

A Comparison of the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, the Maryland Model for School Readiness, and the Maryland Guidelines for Healthy Child Development and Care

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Acquiring awareness and knowledge of outcomes and indicators for early learning presented in the *Maryland Model for School Readiness*, the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework*, and the *Guidelines for the Healthy Development of Young Children Birth to Three*.

SUMMARY

The *Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR)*, developed by the Maryland State Department of Education, provides a common goal and language to assist parents, teachers, and providers to assist young children's learning. The overall framework provides for an appropriated assessment of children's learning and defines what preschool and kindergarten children should know and be able to do during their early years.

To ensure accountability at the national level, Head Start in 2000 developed a document delineating the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*. Both *MMSR* and the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework* include similar domains, elements/ indicators and objectives. The documents are intended to guide practitioners in their curriculum development and ongoing assessment of the progress and accomplishments of children.

As part of the Child Care and Development Fund, a federal initiative entitled *Good Start, Grow Smart*, requires that each state develop early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers. Maryland's *Guidelines for the Healthy Development of Young Children Birth to Three* were developed by the Department of Human Resources with the assistance of a representative group of early childhood stakeholders and content/curriculum experts. The guidelines are consistent with the analogous domains, elements/indicators and objectives of the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework* and the *MMSR*.

The Alignment Document was developed to illustrate that, although there may be some differences in terminology, there is a strong commonality among the Performance Standards of the *MMSR*, the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework*, and the *Maryland Guidelines for Healthy Child Development*. The Alignment Document was developed to create a shared language and evidence-based frame of reference so that practitioners, curriculum coordinators, families, and decision makers can work collaboratively to support the implementation of the early learning standards. Regardless of the education program or the setting of the early childhood program, every preschool child in Maryland has the right to a continuum of quality learning experiences that are guided by designated standards.

It is expected that by implementing the standards into program goals and objectives, engaging and supporting families as partners, and building a system of communication and coordination, significant benefits will surface to ensure that all children will begin kindergarten ready to learn.