

UPK

Universal
PreKindergarten

*California's
Great Start*



How to use this tool

This tool can be shared with expanded learning staff who are working with preschool-aged children for the first time. Approaches may include:

- Including these slides as part of a staff training;
- Providing staff with self-directed learning time;
- Integrating information within these slides into staff meetings and discussion;
- Serving as the basis for deeper discussions around overlapping characteristics of playful learning and quality expanded learning programs.

Potential outcomes from using this tool

By accessing the information and resources contained within this deck, expanded learning staff will have:

- ↑ Increased knowledge of Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) and Expanded Learning in California, including the intersection between UPK and expanded learning programs;
- ↑ Improved understanding of child development of preschool-aged children;
- ↑ Improved understanding of play-based learning and why it is important;
- ↑ Increased knowledge of how current Point-of-Service Quality Standards for expanded learning programs can be applied to working with preschool-aged children; and
- ↑ Access to introductory resources and tools that can support professional learning around supporting a play-based learning environment for preschool-aged children in expanded learning programs.

Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) is the expansion of the state's strategy to meet the early education needs of 3- and 4-year-old children and their families.

UPK brings families more choices for preschool, including Transitional Kindergarten, which will be available to all 4-year-olds by 2025-2026.

UPK is an essential part of transforming California's schools and giving every student in California a great start. Expanded learning

programs are a critical piece of California's UPK strategy.



Expanded Learning Opportunities Program

- The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) provides \$4 billion to classroom-based local educational agencies across California that serve Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through sixth grade students in after school, summer, and intersession programs.
- With the expansion of UPK, expanded learning programs are now using ELO-P funds to serve more preschool-aged students than ever before.



Early educators play an essential role

- Educating young children requires a unique skillset with a foundational understanding of how to support young children's developmental needs and expertise in designing joyful learning activities that captivate children's natural curiosity.
- Expanded learning programs are designed to provide joyful learning opportunities. With some additional support, expanded learning program staff are well-suited to serve preschool-aged students.



The Science of Learning (SoLD)

Development is optimally fostered when the educational environment supports **all dimensions of child development** in preschool-aged children (social, emotional, cognitive, physical).

Overarching principles for expanded learning providers serving UPK students include:

- **Importance of Relationships:** Strong, supportive relationships enable children to take advantage of productive learning opportunities
- **Attending to Individualization:** Individual needs require differentiated instruction and supports to enable optimal growth
- **Play is Primary:** Play is the main vehicle for learning, with enhancements from intentional teaching





Learning Stems from Play:

Promoting Playful Learning

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

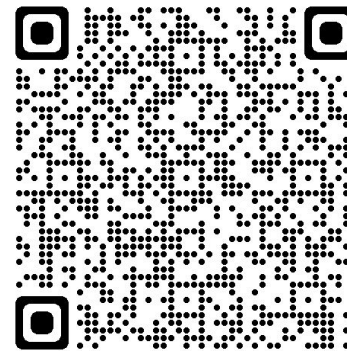


Our youngest learners thrive when the majority of their time is spent engaged in child-directed playful learning activities, especially in expanded learning programs, when young children have already participated in educator-directed instructional time. Whenever possible, a substantial portion of this time should be spent outdoors or in spaces that allow for gross motor play.

Applying the Point-of-Service Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs

1. Safe and supportive environment (p. 7)
2. Active and engaged learning (p. 8)
3. Skill building (p. 9)
4. Youth voice and leadership (p. 10)
5. Healthy choices and behaviors (p. 11)
6. Diversity, access and equity (p. 12)

Expanded Learning Quality Standards →

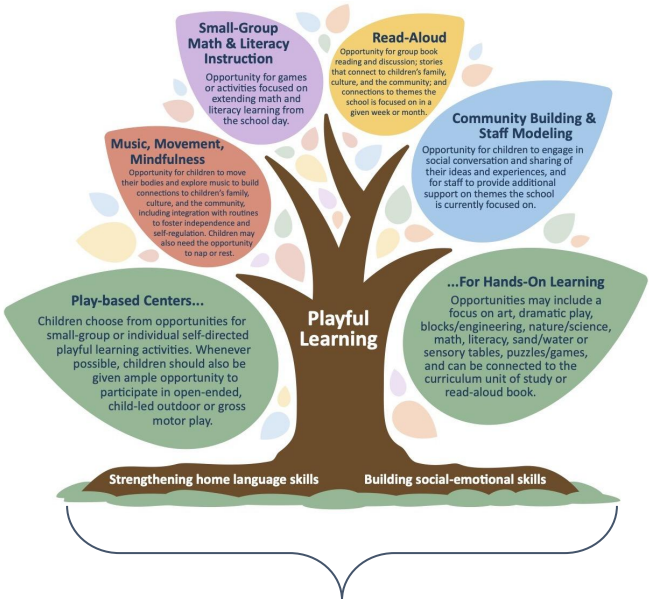


Some of the Expanded Learning Quality Standards are Foundational for Play-Based learning in UPK



- 1. Safe and supportive environment:** Children feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe, a sense of belonging, a connection to school.
- 6. Diversity, access, and equity:** A flexible, intentional, and adaptable approach to programming for our youngest learners. A welcoming environment to share their experiences and backgrounds.

Some of the Expanded Learning Quality Standards are Foundational for Play-Based Learning in UPK

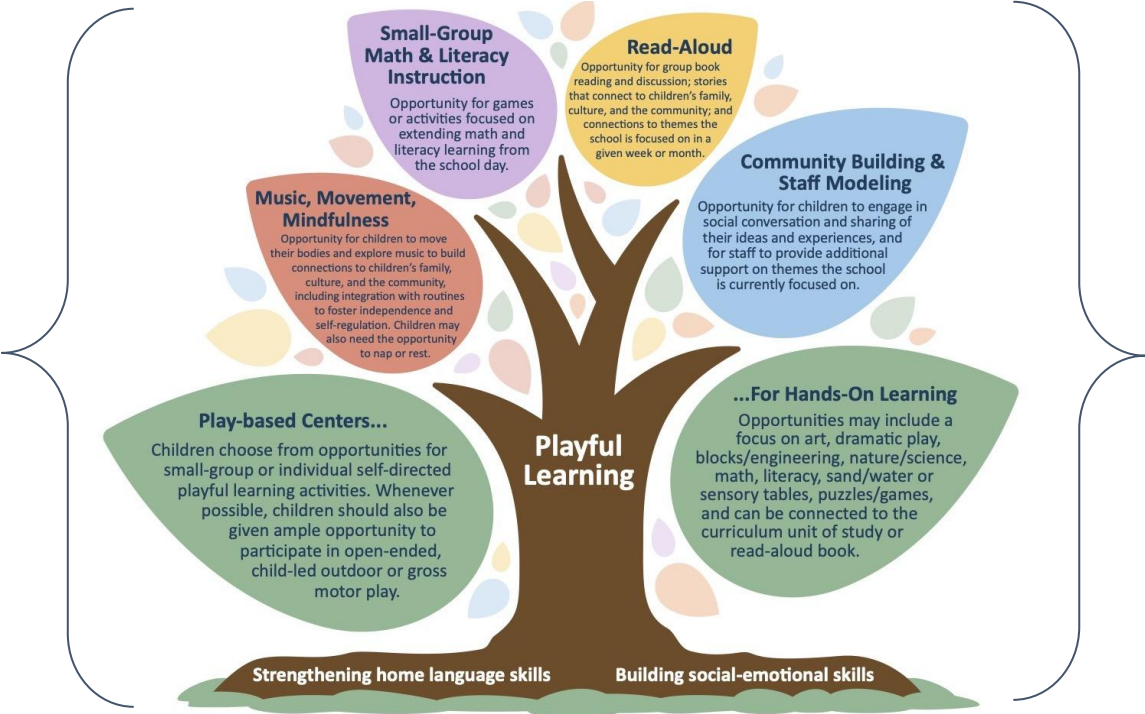


- Resources for supporting **1. Safe and supportive environments**
- Safe and Supportive Environment in Action [Video](#)
 - Cultivating Caring Relationships [Article](#)
 - [Child Mind Institute](#) Resource Website

- Resources for supporting **6. Diversity, access, and equity**
- Diversity, Access, and Equity in Action [Video](#)
 - [UDL and Preschool Learning \(thinglink.com\)](#)
 - UPK Inclusion [Articles/Resources](#)
 - [Top 9 Ways Children Benefit from Preschool Inclusion](#) (Infographic)

Some of the Expanded Learning Quality Standards are best implemented for preschoolers through play-based learning

- 2. **Active and engaged learning:** Children participate in engaging activities in groups and hands-on play-based activity centers to promote collaboration and expand horizons.
- 3. **Skill building:** Children are provided opportunities to practice and build their skills, including developing communication skills, and learning to collaborate with others.



- 4. **Youth voice and leadership:** Children have a voice and role in selection of activities and the program.
- 5. **Healthy choices and behaviors:** Children learn about the importance of taking care of their bodies, including balanced nutrition, physical activity, and healthy choices.

Some of the Expanded Learning Quality Standards are best implemented for preschoolers through play-based learning

Resources for supporting **2. Active and engaged learning**

- Active and Engaged Learning in Action [Video](#)
- [38 Ideas for K–2 Literacy Centers You're Going to Love \(weareteachers.com\)](#)
- [35 Active Math Games and Activities for Kids Who Love to Move](#)

Resources for supporting **3. Skill building**

- Skill Building in Action [Video](#)
- [The Powerful Role of Play in Early Education](#)
- [Serious Fun: How Guided Play Extends Children's Learning](#) (NAEYC)
- [Five Reasons to Stop Saying “Good Job!”](#)
Alfie Kohn



Resources for supporting **4. Youth voice and leadership**

- Youth Voice and Leadership in Action [Video](#)
- [A Road Forward: Five Democratic Life Skills for a Civil Society](#) - NAEYC Article, 6-10-2021

Resources for supporting **5. Healthy choices and behaviors**

- Healthy Choices and Behaviors in [Action](#)
- [GoNoodle](#)
- [USDA myplate](#)
- [Yoga ED](#)

Other Professional Learning Resources

Resources for supporting Small-Group Math and Literacy Instruction

- [Sing, Read, and Play with Early Math](#)
- [Building STEM Skills Through Unit Block Play](#) Community Playthings

Resources for Read-Alouds

- [Repeated Interactive Read Alouds in Preschool and Kindergarten](#)
- [8 Strategies for Preschool ELL's Language and Literacy Development](#)

Resources for supporting Music, Movement, Mindfulness

- [Music and Songs \(naeyc\)](#)
- [Preschool Movement Songs: 15 Action Songs for Kids](#)



Resources for supporting Community Building & Staff Modeling

- [Family Engagement](#)
- [Family, School & Community Relationships - National AfterSchool Association](#)

Resources for supporting Play-based Centers

- [The Big List of K-2nd Literacy Centers](#)

Resources for supporting Hands-on Learning

- [AfterSchool Today: Playful Learning a Way to Maximize Afterschool Time](#)

Resources for strengthening home language skills

- [Keeping Your Home Language](#)
- [The Importance of Home Language Series](#)

Resources for building social emotional skills

- [Teaching Pyramid](#)
- [Stop Toxic Stress Before it Starts - First 5](#)
- [Second Step - Out-of-School-Time](#)
- [Conscious Discipline - Free Resources](#)

More Resources

- **Boys of Color**
 - This publication focuses on boys of color in Oakland, CA. Oakland is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the nation, and children of color represent a majority in their public schools. It explores and explains some of the strategies to employ better, more culturally responsive strategies for supporting school success for young boys of color so that educators and community partners can use them to address opportunity and achievement gaps that are appearing in the earliest years
- **Play, It's the Way Young Children Learn**
 - This article explores the way that young children learn through play and how it builds the skills that they need for critical thinking, collaboration, and leadership. It elevates that play is not a break from learning, that play is the way that young children learn.
- **The Power of Play for Addressing Trauma in the Early Years**
 - About 47% of children aged 0-5 in the United States have experiences one or more types of serious trauma. This article shares how you can use the power of play to build resilience and support healing.

Professional Development Resource

- **California Early Childhood Online (CECO)** :
 - FREE professional development that includes STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) Starters Tinkering for Early Learners – Create FREE account and register for FREE module. STEAM Starters is a series of online modules designed to support the integration of a tinkering approach into your early learning and care program. The module materials offer examples of how a tinkering approach can provide you with starting points to support children’s STEAM learning. (STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).
- **Teaching Pyramid:**
 - The Teaching Pyramid approach provides a systematic framework that promotes social and emotional development, provides support for children’s appropriate behavior, prevents challenging behavior, and addresses problematic behavior. You can access FREE materials including, classroom, and family materials to support students social emotional development.

Find resources and materials here: at
<https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/groups/e0cfjrjf/upk-p-3>

[LEARN MORE](#)