

**CROSSWALK: VIRGINIA’S EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (ELDS) AND
EARLY LEARNING MATTERS (ELM) CURRICULUM AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS**

revised (01/30/2026)

Virginia’s Early Learning & Development Standards (ELDS)	Early Learning Matters (ELM) Curriculum: Birth – 36 Months www.elmcurriculum.org			
	Birth- 12 mos.	12-24 mos.	24-36 mos.	
<p>The process for this crosswalk</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying and pairing of the areas of Virginia’s ELDS to the areas of development in ELM 2. Identifying and pairing of the sub areas of Virginia’s ELDS to the foundation skills promoted in ELM 3. Identifying and pairing of the focus area of Virginia’s ELDS to specific examples of activity plans, teaching strategies, and/or additional learning supports within ELM. Each foundation skill is promoted across multiple blocks of activity plans, however, only one example is provided for ease in readability. 				
Approaches to Play and Learning		Self-Regulation		
APL1. Curiosity and Initiative		<p>The ELM Curriculum encourages curiosity and taking initiative in various ways. For example, exploration of different objects is emphasized across multiple activity plans. Children are offered ample opportunities to touch, take apart, and manipulate these objects to understand what they and how they work, and teachers are encouraged to talk about these objects as children are exploring. Further, all ELM activities are driven by children’s interests, and thus, allow children to take initiative in their own learning. For example, in Block 14, children are given options for various toys to play for a planned ELM activity focused on farm animals.</p>		
APL1.1. Being curious learners				
APL1.2. Taking initiative				
APL2. Creativity and Imagination		<p>ELM fosters children’s creativity and imagination in numerous ways throughout the activity plans and across areas of development. For example, ELM offers countless opportunities for children to create art and build with different kinds of materials. ELM also encourages imagination through pretend play and opportunities to dance and create music with different instruments.</p>		
APL2.1. Showing creativity and imagination				
APL3. Executive Functions and Cognitive Self-Regulation		<p>The ELM Curriculum promotes children’s concentration and executive function in the area of Self-Regulation. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:</p>		
APL3.1. Focusing and paying attention		Focusing on a moving toy (Block 1)	Watching and making a toy move and stop (Block 7)	Focusing on body movements to a song (Block 7)
APL3.2. Building working memory		Watching a toy being hidden for a caregiver to find (Block 25)	Remembering where the toy car is hiding (Block 12)	Watching and remembering the location of a moving car (Block 12)

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APL3.3. Thinking flexibly and adapting	Watching and manipulating a toy car (Block 13)	Watching and making our body move to music and stop when music stops (Block 18)	Moving and freezing our bodies as music plays and stops (Block 9)
APL3.4. Inhibiting responses			Taking turns and sharing with peers (Block 2 – Social-Emotional)
APL3.5. Persisting and problem-solving	Persisting in removing toys from box (Block 24)	Looking closely to find pictures that are the same (Block 15)	Taking apart and putting together a puzzle (Block 15)
APL4. Behavioral Self-Regulation	The ELM Curriculum promotes children’s self-control in the area of Self-Regulation. Here are examples of activity plans promoting this skill in each age group:		
APL4.1. Managing actions and behaviors	Practicing how to calm down after a song with actions (Block 2)	Practicing how to calm down after ringing a bell (Block 5)	Watching and practicing a tree pose (yoga) (Block 8)
Social and Emotional Development		Social-Emotional	
SED1. Positive Self-Concept	Children’s positive self-concept is nurtured in various ways through the ELM curriculum. For example, teachers are expected to create warm and responsive environments and are encouraged to use positive language when describing the actions of children. Teachers are expected to acknowledge children’s actions, utterances, and feelings in positive ways. Finally, when children become verbal, many activity plans focus on helping children describe how they are feeling and how this may be different than others.		
SED1.1. Developing self-awareness	ELM supports the development of self-awareness through various activities and daily routines. For example, teachers are encouraged to use children’s names frequently and talk about what each child is doing (e.g., “Jaden, you’re watching Lisa play with a rattle.”). ELM also encourages teachers to name the body parts that infants are looking at during diapering and feeding.		
SED1.2. Developing self-confidence	ELM recommends that teachers use frequent encouragement and praise to foster the development of children’s self-confidence. For example, ELM recommends that during challenging tasks, teachers use encouraging language (e.g., “You are working so hard!”) to help the child persist.		
SED1.3. Becoming autonomous and independent	ELM helps children become autonomous and independent. For example, activity plans typically include two or three options. The first option capitalizes on proven		

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	benefits of learning by observing. Subsequent options involve guided practice and, in many plans, independent practice. The Be Prepared section included in many activity plans supports teachers in being autonomy supportive. For example, in one activity, ELM recommends that teachers sit next to an older toddler with a puzzle placed in front of the toddler. The intent is to informally communicate support for the toddler’s direct and active manipulation of the material, with the caregiver as a guide on the side. This approach is consistent with the emergence of autonomy among older toddlers and sends a clear message about the toddler’s active role in learning. ELM gives recommendations around children engaging in their own self-care (e.g., washing their own hands when developmentally ready).		
SED2. Emotional Competence	The ELM Curriculum promotes children’s awareness of emotions in the area of Social-Emotional development. Here are examples of activity plans promoting the skill in each age group:		
SED2.1. Seeing and naming emotions in self and others	Engaging in responsive interactions focused on facial expressions (Block 3)	Looking at and making different facial expressions (Block 16)	Naming and describing some common feelings (Block 17)
SED2.2. Expressing emotions		Communicating happy and sad feelings (Block 17)	Talking about feelings and reasons for different feelings (Block 24)
SED2.3. Communicating feelings, wants, and needs	Exploring happy and sad feelings using a book (Block 19)		
SED2.4. Regulating emotions	See Self-Regulation: self-control	Talking about way to calm down when feeling upset (Block 22)	Talking about and practicing ways to calm down when feeling upset (Block 21)
SED2.5. Showing care and concern for others	Interacting with a caregiver focused on nurturing actions (Block 16)	Imitating different facial expressions (Block 19)	Talking about how the main character of a story might feel in response to different events and situations (Block 22)
SED3. Interacting with Others	The ELM Curriculum promotes social interaction skills in the area of Social-Emotional development. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:		
SED3.1. Developing relationships with adults	Interacting with caregiver while playing with different toys (Block 4)	Engaging in play with caregiver and taking turns (Block 2)	Imitating actions of staff and peers (Block 6)

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SED3.2. Developing relationships with other children	Meeting and greeting infants in our room (Block 10)	Watching and imitating peer actions while playing with toy vehicles (Block 7)	Engaging in pretend play with peers (Block 3)
SED3.3. Engaging in cooperative play	Participating in back and forth play with caregiver (Block 2)	Playing with peers at the water table and with toy telephones (Block 8)	Working cooperatively with others (Block 12)
SED3.4. Solving social interaction problems			Talking about and using our hands to do good things for ourselves and others (Block 23)
Communication, Language and Literacy Development		Communication/Language	
CLLD1. Communication	The ELM Curriculum promotes the skills of receptive and expressive language in the area Communication/ Language as well as other areas such as Social-Emotional. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:		
CLLD1.1. Understanding verbal and nonverbal cues	Participating in a song with hand movements (Block 16)	Talking about pictures of facial expressions (Block 10)	Connecting visual symbols to items, activities, and songs (Block 12)
CLLD1.2. Using vocabulary and nonverbal cues to communicate	Repeating and expanding a child’s utterance and recognize nonverbal communications	Inviting toddlers to say key words or repetitive phrases	
	Waving hello and goodbye (Block 20)	Talking and acting out a story about monkeys jumping on a bed (Block 8)	Using a puppet to act out a story about five little ducks (Block 16)
CLLD1.3. Learning and engaging in conversational interactions	Participating in responsive interactions during routine activities (Block 13 – Social- Emotional)	Talking about pictures in a wordless book (Block 25)	Telling stories with a wordless book and props in a “story bag” (Block 24)

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CLLD2. Foundations of Reading	<p>Book sharing is used extensively in the ELM Curriculum to promote young children’s communication and language skills. During infancy, activity plans offer options for looking at a book’s pictures that a caregiver describes in his/her words while pointing.</p> <p>Book-sharing activities with toddlers emphasize opportunities to communicate about pictures and a story and point to items in pictures that a caregiver names. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:</p>		
CLLD2.1. Paying attention to print as meaningful	Talking about pictures of familiar objects (Block 11)	ELM encourages pointing to book text while reading a book with toddlers. The intent is to support children’s awareness of (a) print on a book page, (b) print can be spoken, and (c) print is different than pictures.	
		Talking about pictures of farm animals (Block 5)	Using book words and pictures to learn about colors (Block 5)
CLLD2.2. Understanding ideas, vocabulary, and information in stories and texts	Activity plans consistently encourage caregivers to connect book information to familiar items and experiences in children’s classroom and home environments.		
	Talking about fun things babies do with Families (Block 21)	Talking about pictures of mother and baby animals at bedtime (Block 6)	Connecting book words and pictures to toddlers’ experiences (Block 7)
CLLD2.3. Learning spoken language is composed of smaller segments of sound	Talking about sounds made by items shown in book pictures (Block 3)	Noticing different kinds of sounds (Block 14)	Talking about sounds featured in a book and heard in our room (Block 25)
CLLD2.4. Learning how letters and print work to create words and meaning			Connecting a printed word to objects and pictures (Block 22)
CLLD3. Foundations of Writing	<p>The ELM Curriculum promotes fine motor skills in the area of Physical/Health. Activity plans for young and older toddlers support holding and manipulating tools, including paintbrushes markers, and crayons. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:</p>		

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CLLD3.1. Drawing, scribbling, and writing to communicate		Making marks with paintbrushes and markers (Block 3)	Drawing on smooth and textured surfaces (Block 13)
CLLD3.2. Developing writing habits and skills		Making marks on paper with different types of artistic tools (Block 11)	Making marks and circles with different colors (Block 4)
CLLD3.3. Handling writing tools			
Health and Physical Development		Physical/Health	
HPD1. Using Senses	The ELM Curriculum promotes the use of senses (looking, feeling, hearing) in the area of Physical/Health as well as additional areas including Cognitive development. Specifically, in the area of Cognitive, infants and toddlers are encouraged to use one or more senses to explore objects. Here are examples of activity plans promoting the use of senses in each age group:		
HPD1.1. Learning through all senses	Using our senses to explore toys in different ways (Block 15- Cognitive)	Using fingers and paintbrushes to make marks (Block 25- Physical/Health)	Manipulating sensory materials (Block 3- Physical/Health)
HPD2. Gross Motor	The ELM Curriculum promotes the skill of gross motor development in the area of Physical/Health. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:		
HPD2.1. Developing large muscle control	Practicing how to shift positions: rolling over, crawling, sitting (Block 3)	Balancing and moving parts of our body (Block 14)	Practicing how to jump (Block 10)
HPD2.2. Exploring the environment	Practicing early locomotion, including creeping, crawling, or walking (Block 15)	Carrying a bag of items around the room (Block 12)	Engaging in physical movements that include crossing the midline (Block 21)
HPD3. Fine Motor	The ELM Curriculum promotes the skills of fine motor development in the area of Physical/Health. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:		

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HPD3.1. Using eyes and hands together	Practicing eye-hand coordination with novel items, including toys with holes (Block 14)	Manipulating stacking toys and pegs in peg boards (Block 21)	Using fine motor skills to practice pincer grasps, manipulate tongs, and cut with scissors (Block 24)
HPD3.2. Developing small muscle control	Reaching for, grasping, holding, and moving different toys (Block 5)	Practicing how to shake and stop shaking bells (Block 19)	Putting together materials with both Hands (Block 14)
HPD4. Physical Health and Self-care	ELM Curriculum activities recognize optimal support for physical well-being and health include good nutrition and hygiene, exercise, regular periods of sleep and rest, and regular attention to vision and hearing. Suggestions for supporting good health practices are offered in the User Guide: Birth- 36 Months Areas Promoted by ELM Physical/Health.		
HPD4.1. Taking care of daily health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say clearly the names of foods offered to toddlers for snack and meals. Point to an item when you say its name. For older toddlers (24–36 months), tell whether a food item you name is a fruit or a vegetable (veggie). Also, invite older toddlers to say the names of foods offered during a snack or meal. • Offer brief, child-friendly explanations to toddlers for regular routines in your room, such as rest time and handwashing. Emphasize how health-related routines help us have strong bodies. • Demonstrate and describe how to use utensils and dishes during mealtimes with toddlers. • Create a simple handwashing song for toddlers. Include key actions, such as wet, rub, scrub, rinse, and dry. (See 12-24 mos. Block 13) • Tell an infant that you think he/she is hungry or full. Example: “I think you are crying because you are hungry. Let’s find some food for you.” 		
HPD4.2. Adopting safe behaviors			
HPD4.3. Eating with healthy habits			
HPD4.4. Developing healthy habits for rest and sleep			
Cognitive Development		Cognitive	
CD1. Science: The Natural and Physical World	The ELM Curriculum promotes the skills of object inquiry and problem solving in the area of Cognitive development. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:		
CD1.1. Paying attention to the natural world	Looking at and manipulating different	Manipulating dry and wet sand (Block 1)	Manipulating water and dry material (Block 9 – Physical/Health)

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	types of objects, including water (Block 2)		
CD1.2. Testing questions and ideas	Holding and manipulating different toys, including nesting cups (Block 5)	Taking toys apart and putting them back together (Block 10)	Guessing what is hiding in a picture book and a bag (Block 3)
CD2. Social Science: People, Community, and Culture	The ELM Curriculum promotes social interaction skills in the area of Social-Emotional development. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:		
CD2.1. Learning about ways that people interact	Interacting with a caregiver while playing with a baby doll (Block 15)	Talking about our families and friends Recognizing peers in our room (Block 10)	Engaging in open-ended play with a caregiver and peers focused on telling others what we are doing (Block 4)
CD2.2. Understanding relationships and connections	Meeting and greeting infants in our room (Block 10)	Exploring how children’s activities and actions are the same and different (Block 9)	Looking at and describing what children in a book are doing together (Block 10)
CD2.3. Learning about differences	Talking about different things babies do (Block 14 – Communication/ Language)	Exploring how different family members do different kinds of activities (Block 15)	Talking about how children can be the same and different (Block 9)
CD3. Mathematics	The ELM Curriculum promotes the skills of object inquiry and problem solving in the area of Cognitive development. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these skills in each age group:		
CD3.1. Comparing numbers, counting, and recognizing quantities	Choosing one of two toy possibilities (Block 21)	Picking one toy for each teddy bear (Block 7)	Participating in games that promote the concepts of one and two (Block 21)
CD3.2. Understanding number relationships and solving problems using operations			
CD3.3. Geometric thinking and spatial reasoning	Watching a caregiver manipulate and hide a toy (Block 20)	Exploring location words (Block 17)	Engaging in movements that emphasize different spatial relationships (Block 13)

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CD3.4. Sorting, classifying, and patterning	Noticing differences between toys (Block 7)	Finding toys that are the same and different (Block 12)	Sorting and matching by color and type (Block 4)
CD3.5. Describing, comparing, and measuring	Looking at and manipulating different types of objects, including soft and hard toys (Block 1)	Describing and manipulating different types of clothes (Block 9)	Comparing clothes worn by people and by animals (Block 14)
CD4. Fine Arts	Throughout the ELM curriculum children are provided experiences to learn through the use of creative expression in multiple areas of development. Here are examples of activity plans promoting these experiences in each age group:		
CD4.1. Exploring and expressing ideas through movement and dance	Moving to music with hands and arms and while being held by a caregiver (Block 21 – Physical/Health)	Doing hand and leg actions with music (Block 7)	Coordinating actions with words in a song (Block 1 – Self-Regulation)
CD4.2. Learning about and through music	Focusing on a rhyme and finger actions (Block 22 – Self-Regulation)	Listening to and saying rhyming words in a nursery rhyme (Block 13- Communication/ Language)	Moving shakers in different ways to music (Block 17 – Physical/Health)
CD4.3. Building understanding, empathy, and relationship skills through drama and theatre arts	Watching the actions of a puppet (Block 7 – Self-Regulation)	Engaging in pretend play with a caregiver and with peers (Block 25 – Social- Emotional)	Engaging in pretend play with peers (Block 15 – Social-Emotional)
CD4.4. Using visual arts media to express thoughts and feelings	Focusing on color differences (Block 18 - Cognitive)	Making marks on paper with different types of artistic tools (Block 11 – Physical/Health)	Manipulating and creating with play dough (Block 23- Physical/Health)