

This FAQ is a companion document to the IQ Guide for Planning Instruction and includes information to support programs in planning appropriate instruction.

Organizational Components

How do I organize lesson plans? Lesson plans should be complete and on site by the first school day of each week. They should be organized chronologically and kept accessible. Instruction in the classroom should be based on the needs of the children. Standards (GELDS) should reflect the intent/purpose being targeted by that particular activity. Clock times on lesson plans should correspond with the clock times on the daily schedule.

What documents/templates are used to create a complete lesson plan? BFTS provides lesson plan templates for teachers to utilize. These templates are not required but recommended. Templates are located on the BFTS website at www.decal.ga.gov. The choice of a lesson plan template is an individual teacher, school or system choice; however, all required Pre-K components must be present. Programs choosing to use a BFTS template may not delete any BFTS components. **First**, choose a Lesson Plan Template from the five provided. You may rearrange the order of the events on the template. **Second**, choose a Small Group Template from the four provided. Small Group Templates address the needs of students at various times throughout the year; choice of this template will change as your students abilities and needs change. **Third**, choose one of the Changes to the Environment Forms to reflect rotation of materials based on topic of study/student needs. **Lastly**, documentation of assessment plans can be reflected directly on the lesson plan template with the actual activity which is to take place, or teachers may use the Planning for Assessment Template which will be attached to weekly lesson plans. **Programs choosing to use their own lesson plan template must ensure that all required components are documented.** Providers can refer to the **Instructional Quality (IQ) Guide for Planning Instruction (Appendix T)** which provides additional clarifications, information, and guidance in instructional planning.

What are the "Off to a Good Start" lesson plans? These plans also referred to as OTAGS offer 12 weeks of lesson plans designed for teachers new to Georgia's Pre-K; however, it is a resource that all teachers are encouraged to use. Inside you'll find 12 weeks of comprehensive lesson plans, including developmentally appropriate activities and strategies for future planning. Specific sections are provided that give guidance regarding assessment and setting up small groups, as well as ideas for books, songs, and transitions. They are located at the following link: <https://bestpractices.gsu.edu/resources/otags/>

Instructional Activities

What activities are considered appropriate for Pre-K? Appropriate activities support all domains of learning and emphasize active exploration, interaction with materials, teachers, and other children. Teachers provide ample opportunities for children to choose materials with time to explore and manipulate. Open-ended activities allow children to explore, create solutions, and problem solve. Use strategies which allow students to work in their own interest areas, use their own learning styles, and work at their own ability level. Teachers should be aware of children's skill levels and plan activities and materials accordingly. Rote/drill activities with memorization, letter of the week, worksheets and dittos are inappropriate. Knowledge of early childhood development and assessment data is used to plan both individual and whole group instruction.

How do I appropriately incorporate technology in the classroom? Young children learn social skills and the ability to read non-verbal cues through face-to-face interactions. Recent studies have shown that children learn better from a person who is engaging with them face-to-face rather than from watching a person on a screen. While interactive displays (smart boards, projectors, tablets, etc.) can be a beneficial tool in the classroom, teachers need to be cognizant of how often and how long they are used in the classroom. The American Academy for Pediatrics recommends that children between the ages of 2 to 5 receive no more than sixty (60) minutes of screen time per day.

What is an Opening Activity? An opening activity helps prepare and focus children on the topic of study, current interests or special events which will occur during the day. An opening activity serves as a way to create excitement and interest in learning opportunities which have been planned for the day. Ideas for opening activities might be an introduction of new materials, changes made to learning areas, special visitors, experiments, question of the day or morning message. Field trips can also be addressed during this time. Opening activities should take place daily and vary throughout the year.

How do I address needs of an individual child? Space to document plans to individualize for children is located on the Small Group Lesson Plan Template. There will be times when small group placement is not appropriate to meet the needs of a child, but support is needed throughout the day (for example, a child who needs support in self-control, has difficulty making friends, or is behind other classmates in basic skills, etc).

What is meant by music with gross motor and how do I reflect these opportunities? Gross motor activities allow children to use large muscle movements. Activities reflecting children on their feet, moving and responding to music meets this expectation. The title of music choice and gross motor activity (marching, using bean bags, etc.) should be reflected in lesson plans. Music and movement is an opportune time to teach and reinforce skills, therefore standards (GELDS) listed with music and movement will reflect the intent/focus behind which skills are being taught or strengthened.

What is Closing Activity? Closing is the last instructional event of each day. This time is used to refocus children on the events of the day, go over any reminders for upcoming events and provide an overview of the next day's activities. Purposefully planned activities with supporting standards should be reflected in lesson plans. Activities will vary based on student needs/current events. Closing activities should vary during the year.

Language and Literacy Development

How do I support Language and Literacy Development? Activities are planned throughout the day. **First**, teachers are required to plan at least two (2) opportunities for the children to participate in reading and discussing children's literature daily. Lesson plans must include the names of the stories and/or pieces of literature along with the standards (GELDS) reflecting the focus of story time (predict the ending, count the number of animals on each page, discuss new science vocabulary, etc). Standards (GELDS) for planned books may be related to any of the domains but will always reflect the focus of the book choice. Ideas to incorporate into story time might include:



- *Introduce book: read the title, author and illustrator; ask what the book might be about; suggest things to look and listen for during reading.*
- *Run your finger under the text while reading and discuss how we read from left to right.*
- *Answer questions related to the book.*
- *Talk about the story during and after a read-aloud session.*
- *Explain vocabulary or concepts that might be unfamiliar.*
- *Ask children to look closely at the pictures to help them understand the story, make predictions.*
- *Pause and wait so children can say the word that ends a repetitive or predictable phrase.*
- *Ask thinking questions: "What might happen next?" "Where did he go?" "Why did she do that?"*

Second, teachers plan for a **large group literacy activity daily**. Large Group Literacy should be a combination of reading and writing activities throughout the week. Activities could include flannel board stories, shared reading using big books, chart stories, acting out a familiar story using props, and modeled writing. Large group literacy activities encourage conversations and questions; develops an awareness of the print concepts; increases vocabulary and allows opportunities for brainstorming; and analysis and prediction skills.

Shared reading is an interactive reading experience when the teacher leads the class in reading or chanting a familiar book, text, or poem often enlarged for the whole class to see. Shared reading allows students to observe the reading process and to practice reading strategies or concepts in the safety of a group. The text is reread several times over a few days initially by the teacher, who gradually pulls back as students progressively master the text. In each reading, children are encouraged to focus on or discover new concepts of print.

Modeled writing includes making lists on large paper, writing chart stories, creating graphs or words on a word wall. Other examples include morning message board or daily news activities. To help children make the connection between the spoken and written word, teachers should model by writing clearly and legibly and talk about writing and why we write.

It is appropriate to plan specific shared reading and modeled writing experiences daily; however, it is equally important to capitalize on the many spontaneous opportunities that occur throughout the instructional day.

Third, minimum once a week, a lesson is planned with a small group of children (2-8) involving reading a piece of literature and engaging the children in a supporting activity. The activity and the piece of literature must be documented in the lesson plans with the standards (GELDS) that best reflect the intent/focus of the book and activity. The standard for the planned small group reading and activity may be related to any of the domains. Small group reading should occur at least once a week during small group time. Not all children are required to participate in small group reading every week.

Fourth, phonological awareness activities should be planned for both large and small group instructional times, but at least one activity daily in which all children are involved should be planned. Large group planning is appropriate for exposure and support of phonological awareness, while small group settings provide an optimal instructional time to address children's varying levels of development and more effectively support individual needs. The activities should be varied based on the needs and levels of the children in the classroom. It should be evident in lesson plans that activities are following a continuum of learning with a progression throughout the year; beginning with listening and rhyming and moving to syllable segmenting and phoneme manipulation later in the year or as children are ready for a particular skill level.

The levels of phonological awareness are:

Using the *Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)* to plan instruction:

- CLL6.4a Listens and differentiates between sounds that are the same and different.
- CLL6.4b Identifies and produces rhyming words.
- CLL6.4c Isolates the initial (beginning) sounds in words with adult guidance.
- CLL6.4d Segments sentences into individual words.
- CLL6.4e Segments words into syllables.
- CLL6.4f Manipulates and blends sounds (phonemes) with adult guidance.

Small Group Instruction

How do I organize Small Groups? Small group instruction provides opportunity to focus attention on individual children and individual needs. Small groups provide an opportunity to assess on a more individual level. Small group instruction involves no less than two and no more than eight (**2-8**) children who meet with one of the teachers to experiment with materials and solve problems. Some children may work independently on an assigned task. Small group activities should use basic materials found in the classroom and should not include patterned art projects. By using these materials, teachers take advantage of supporting children in understanding how to use materials appropriately while setting up the environment for better collection of assessment data. This data should be used to plan small groups based on the developmental needs and skills of children. Groups should change as the teacher gathers more assessment information and children's needs and skill levels change. Georgia's Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) for Pre-K should be used in planning small group instruction and documented in lesson plans. Activities during small group time will maintain the practice of planning developmentally appropriate experiences. The activities planned for groups of students working independently should also be purposeful with standards documented. Lesson plans will identify specific groups by use of names, initials, symbols, or a number assigned to each child.

Planned Assessment Collection

What is the process for assessing Pre-K Children? In order to help students become successful learners, teachers must know the strengths and needs of their children. Assessment is the first step in planning activities and instruction. Factual information should be used to determine the needs of children. Assessment is conducted in the context of the daily classroom learning environment and not obtained through on-demand, rote/drill processes. Teachers gather information by observation, work samples, matrices, and photos. Observing children interacting with each other, with materials and with the teacher is the optimal process for gathering knowledge of a child's abilities and needs. This information is gathered on a regular, ongoing basis.

How do I plan for assessment? Because the Pre-K day is a fun-filled and fast-paced environment, thoughtful planning for collection of assessment will make each day more productive and the quality of assessment documentation will increase. In addition to the planned assessment, many observations happen spontaneously, so have the camera ready and note taking materials easily accessible every day. Teachers could identify specific children daily whom they will interact with during center time, thus gathering data through conversation and use of materials; plan a small group activity which allows for assessment data gathering; introduce and then “plant” materials which encourage children to exhibit skills/knowledge; and have blank matrices available to capture those predictable moments which happen through the routine of each day. Daily planning will ensure teachers are collecting quality assessment data rather than randomly focusing on activities throughout the day. Teachers should focus on the quality of the assessment data they collect rather than the quantity of the documentation.

Who is responsible for gathering assessment data? Both teachers share the responsibilities of observing, taking observational notes and photos, completing matrices, and collecting work samples. Lead Teachers should provide direction to Assistant Teachers for how they can assist in the gathering of assessment data. Lead Teachers should note in lesson plans opportunities which have been pre-planned for gathering assessment data each day. Large group, center time, lunch and even outdoor time offer a wealth of information if teachers are focused on observing and interacting with children. Documentation of assessment plans can be reflected directly on the lesson plan template with the actual activity which is to take place, or teachers may use the Planning for Assessment Template and include it with weekly lesson plans.