

Curriculum Nomination Form & Guide

Use the Curriculum Nomination Form to nominate classroom curricula for Parent Aware. The Curriculum Nomination Guide, starting on page 4, defines terms and provides guidance on nominating a classroom curriculum.

Instructions

Complete page 3 of this document and submit your nomination according to the information below.

Three types of curricula are eligible for review. Below is information about each type, and what information is needed to nominate it.

Published curricula

- These are curricula published, marketed, and sold to others by an organization. They typically include a combination of hard copy materials and information on a website, but are sometimes completely provided via website, application, or software.
- Enter the name of the curriculum and related information, such as the edition and copyright date. Provide the age group for which the curriculum is designed.
- No other information is needed. The curriculum review committee will obtain copies of the nominated curriculum from the publisher, review it, and let you know whether or not it was found to be aligned with the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs).

Self-designed curricula

- These are curricula written by an early educator who works for the child care and early education program where the curriculum is used and is not available for sale to others. They may include a combination of hard copy materials and information provided on a website or completely provided online.
- Enter the name of the curriculum. Many self-designed curricula are named after the program that designed them. Because site-designed curricula are not published, they typically do not include information such as the edition and copyright date. Therefore, those spaces in the nomination form may be left blank. Provide the age group for which the curriculum is designed.
- Provide a copy of the self-designed curriculum and all supporting materials (e.g., manuals, training materials, procedures, protocols). They can be provided in hard copy, as attachments to an email, or as a link to a website or online application

Bundled curricula

- These are either a set of domain-specific curricula that together form a curriculum that covers all of the domains in the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress, or they are a combination of published and self-designed materials. Sometimes they are made up of a published curriculum that does not meet enough of the criteria to be found to be aligned on its own. The program that wishes to use the curriculum may develop guidance that fills the gaps the published curriculum did not include, allowing the curriculum to become approved as a bundle.
- For the published parts of the bundle, follow the directions for “published curricula.” For the self-designed parts, follow the directions for “self-designed curricula.”

How to submit your curricula nomination

By mail

To submit your nomination via mail, put a hard copy of your completed nomination forms and a copy of the curriculum (examples of curriculum materials include: curriculum manuals, guidance for early educators, training materials, books, learning objectives, lesson planning forms, charts for daily routines and schedules, diagrams and photos with written explanation describing the learning environment, and descriptions of activities) into an envelope addressed to:

Child Care Aware of Minnesota
Attn: Quality Improvement Team
10 River Park Plaza, Suite 820
St. Paul, MN 55107

By email

To submit your nomination via email, scan or take a picture of your completed nomination form and attach it, along with a copy of your curriculum (examples of curriculum materials include: curriculum manuals, guidance for early educators, training materials, books, learning objectives, lesson planning forms, charts for daily routines and schedules, diagrams and photos with written explanation describing the learning environment, and descriptions of activities), to an email addressed to the Parent Aware Quality Improvement Team, using the following email address:

qualityimprovementinfo@childcareawaremn.org

What You Can Expect

Curriculum nominations are processed in the order in which they are received. Before full reviews of nominations are conducted, curricula are screened. The screening process helps to ensure that the curricula include the required information and allows for any necessary revisions or the submission of additional documentation before the full review. Your program will be notified if the nomination has not passed screening. Final decisions will be sent to the nominating program in approximately 8 weeks.

Questions

If you need information or technical assistance regarding the Parent Aware curriculum review process, please contact the Quality Improvement team at Child Care Aware of Minnesota at:

qualityimprovementinfo@childcareawaremn.org

Curriculum Nomination Form

Contact information for the program nominating the curriculum (please complete all fields):

Program Name:

Program Contact Name:

License or School District Number:

County:

Email:

Phone Number:

Age Groups Served:

Type of curriculum nominated (fill in or check the circle next to the curriculum's type, below):

- ☐ Self-designed
- ☐ Published
- ☐ Bundle of curricula

Notes:

Is there something unique about your curriculum or bundle of curricula? Add a note here to help explain how it works:

Curriculum Information:

Enter the following information about the curriculum you wish to nominate. If your nomination includes more than two curricula, additional pages may be attached.

Title:

Edition:

Author(s):

Publisher:

Copyright Year:

Website Address:

Ages designed for: ☐ infant/toddler or ☐ preschool/pre-k

Title:

Edition:

Author(s):

Publisher:

Copyright Year:

Website Address:

Ages designed for: ☐ infant/toddler or ☐ preschool/pre-k

Curriculum Nomination Guide

This is a guide for nominating curricula for Parent Aware review for alignment with the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress.

The guide covers:

- Who is eligible to submit curricula for review
- Types of curricula eligible for review
- What will be reviewed
- Review process and definitions
- Required criteria used to review and approve curricula for Parent Aware
- Other things to consider when developing or choosing a curriculum
- How to submit curricula for review

Who is eligible to submit curricula?

Child care and early learning programs participating in Parent Aware are invited to nominate classroom curricula for review.

What types of classroom curricula are eligible?

- Comprehensive, published curricula
- Comprehensive, site-designed curricula
- A bundle of curricula

What will be reviewed?

The Parent Aware Curriculum Review Team reviews curricula developed for early educators to use in early care and education settings. Examples of materials that are reviewed include: curriculum manuals, guidance for early educators, training materials, books, learning objectives, lesson planning forms, charts for daily routines and schedules, diagrams and photos with written explanation describing the learning environment, and descriptions of activities.

Review process and definition of a Parent Aware Curriculum

Nominated curricula will first be screened to determine if they meet the Parent Aware definition of a curriculum. The definition of curriculum is:

A set of written materials that early educators use to develop engaging learning experiences for young children that include:

1. *A research basis or philosophy that describes how children learn and how teachers teach*
2. *Goals and objectives of children's learning*
3. *Instructional approaches used to help children achieve the goals and objectives*
4. *Information about the setting and environment in which learning happens*
5. *Examples of learning experiences for young children*

The curriculum must be aligned with the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress.

If the nominated curriculum is found to meet the Parent Aware definition of a curriculum, it will be reviewed to determine if it meets the required criteria. The guidance at the end of this document provides a detailed description of what the reviewers will look for as they review each curriculum.

Other things to consider when developing a curriculum are provided at the end of this guide. These items are recommended but not required and will not be reviewed.

Required Criteria

1. Research basis or philosophy statement that describes how children learn and how teachers teach

**Definition: This is a description of the theory, approach, philosophy, and/or research the curriculum is based on. Original research is not required.*

Materials that would qualify:

- Section in a published curriculum manual
- Short written statement
- Book, or a chapter from a book
- Handout from a training

The statement must be clearly written.

It must include references to generally accepted early learning approaches, child development theorists, and/or research.

2. Learning objectives

**Definition: A list of the things the program wants children to know and be able to do*

The reviewers will look for alignment between the curriculum's learning objectives and the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. The curriculum must include goals and objectives in all of the following domains:

- Approaches to Learning
- The Arts
- Language, Literacy, and Communications
- Mathematics
- Physical and Movement Development
- Scientific Thinking and Exploring
- Social and Emotional Development
- Social Systems

Types of materials that would qualify:

- Section from a published curriculum manual
- Developmental chart
- The Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs)

The Minnesota ECIPs may be used as the learning objectives of your curriculum. If you are using them as the learning objectives for your curriculum, make sure your curriculum reflects this and includes a link to the ECIPs.

The learning objectives must include at least some objectives in each of the domains in the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs). There is no expectation that the wording will be the same. Rather, your learning objectives will be reviewed to determine if there are some objectives aligned to some ECIPs from each domain.

3. Information about the setting and environment in which learning happens

**Definition: A description of the features of your learning environment.*

Examples of materials that would qualify:

- Photos of the features of a learning environment, combined with written descriptions of what is in the photos and which learning domains are addressed in the area(s) shown.
- Sketch of the room's layout
- Section from a published curriculum manual describing what should be included in a learning environment
- Description of how to arrange the learning environment
- Information about the materials needed for particular activities
- Book, or chapter of a book, about setting up learning environments

The arrangement of the environment must be clearly described.

The environment must include sufficient materials to address **all** of the domains in the Minnesota ECIPs.

4. Instructional approaches used to help children achieve learning objectives

**Definition: A description of how to plan for and carry out engaging learning experiences for young children, including lesson plan forms or other methods for instructional planning and use of daily schedules.*

The curriculum must include:

- Forms or processes associated with instructional planning, such as a lesson plan form, a curriculum map that outlines planned instruction, or a method/process for doing curriculum webbing.
- Daily routine or daily schedule

In addition to the forms mentioned above, a written description of how early educators using this curriculum should plan for and carry out engaging experiences for young children is required.

The following types of materials would qualify:

- Section in a published curriculum manual
- Short written statement
- Book, or a chapter from a book
- Handout from a training

The description must be clearly written.

5. One example of young children's learning experiences for each domain in the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress

Types of materials that would qualify:

- Section(s) from a published curriculum manual
- Short written statements for each domain in each of the ECIPs
- Book, or a chapter from a book, describing activities you carry out in your program
- Handout(s) from training(s)

At least eight examples are required for each age group served, one for each of the following domains:

- Approaches to Learning
- The Arts
- Language Development and Communication
- Mathematics
- Physical and Movement Developmental
- Scientific Thinking and Exploring
- Social and Emotional Development
- Social Systems

Age groups:

- Infants and/or toddlers
- Preschoolers/pre-k

Other things to consider when developing or choosing a curriculum

The following information is provided to encourage early learning programs to consider critical characteristics of curriculum when developing a site-designed curriculum or selecting a published one.

None of the following items is reviewed as part of the Parent Aware review process, and programs are not required to provide evidence that their curriculum includes these items.

Provisions for including families

- Did you embed the following items in the lesson design (home follow-up ideas; items to discuss) and/or suggestions about at-home or family activities, on-site family activities (i.e., activity nights) and/or resources/guidance for teachers?
- What connections are made between lessons and children's family experiences? Are there explicit home follow-up ideas?
- How are parents' interests, concerns, or resources included or represented?

Sequence

**Definition: Sequence is the order in which various activities/topics are presented to children within a curriculum. A curriculum's sequence should provide a continuum of skills from beginner to emerging to mastery/proficiency.*

- Do skills build on or "scaffold" each other? Do the materials guide teachers on how adults should plan for skills across ages?
- Does the curriculum articulate a sequence and, if so, is the sequence logical?
- Is there a clear way to gauge children's progress and a description of the skills and knowledge that should be expected to come next?
- Does the curriculum clearly explain how teachers would use data from their observations of individual children to plan activities?

Developmentally appropriate materials

**Definition: Developmentally appropriate activities vary with and adapt to the age, experience, interests, and abilities of individual children.*

- Do the materials fit the age range of the children? Are they adaptable?

- Does the curriculum include guidance for using open-ended materials that children can use for play-based learning?
- The majority of activities should not include worksheets and teacher-modeled activities in which children have little or no ability to be creative.

General approach (appropriate balance of teacher-directed and child-directed activities)

- Is there a balance of both teacher-directed and child-directed or “child-initiated” learning indicated in the written materials?
- Do the examples of activities provided demonstrate a good mix of both?

Provision for different types of learning experiences (individual, small group, and large group, learning centers, “hands-on” learning experiences, and learning during routines and transitions)

- Are different types of experiences listed in the written materials? Are particular activities matched with different types of learning? Is there a good mix?
- Are there examples of how routines and transitions are used as learning experiences?
- Are there examples of different types of experiences provided?

Guidance on adult-child interaction, including behavior management

- Are there suggested follow-up questions to group/small group activities?
- Is there guidance about how teachers follow/adapt to children’s interests (either as a group or individual children)? Is there guidance on interactions/conversations with individual children?
- Is there guidance on arranging the environment to reduce stresses that could lead to behavior management issues/problems?

Guidance on adapting/refining to serve children who are English language learners

**Definition: Materials that describe how to adapt or refine instruction for children who speak another language at home and are learning English.*

- Are there specific suggestions about how to adapt materials to serve children learning English as a second language?
- Does guidance show respect for children’s home languages when they are different from the primary language in the classroom? Does the curriculum include resources or suggestions for incorporating children’s home languages into the classroom?
- Does the curriculum provide materials in other languages?

Guidance for using instructional assessment information in the curriculum planning process

**Definition: Materials that describe how to use assessment results to plan meaningful instruction.*

- Is there guidance about how the teacher follows/adapts to children’s interests and ability levels using observations of children?