

## **PRE-KINDERGARTEN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Carefully developed early learning expectations linked to K-12 standards contribute to a more cohesive, unified approach to young children's education. The mission of the Pre-kindergarten Review Committee, to define Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) Pre-kindergarten Foundation for Common Core Standards, led to two important challenges. The Foundation for the Common Core Standards had to be defined in such a way as to acknowledge and support the unique developmental learning of preschool age children. The pre-kindergarten document refers to and is aligned with the K12 Montana Common Core Standards. While pre-kindergarten children are ages three through five, this document presents skills expected at the completion of preschool.

The committee researched the work of other states, including Massachusetts, New Jersey, California and New York. The New York State Pre-Kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core is organized into five broad developmental and interrelated domains. The work of this committee was informed by and emerges primarily from the New York document.

This document focuses extensively on the learning styles of young children and addresses this unique stage of developing learning abilities as well as targeted information and specific skills.

The five distinct, but highly interrelated domains provide the structure for MCPS Pre-kindergarten Foundation for Common Core Standards.

1. Approaches to Learning – initiating and enhancing children's involvement in learning and acquiring knowledge.
2. Physical Development and Health – children's physical health, movement, and ability to engage in daily activities.
3. Social and Emotional Development – emerging emotional competence and ability to build positive relationships that add meaning to children's experiences in the home, school, and larger community.
4. Communication, Language, and Literacy – children's creation, communication, and understand of meaning.
5. Cognition and Knowledge of the World – children's needed knowledge and understanding about their world and how they apply what they know. This domain is the most direct reflection of the content competencies and knowledge of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Pre-kindergarten teachers, caregivers, and parents can determine what children are learning, what they enjoy, and what they have mastered, through careful observation of their play, work, and interactions with others, both in the classroom and in other environments. Listening and conversing with children, as well as examining and commenting on their creations and explorations, provide valuable information about each child's individual learning and development. The Montana Common Core Standards provide an essential beginning for developing and implementing high quality curriculum, creating meaningful and appropriate learning experiences for preschool age children across Montana, and informing other critical processes such as designing learning environments, planning standards-based instruction and assessment, as well as pre-service and in-service training for administrators and teachers, and results-oriented parent engagement.

### **The MCPS Preschool Common Core Standards and Success for All Students**

The primary purpose of pre-kindergarten standards is to ensure that all MCPS children have rich and varied early learning experiences that prepare them for success in school and lay the foundation for college and career readiness.

### **Preschool Children with Disabilities**

The MCPS Pre-kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core Standards will assist all early childhood professionals in setting high expectations for children. Pre-kindergarten children with disabilities and their typically developing peers are all capable of learning, achieving, and making developmental progress. Pre-kindergarten children with disabilities need specially designed instruction, related services, and supports designed to address their disabilities and ensure their participation in age-appropriate activities with non-disabled peers. Each pre-kindergarten child with an identified disability has an individualized educational program (IEP) which documents his/her individual goals, supports, and services as determined by his/her needs, strengths, and abilities. These individual supports, accommodations, and services are designed to assist the child to meet the goals in his/her IEP as well as to achieve the learning standards.

### **Indian Education for All**

The MCPS Pre-Kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core Standards reflects the constitutional mandate that all educators must provide instruction including the distinct and unique heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner. The wide variety of methods, materials, activities, and resources incorporated in pre-kindergarten education will include those by and about American Indians, to gain a better understanding of themselves and their fellow citizens.