> <p>Play songs that encourage and promote pretend play and movement (e.g. <i>Bear Hunt</i>, <i>Wheels on the Bus</i>)</p> <p>Create environments that supports associative play (e.g. two or more children are discussing their buildings but may not be working on the same project)</p>	<p>Provide open ended materials and encourage children to freely explore materials indoors and outdoors (e.g. using acorns or other natural materials as "food" or people, mud kitchens, hoses, etc.)</p> <p>Play songs that encourage and promote pretend play and movement (e.g. <i>Bear Hunt</i>, <i>Wheels on the Bus</i>)</p> <p>Provide and rotate safe real world props and materials (e.g. phones, keyboard, desk phone, plates, forks and spoons, etc.)</p> <p>Create environments that supports cooperative play (e.g. children may plan and assign roles while playing restaurant)</p>

Acknowledgements

The Indiana Department of Education is grateful to the following professionals for their input into the creation of this guidance:

Sarah Bailey, Infancy Onward; Mental Health America of Indiana

Lacey Bohlen, Indiana Department of Education

Danielle Capstick, Early Learning Indiana

Amanda Clapp, Bright Start Child Care Ministry

Dawn Cole-Easterday, Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children

Erin Donovan, Ivy Tech Community College

Felecia Jordan, Indiana Department of Education

Erin Kissling, Indiana Department of Education

Amy Marine, Chances and Services for Youth

Sarah Mohr, Indiana Department of Education

Christopher Nunn, Indiana University

Sarah Parks-Reese, Indiana Department of Education

Diane Pike, Saint Mary's Child Center

Dr. Megan Purcell, Purdue University

Danielle Riddell, Chances and Services for Youth

Pamela Roadruck, Family and Social Services Administration, Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning

Tiffani Roll, Bright Start Child Care Ministry

Krystal Robinson, Indiana Department of Education

Aubrey Schrader, Indianapolis Public Schools

Rose Tomishima, Indiana Department of Education

Jessica Tomasino, Indiana Department of Education

Shael Weidenbach, Art With a Heart

Allyson Zimmerman, Family and Social Services Administration, Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning

For additional resources, please see the Early Learning Foundations Guidance Online Tool at www.doe.in.gov/earlylearning.