Resources on Social and Emotional Development and Early Learning Standards

Information Request:

This State's Department of Education would like information on how the research defines skills in social-emotional development, approaches to learning, and executive function, to inform planned revisions to the early childhood indicators of progress for children birth to three and three to five years old, including examples of how other states have identified these domains/constructs in their standards documents.

State's Goal:

This State's Departments of Education, Human Services and Health are working together to ensure that standards for children ages birth through grade three are aligned across ages/grades, and address all domains of development key to children's learning and success in school. State leaders are putting in place a long-term plan for regular revisions to each of the relevant documents. In late May, a revisions team will begin to revise standards for children birth through age five in the language arts, social-emotional, and approaches to learning domains.

What We Know:

The State is engaged in ambitious systems change in early childhood, spurred by recent receipt of the federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant. The RTT-ELC grant is implementing reforms in all sectors serving young children, including developing a kindergarten entry assessment; scaling up Parent Aware, the quality improvement system for child care; and providing professional development for teachers and leaders. Additionally, the state is working toward a birth-to-third-grade policy structure, and is currently engaged in significant efforts to implement the Common Core State Standards. The state agencies are coming together to build on decades of work to support families and practitioners in ensuring a healthy start and success in school for young children.

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Response:

How does research define social-emotional learning and executive function?

Social-emotional learning and approaches to learning are two of the domains identified by the National Educational Goals Panel (1996) report as critical domains of school readiness[1]. Thus, most states include social-emotional learning and approaches to learning in their standards documents. More recently, researchers have begun to identify additional "noncognitive" skills, such as executive function, self-control, and self-regulation that begin to develop in the preschool years and are associated with school readiness and school success. These terms are often used interchangeably, and in some research, skills such as "working memory" are considered constructs of the cognitive domain. Noncognitive skills are increasingly discussed in college and career ready standards and preparation for higher education[2].

Two of the primary sources of information and research on social and emotional learning and executive function are the Collaborative for Social, Emotional and Academic Learning and the Harvard Center on the Developing Child.

Collaborative for Social, Emotional and Academic Learning

(CASEL) http://casel.org/

CASEL has identified five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies.

The definitions of the five competency clusters for students are:

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

- **Social awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.

- **Responsible decision-making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

[1]The National Educational Goals Panel (1996). The National Educational Goals Panel Report: Building a Nation of Learners. Washington, DC: Author. http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/reports/goalsrep.pdf

[2]Sedlacek, W. E. (2011). Using noncognitive variables in assessing readiness for higher education. Readings on Equal Education. 25, 187-205. Retrieved on May 10, 2013 at http://www.usc.edu/programs/cerpp/docs/UsingNCV-Sedlacek.pdf

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For Further Information:

- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (nd). What is Social and Emotional Learning. Chicago, IL: Author. http://casel.org/why-it-matters/what-is-sel/

- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (December, 2007). Background on Social and Emotional Learning. CASEL briefs. Chicago, IL: Author. http://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/SELCASELbackground.pdf

- Zins, J.E. & Elias, M.J. (2006). Social and Emotional Learning, Chapter 1,pgs 1-14. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists. http://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/elias_zins.pdf

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

http://developingchild.harvard.edu/

The Center on the Developing Child refers to noncognitive skills, or executive function, as skills that include the ability to focus and ignore distractions, retain and use new information, plan actions and revise plans as needed, and inhibit impulsive behavior. Executive Function includes the following core concepts/sets of skills:

1. Working Memory is the ability to hold and manipulate information over short periods of time.

2. Cognitive or Mental Flexibility is the ability to adjust to changes circumstances or perspectives.

3. Inhibitory Control is the ability to filter distractions, interruptions, and resist temptations to sustain attention and focus. In other words, to pause and think before acting.

The development of these skills begins in early childhood and continues through late adolescence. Executive functions are the foundation of early school success and academic achievement and are integral to the development of social, emotional and moral development. Strong, positive relationships with adults and peers play a strong role in the development of executive functions skills, and repeated exposures to stress have a detrimental effect on the development of executive function. Research has shown that executive function skills are malleable and can be affected by curricula that offer opportunities to practice and scaffold the development of these skills throughout development.

For Further Information:

- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011). Building the Brain's "Air Traffic Control" System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function: Working Paper No. 11. Available at: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/reports_and_working_papers/working_papers/wp11/

- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004). Children's Emotional Development Is Built into the Architecture of Their Brains: Working Paper No. 2. Available at: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/reports_and_working_papers/working_papers/wp2/

- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (nd). In Brief: Executive Function: Skills for Life and Learning, paper and video. Available at: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/briefs/inbrief_series/inbrief_executive_function/

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State Example of Professional Development on Executive Function:

The Washington State Department of Early Learning is one of the Center on the Developing Child's Frontiers of Innovation states. Through this project they have developed an on-line professional development course for teachers/caregivers of young children on the core skills of executive function and practices to support development in young children.

- For Information on Frontiers of Innovation

Available at: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/activities/frontiers_of_innovation/foi_activities/

- To review the Washington State Department of Early Learning Course on Executive Function

Available at: http://www.deltraining.com/courses/Executive_Function/content-frame.htm

How have states addressed social-emotional development, approaches to learning, and executive function, in learning standards for children birth through age five?

Most states include domains of social and emotional development in their early learning standards following the NEGP report; and many states include approaches to learning, especially for standards for preschool children. As of this time, no state identifies a "separate domain" for executive function but may include related skills such as creativity, play, self-regulation, working memory, in other domains. The recently revised Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (2011) includes social-emotional development, approaches to learning, and logic and reasoning as separate domains, and notes that executive function skills are embedded throughout all 10 domains.

In 2010, CASEL conducted a scan of state social and emotional standards from birth through high school. Key findings of the report are:

- 50 states included social-emotional learning in their prekindergarten standards

- 34 states included social and emotional learning in infant-toddler standards

- Illinois is the only state that has freestanding social and emotional standards for K-12 (see reference below on how this came to be and lessons learned in implementation).

- The two most widely used source documents in the development of early learning standards was the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (48% of respondents) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children Birth through Age 8 (60% of respondents).

CASEL also produced an interactive website of states social and emotional learning standards, for infant-toddlers, Prekindergarten, and K-12. The website allows users to compare how states address domains and skills related to social and emotional learning across each age/grade group.

For Further Information:

- Dusenbury, L., Zadrazil, J., Mart, A. & Weissberg, R. (April 2011) State Learning Standards to Advance Social and Emotional Learning: The State Scan of Social and Emotional Learning Standards, preschool through high school. Chicago, IL: CASEL.

Available at: http://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/Forum-Brief-on-the-State-Scan-5-10-2011.pdf

- Gordon, R. Ji, P., Mulhali, P., Shaw, B. & Weissberg, R. (2011). Social and Emotional Learning for Illinois Students: Policy, Practice and Progress: How Illinois SEL standards came to be and what the state has learned from putting them into practice. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, Institute of Government and Public Affairs.

Available at: http://casel.org/publications/igpa-illinois-report/

- Social and Emotional Learning In Your State, Interactive Website.

Selected State Examples:

Chart 1 (attached) identifies the standards and indicators of social and emotional development in three states. Idaho, Pennsylvania, and Washington have aligned social-emotional standards from birth through early elementary standards.

Considerations on how these states addressed approaches to learning and/or executive function:

Idaho aligned standards for Social and Emotional Development (Domain 3) from early childhood through 3rd grade. The domain of Approaches to Learning and Cognitive Development embeds executive function within this domain. 16 core concepts are identified as "goals" with information on developmental growth, indicators of progress, and caregiver strategies noted for each age range from birth through third grade.

See: http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Children/IELeGuidelines/Idaho_Early_Learning_eGuidelines.htm

Pennsylvania has early learning standards for children birth through 2nd grade, revised in 2009, and currently under revision. The early learning standards also include the domain of Approaches to Learning through Play for infants through kindergarten and Approaches to Learning for 1st and 2nd grade. PK-12 academic standards include an interpersonal domain.

Washington has aligned standards from early childhood through 3rd grade, revised in 2012. Domains related to social-emotional development, approaches to learning and executive function include the following: "about me and my family and culture" and "building relationships."

Additionally the following states have recently revised or are currently revising standards for children birth through age five:

Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards for Birth through Age 5 (final revisions by June 2013)

See: http://www.gelds.decal.ga.gov/Default.aspx

- Social and Emotional Development

- Approaches to Play and Learning

Maryland Social Foundations Standards for preschool age 3, preschool age 4, and kindergarten (2013 draft for public comment by May 15)

See: http://marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/E9C73915-866E-4E12-876D-928815E229A2/35602/SEFELframework_draft032013.pdf

- Social Foundations (to replace Personal and Social Development, including personal self-regulation, social self-regulation, approaches to learning)

Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards (October 2012) for children birth through kindergarten entry

See: http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/elds.php

- Social-Emotional Development

- Approaches Toward Learning

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Next Steps:

After a review of the information presented in this document and the resources below, we recommend that we schedule a call with the state early learning standards leadership team to discuss the information to identify questions and next steps for technical assistance.   The following are initial considerations for the team:

What constructs and skills to include in the standards from birth through age five?

The current birth-to-three standards include the domain of social and emotional development and the three-to-five standards include both social and emotional development and approaches to learning. The research on social and emotional development and executive function identified here can help the revisions team determine the degree to which these skills are represented in the current standards and indicators for children birth to age three, and three to five. A cross-walk of these skills and the related domains, sub-domains (core concepts), and indicators of progress will help to identify areas where there may be gaps in the developmental trajectories of these skills.

Most states (except for Maryland) are using the domains of social-emotional development and approaches to learning and embedding executive function skills within these domains and most have used the same language for many of the areas/goals across the age levels. However, to develop indicators that reflect the trajectories of these skills and behaviors across the age span will be more complex. The field does not have adequate research to help define what these skills and behaviors look like at the different ages.

1. The revisions team may want to engage a content expert to either review the cross-walk and/or conduct a more intensive content analysis to identify the developmentally appropriate learning trajectory of social-emotional, approaches to learning, and executive function skills. CEELO can help the team identify appropriate content experts or researchers to conduct a high complexity analysis of standards, core concepts and indicators, if needed.

What language and format should be used to describe standards and indicators so expectations are clear to adults?

Regarding your request for information and guidance on "examples of how the language in state documents make the skill/expectation clear to adults, measureable, and support healthy child development?" You will note that some states use language "child will" and "the child(ren)" and other states frame indicators around the skill identified, such as "shows interest in…." This decision is related to a larger set of decisions around the age range covered (i.e., one set of standards for birth through age five or two standard documents), target audience, structure, number of levels, number of items, and supporting resources to be included in the document. As a first step, we would suggest that the revisions team review "writing ELGs" section of the Early Learning and Development Resources (see: http://earlylearningguidelines-standards.org/content.php?s=writing_elgs). Resources here identify a number of considerations and recommendations. CEELO would be happy to assist the team in working through these questions and providing additional information to help make decisions on which approach is best.

How will the revisions to the early learning standards impact and align with other elements of a comprehensive early childhood system?

Standards are one component of a comprehensive early childhood system, and many other elements align with the standards, including curriculum and assessment. This state is engaged in a number of early childhood projects as part of their Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, such as implementing a kindergarten entry assessment as part of a comprehensive assessment system. These and other efforts to improve outcomes for young children have significant implications for early learning standards. It helps to have a good understanding, and long-term plan, of how the upcoming revision in both domains will build on successful efforts in professional development, training, and quality improvement (e.g. Parent Aware) and trigger needed changes in these or other elements of the system.

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Additional Resources:

Domitrovich, C., Dusenbury, L. & Hyson, M. (2012) "Beyond Academic Competence: The Foundations of School Success", presented at the Aligning and Implementing Birth - Third Grade Learning Standards: A Strong Foundation for College and Career-Training Readiness Conference. Philadelphia, PA: National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/meeting--webcast-materials/page-health-meetings-webcasts/col2-content/main-content-list/aligning-and-implementing-birth.html

Early Learning and Development Standards Resources, available at:
http://earlylearningguidelines-standards.org/index.php?s=home

• This website is a collection of resources intended to inform state decision-makers on the key decisions and considerations in standards development and alignment. Developed by Sharon Lynn Kagan and Catherine Scott-Little, researchers with vast experience in standards development, revision, and alignment, as well as implications for curriculum and assessment, and professional development.

Mangione, P. & Zur, O. (2012) The Alignment of California Preschool Learning Foundations with Key Early Education Resources: California Infant-Toddler Learning and Development Foundations, California Content Standards, Common Core State Standards, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. California Department of Education, available at: http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/psalignment.pdf

• This document offers detailed information on how one state approached an examination of alignment across multiple standards for children birth through kindergarten. Beginning with a review of the purpose and context of each set of standards, tables illustrate the alignment of all domains across standards, and subsequent tables provide a deeper look within each domain and corresponding indicators across standards.

State Early Learning Standards: Lessons from Applying Implementation Research, Bridge Webinar, sponsored by CEELO and the Northeast and Islands Regional Education Laboratory on April 24, 2013. Recordings and resources are available at: http://www.relnei.org/events/event-archive/state-early-learning-standards-implementation-research.html

• This webinar discusses issues related to implementation of standards that will be helpful for the team to consider. Catherine Scott-Little addresses quality of standards and approaches states are taking to revise and align standards; Melissa Van Dyke of the National Implementation Research Network discusses implications from implementation science; and Harriet Feldlaufer shares the experiences of CT to support effective use of the early learning standards.

Suggested citation:

Connors-Tadros, L. (2013). *Research and Information on Social and Emotional Learning to Inform Birth through Age Five Standards Revision.* CEELO FASTfacts, New Brunswick, NJ: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes.

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CHART 1:

Idaho, Pennsylvania and Washington Standards for Infant-Toddlers, PreKindergarten and K-12 Social and Emotional Development Domain

The following table identifies standards related to social and emotional development for Idaho, Pennsylvania, and Washington. They were selected as examples of states that have aligned social and emotional standards from birth through 3rd grade. The information is excerpted from the "Social Emotional Learning in Your State" interactive website of the Collaborative for Social, Emotional and Academic Learning (CASEL) http://casel.org/policy-advocacy/sel-in-your-state/

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Links to source documents: Birth through kindergarten early learning standards—
http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Children/IELeGuidelines/Idaho_Early_Learning_eGuidelines.htm

Infant/Toddler	Pre-K	K-12
Social and Emotional Development	**Social and Emotional Development**	**Social and Emotional Development**
• **Sub-Domain: Social Development**	• **Sub-Domain: Social Development**	• **Sub-Domain: Social Development**
∗ Goal 27: Children trust, interact with, and seek assistance from adults.	∗ Goal 27: Children trust, interact with, and seek assistance from adults.	∗ Goal 27: Children trust, interact with, and seek assistance from adults.
∗ Goal 28: Children develop friendships with peers.	∗ Goal 28: Children develop friendships with peers.	∗ Goal 28: Children develop friendships with peers.
∗ Goal 29: Children demonstrate positive negotiation skills.	∗ Goal 29: Children demonstrate positive negotiation skills.	∗ Goal 29: Children demonstrate positive negotiation skills.
∗ Goal 30: Children demonstrate awareness of behavior and its effects on others.	∗ Goal 30: Children demonstrate awareness of behavior and its effects on others.	∗ Goal 30: Children demonstrate awareness of behavior and its effects on others.
∗ Goal 31: Children participate positively in group activities.	∗ Goal 31: Children participate positively in group activities.	∗ Goal 31: Children participate positively in group activities.
∗ Goal 32: Children demonstrate sympathy and empathy.	∗ Goal 32: Children demonstrate sympathy and empathy.	∗ Goal 32: Children demonstrate sympathy and empathy.
∗ Goal 33: Children develop a sense of humor.	∗ Goal 33: Children develop a sense of humor.	∗ Goal 33: Children develop a sense of humor.
∗ Goal 34: Children adapt to diverse settings.	∗ Goal 34: Children adapt to diverse settings.	∗ Goal 34: Children adapt to diverse settings.
∗ Goal 35: Children recognize, appreciate, and respect similarities and differences in people.	∗ Goal 35: Children recognize, appreciate, and respect similarities and differences in people.	∗ Goal 35: Children recognize, appreciate, and respect similarities and differences in people.
• **Sub-Domain: Emotional Development**	• **Sub-Domain Emotional Development**	• **Sub-Domain Emotional Development**
∗ Goal 36: Children perceive themselves as unique individuals.	∗ Goal 36: Children perceive themselves as unique individuals.	∗ Goal 36: Children perceive themselves as unique individuals.
∗ Goal 37: Children demonstrate belief in their abilities.	∗ Goal 37: Children demonstrate belief in their abilities.	∗ Goal 37: Children demonstrate belief in their abilities.
∗ Goal 38: Children regulate their feelings and impulses.	∗ Goal 38: Children regulate their feelings and impulses.	∗ Goal 38: Children regulate their feelings and impulses.

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Links to source documents:

Infants-Toddlers through 2nd grade standards: http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=career_standards

PK-12 Standards: http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/Student_Interpersonal_Skills_Standards.pdf

Infant/Toddler	Pre-K	K-12
Social and Emotional Development: Learning About Myself and Others * Self Concept (Identity) * Self Regulation * Pro-Social Relationships with Adults * Pro-Social Relationships with Peers	**Social and Emotional Development: Learning About Myself and Others** * Self Concept (Identity) * Self Regulation * Pro-Social Relationships with Adults * Pro-Social Relationships with Peers	**Social and Emotional Development: Learning About Myself and Others** * Self Concept (identity) * Self Regulation * Pro-Social Relationships with Adults * Pro-Social Relationship with Peers **1st-2nd Grade:** * Develop Self Concept * Develop Self Regulation * Develop Social Interaction * Develop Care and Resilience **PK-12 Interpersonal Skills Standards** * Self-Awareness and Self-Management * Establishing and Maintaining Relationships * Decision Making and Responsible Behavior

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Washington

Links to source documents:

http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/development/docs/Guidelines.pdf

Infant/Toddler	Pre-K	K-12
About me and my family and culture	**About me and my family and culture**	**EALR 1: The student uses listening and observation skills and strategies to gain understanding.**
* Family and Culture	* Self-concept	* Uses listening and observation skills and strategies to focus attention and interpret information.
* Self-concept	* Self-management	* Understands, analyzes, synthesizes, or evaluates information from a variety of sources.
* Self-management	* Learning about Learning	**EALR 2: The student uses communication skills and strategies to interact/work effectively with others.**
* Learning about Learning	**Building Relationships**	* Uses language to interact effectively and responsibly in a multicultural context.
Building Relationships	* Interactions with Adults	* Uses interpersonal skills and strategies in a multicultural context to work collaboratively, solve problems, and perform tasks.
* Interactions with Adults	* Interactions with Peers	* Uses skills and strategies to communicate interculturally.
* Interactions with Peers	* Social Behavior	**EALR 3: The student uses communication skills and strategies to effectively present ideas and one's self in a variety of situations.**
* Social Behavior	* Problem-solving and Conflict Resolution	* Uses knowledge of topic/theme, audience, and purpose to plan presentations.
		* Uses media and other resources to support presentations.
		* Uses effective delivery.
		EALR 4: The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of communication.
		* Assesses effectiveness of one's own and others' communication.
		* Sets goals for improvement.

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