



Nevada Ready! B-5 Alignment: Executive Summary

June 2020

Prepared for:

Name: Dr. Stacey Joyner
Institution: Nevada Department of Education
Email: sjoyner@doe.nv.gov

Prepared by:

SRI International
Authors: Cornelia Taylor, Ph.D., Denise Mauzy, Melanie Chong, & Margaret Gillis, Ph.D.

SRI Education™

A DIVISION OF SRI INTERNATIONAL



This publication was made possible by Grant Number 90TP0025-01-11 from the Office of Childcare, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents contained within are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Childcare, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Suggested citation:

Taylor, C., Mauzy, D., Chong, M., & Gillis, M. (2020). *Nevada Ready! B-5 Alignment: Executive Summary*. Menlo Park, CA.

Contents

Contents	iii
List of Exhibits	iv
Overview	1
Alignment Framework.....	1
Process for Gathering Evidence of Alignment.....	3
Status of Alignment	3
Leveraging the Early Childhood Standards Alignment Recommendations to Support Nevada’s State Systems Work.....	4
Learning Standards.....	4
Workforce Standards	4
Program Standards.....	5

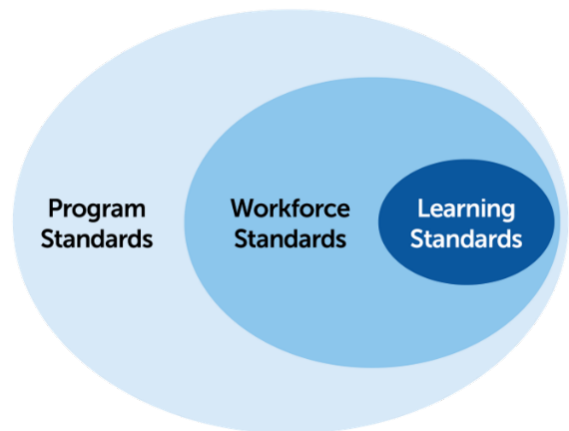
List of Exhibits

Exhibit	Page
Exhibit 1. Relationships among Nevada early childhood standards.....	1
Exhibit 2. Nevada Ready! Standards Alignment Framework	2
Exhibit 3. Summary status of alignment in each standards area	4

Overview

SRI partnered with the Nevada Department of Education to strengthen and align standards related to learning and development for young children, early childhood program quality, and professionals working with young children through Nevada’s Preschool Development Grant Birth–5. As Exhibit 1 shows, these standards are inter-related and nested; revisions to one set of standards impacts the other two standards. The learning standards form the core of the three as they inform approaches to development of both workforce and program standards. The workforce standards support implementation of the learning standards (i.e., what early childhood teachers need to know and do to support young children) and impact approaches to the program standards (e.g., expectations for the workforce related to training and education). The program standards support the implementation of the workforce and learning standards through specific indicators of quality (e.g., training for staff on the learning standards, education thresholds for staff).

Exhibit 1. Relationships among Nevada early childhood standards



This executive summary includes an overview of the alignment framework, a review of the process for gathering evidence of alignment, the status of alignment for each of the three standards areas, and recommendations to support Nevada’s state systems work going forward.

Alignment Framework

SRI developed an alignment framework to organize the components of quality within and across the standards areas. The use of an alignment framework ensured all key aspects of the standards were reviewed similarly across standards documents. The framework included the following components of quality:

- **Appropriateness** is the degree to which the standards are appropriate for the settings and situations to which they apply including developmental appropriateness.
- **Rigor** is the evidence that the expectations of the standard are sufficient to produce the intended outcomes of the content strand (e.g. program quality, kindergarten readiness).
- **Alignment** is the conceptual match-up between standards.
- **Consistency** is defined by the degree of alignment to national standards documents and standards documents from other states.

The alignment framework for each standards area is listed in Exhibit 2. Nevada Ready! B-5 Alignment Framework.

Exhibit 2. Nevada Ready! Standards Alignment Framework

Component of Alignment	Learning Standards
Appropriate Standards	1. Early learning standards emphasize significant developmentally appropriate content and outcomes (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2012).
Rigorous Standards	2. Standards reflect an application of knowledge through higher-order skills.
Aligned Standards	3. The descriptor statement for a 3-year-old's skill is conceptually related to and less complex developmentally than the companion skill for a 4-year-old. 4. The breadth and depth of the standards are consistent across the early learning guidelines (ELG) and the pre-K standards. 5. Sequences are smooth, with the progression showing reasonable expectations for growth from one level/age to the next.
Consistent Standards	6. Learning standards are consistent with national standards such as Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five
Component of Alignment	Program Standards
Appropriate Standards	1. Silver State Star models and requirements are appropriate to different program settings (type, size, and location of program) and include appropriate policies and procedures for accountability and monitoring.
Rigorous Standards	2. Silver State Stars levels reflect a progression of quality programming and the highest-level star rating (5 stars) is truly high quality.
Aligned Standards	3. Silver State Stars' criteria require increasing levels of participation, assessment, and professionalism.
Consistent Standards	4. Silver State Stars' models and requirements are comparable to other state QRIS and national guidance for QRIS. 5. Silver State Stars' models incorporate other nationally accepted program standards/requirements (e.g., Head Start Program Performance Standards).
Component of Alignment	Workforce Standards
Appropriate Standards	1. Workforce standards, career ladder, and professional development reflect developmentally appropriate practice for children as well as expectations that are consistent with education and training levels of personnel.
Rigorous Standards	2. Workforce competencies require increasing levels of knowledge and skill as professionals obtain advancing levels of education, training, and experience.
Aligned Standards	3. Career ladder outlines advancing levels of education, knowledge, and skills.
Consistent Standards	4. Workforce standards are well aligned to national recommendations for standards, such as those from the Transforming the Workforce (National Research Council) and Power to the Profession (NAEYC) initiatives.

Additionally, SRI considered the following issues related to alignment across standards areas.

1. Appropriate:
 - a. How do the Silver State Stars models promote/include the early learning and pre-K standards?
 - b. Do program requirements include training on the standards?
 - c. Do program requirements embed learning environment requirements that support children's optimal growth and development?
 - d. How do the Silver State Stars models incorporate the career ladder in the staff requirements?
 - e. How would revised career ladder levels (if any) be incorporated in the models?
2. Rigorous:
 - a. Does the career ladder reflect the levels of skill needed to support children's development across the areas of the learning standards?
3. Aligned:
 - a. How do the Silver State Stars models promote/include the core competencies?
 - b. Do program requirements include training on the competencies?
 - c. Do program requirements embed the core competencies in the professional development plan?
4. Consistent:
 - a. How do the core competencies, Silver State Stars models, and learning standards align with other national standards documents?

Process for Gathering Evidence of Alignment

Throughout the evidence gathering process, SRI conducted reviews of Nevada's administrative data and the state's resources and documents. In addition, SRI also conducted reviews of national and exemplar state standards documents to assess alignment. This process was heavily informed by stakeholder engagement and feedback. SRI convened a steering committee and work groups in three standards areas: learning standards, workforce standards, and program standards. The steering committee, comprised of statewide stakeholders, was charged to provide input on cross-standards alignment. SRI met with the steering committee before each work group meeting to provide guidance and to make decisions about the direction of the work. The work groups, comprised of stakeholders across the Nevada Early Learning system, were charged with assessing alignment within each of their respective standards areas. The work groups met in October 2019 and December 2019 using a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting approach, with participants in Reno, Las Vegas, and online. In January 2020, SRI convened all work group and steering committee members virtually to discuss the alignment across the three standards areas.

Status of Alignment

With input from the work groups and steering committee and evidence from administrative data and document reviews, SRI rated the alignment of each standards area within each component of quality in the alignment

framework. Exhibit 3 displays SRI’s overall alignment designation (i.e., aligned, mixed alignment, and not aligned) for each component of quality for each the three standards area.

Exhibit 3. Summary status of alignment in each standards area

Component of Alignment	Status		
	Learning Standards	Workforce Standards	Program Standards
Appropriate Standards	Mixed Alignment	Aligned	Mixed Alignment
Rigorous Standards	Mixed Alignment	Mixed Alignment	Mixed Alignment
Aligned Standards	Mixed Alignment	Mixed Alignment	Aligned
Consistent Standards	Aligned	Aligned	Mixed Alignment

Leveraging the Early Childhood Standards Alignment Recommendations to Support Nevada’s State Systems Work

SRI developed the following recommendations for the Nevada Department of Education and Nevada early childhood stakeholders to support planning for next steps for reviewing and revising the learning, workforce, and program standards. See the full report for each standards area for additional, detailed recommendations.

Learning Standards

- Revise the Infant Toddler Early Learning Standards and Guidelines to have wider age bands, improved descriptions of age-expected behavior, more appropriate descriptors for special populations, and stronger alignment to the pre-K standards.
- Revise the pre-K standards to improve appropriateness for children with disabilities and English Language Learners.
- Increase the breadth of the pre-K standards to better align to the K–12 standards.

Workforce Standards

- Maintain the current structure of the Nevada Career Ladder to reflect the range of professionals working in early childhood in Nevada.
- Formalize adoption of the NAEYC Standards and competencies with an emerging level of competencies and a separate set of competencies for program administrators.
- Identify professional development needs and develop strategies and trainings to address those needs for professional across levels and roles. Develop strategies for improving distribution of trainings across the core knowledge and content areas.
- Offer trainings in varying online formats that engage participants and support higher-order thinking and support trainers in providing these offerings.
- Revise the Professional Development Plan (PDP) to address any new standards and competencies. Enhance inclusion of the PDP in the QRIS as a method of verification.

- Expand the scope of tracking, reporting, and evaluation.

Program Standards

- Develop recruitment strategies to increase family child care programs' participation.
- Rename and organize indicators for Center and Family Child Care models to focus on key aspects of quality programming, balancing the need to provide flexibility for programs and support a pathway for continuous quality improvement.
- Reduce the number of center and family child care indicators so there are fewer indicators that are more rigorous, substantive, and more closely linked to quality.
- Enhance the current data system to increase tracking and reporting capability.
- Expand the scope of tracking, reporting, and evaluation.

Please contact Stacey Joyner at sjoyner@doe.nv.gov to request a copy of the in-depth reports prepared by SRI on alignment for each of the standards areas, including the comprehensive list of the criteria reviewed, work group products, and recommendations.