

Transcription of Early Learning and Development Standards Webinar for Principals and Teachers

So as I said, this is Michelle Levy, I am from the Office of Early Childhood. Today's webinar is on the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards. Andrea Brinnel will be our presenter, so I'll hand things over to her momentarily. Andrea is also an Early Childhood Specialist in the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. She has extensive background in public school administration and in early childhood. She has her doctoral degree in education leadership and will be talking to us today addressing the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards for principals and teacher leaders. So just a couple of housekeeping things, as I mentioned, I have muted all of the audience members. This allows us to have a good sound quality. You can click and raise your hand if you have a question [this feature is not available on this recorded webinar.] You can also include questions in the chat box [this feature is not available on this recorded webinar.] You can address chat questions to the entire audience or you can individually select those going to me. What we are going to do is at the end of the presentation, I will pull out the questions for Andrea to respond to. I'll pull out some common questions, that way we can get as many in as possible and organize those a bit. So, with no further ado I will hand things over to Andrea and I will be monitoring that chat box. Thank you so much and enjoy the webinar.

[ANDREA BRINNEL] Thank you, Michelle. Welcome everyone to the principal and teacher leader overview of the new Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards. If you had the pleasure of participating in any of our previous webinars about the new Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards, you'll note that much of the information presented on those webinars is contained in this session. But we've also added additional information as it relates to kindergarten, special education and alignment between grades and programs. Early childhood, it's more than preschool. The developmental period between preschool and third grade is unique. Children develop skills in the area of self-regulation, representational thought and memory during this period. An effective principal needs to understand the importance of learning standards, what children should know and be able to do, as the foundation for developmentally effective instruction. The early childhood years encompass birth through age 8, which is typically grade 3. Early learning and development standards are the cornerstone for creating high-quality pathways for children from birth through grade 12. The early learning and development standards, or as we refer to them commonly as the Connecticut ELDS, delineate a developmental continuum of what young children, from birth through the beginning of their fifth year, should know and be able to do. It's important to keep in mind that although these standards delineate developmental progressions through age 5, the early childhood years continue through age 8. And the underpinnings of these birth to age 5 standards are applicable through the entire early childhood range. For those of you looking for additional information about developmentally appropriate and effective practices in the early childhood years, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recently published separate volumes on developmentally appropriate practice for preschool, kindergarten and the primary grades. These publications are available on the NAEYC website, which is NAEYC.org, and we highly recommend them as really, really good resources. The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) is the

organization that represents and serves all of the superintendents in schools in Connecticut, along with many members of superintendent central office leadership teams. Joe Cirusuolo, the Executive Director of CAPSS, would like to share with you the following thought, "Connecticut's Early Learning and Development Standards are an important foundation for providing high quality learning experiences for all children. The standards, developed by teachers and vetted by NAEYC, provide a framework for what children, birth to five, should know and be able to do. The standards will provide communities a framework for integrating services birth to five as well as having children enter school ready to learn." Some of you may be familiar with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), which is an organization that serves schools, their students and staff in all areas of operation. It's affiliated with the National Federation of State High School Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Middle School Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and presents a united force for all administrators in Connecticut, creates a strong voice on which legislative and public policy issues are moving forward and seeks to promote pre-k through 12 understanding. Karissa Niehoff, the Executive Director of CAS, asked that I share the following message about the new Connecticut ELDS with you, "Connecticut's Early Learning and Development Standards offer teachers, principals and district leaders with the much needed guidance for planning and coordination of programs and services linking our elementary schools with the early learning experiences offered through birth to three services and preschool programs. The integration of these services around a common understanding of the developmental process for young children is essential for the success for all of Connecticut's children and for closing the achievement gaps." Some important things to know about the ELDS is that the ELDS were not just cross walked with the Common Core state standards to see where, and if they fit together. They were developed as standards to be intentionally aligned with the Common Core state standards, as well as recent national standards work in the area of science, the arts, social and emotional development and social studies. Additionally, the National Association for the Education of Young Children was engaged by the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet to coordinate a content validation process for the Early Learning and Development Standards. The process included a comprehensive review of the standards by nationally recognized experts in all domains of child development and learning. It's important to remember that early learning and development standards provide guidance about what we expect children to know and be able to do at different ages and across all of the domains of development. We also know that during the early years that children develop with great variability. There is a broad range in the ages at which children acquire certain skills. Typical child development is not linear and children's developmental trajectories can be quite uneven. The ELDS include age bands that provide us with information to help us think about when we expect skills to emerge in general. These age bands can also help us to think about when it might be appropriate to provide some extra support for children in a particular developmental area. The ELDS are designed to be guides to help us support children and move them in the right direction. They are not intended to serve as gates. They should not keep children from accessing programs or from moving on to new opportunities. The ELDS should be used for positive, not punitive, purposes and should not hold a child back when they're ready to learn new skills and/or concepts. Effective teaching is a continuous process of planning, observing, assessing and implementing instruction. Teachers plan activities, experiences and environments that help children to learn and develop. The new Early Learning and Development Standards, what children should know and be able to do birth to age 5, are an integral

part of this process of planning, observing, assessing and implementing instruction. The ELDS are a fundamental tool in planning for developmentally appropriate and effective instruction for our youngest learners. So I'd like to move to our first poll. You should be seeing the poll now. Prior to the development of the Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards for children birth to age 5, Connecticut had two separate documents, the Connecticut Infant-Toddler Guidelines and the Preschool Curriculum Framework, the PCF, as the state early learning standards. State-funded preschool programs, as well as many other early learning programs, planned instruction for preschool using PCF. The following poll will give you an opportunity to let us know what your level of familiarity is with the PCF, the early learning standards in Connecticut that were the precursor to the ELDS. If you could take a minute and weigh in [this feature is not available on this recorded webinar.] Okay, it looks like about three-quarters of us have voted, so, let's see if I can get that. Get that poll to show. Okay. You'll have to excuse me, this is the first time I've used this system, so I'm trying to close the poll so you can see it. [MICHELLE LEVY] Andrea, I took care of that. It should be showing. [ANDREA BRINNEL] Oh, great! Thank you very much, Michelle. It's wonderful having two people to do this. Thanks again. I can't see the results, so Michelle, if you could, oh I can see them over here. I'm sorry. So, it looks like almost half the people are familiar with the PCF, but they haven't used it. We have a few that use it for planning instruction. And we actually have about 30% of the people are not familiar with them. So, this is a wonderful opportunity for you to jump right in on our new Early Learning and Development Standards. On this slide, you'll see the cover of the new Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards. If you look closely, you'll see the following statement, "Connecticut's Early Learning and Development Standards were developed to help families, communities and schools work together to support children's early learning and growth. It's our sincerest hope that you'll be able to use the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards to support this important idea of collaboration to support our youngest learners." As the new Early Learning and Development Standards were drafted, there were several underlying principles that guided the work. The importance for the standards to be based on the science of learning and development was very strongly noted. We also know that families, schools and communities all play an important role in supporting children's health, learning and development. These guiding principles apply not only to the ages covered by the Early Learning and Development Standards, but to the entire period of early childhood through age 8. So if we look at this slide, you'll see a listing of the guiding principles. The Early Learning and Development Standards are designed to reflect developmentally and culturally appropriate and effective practices, and again, we strongly encourage schools, families and communities to work together on behalf of our youngest learners. In order to foster competent learners, it's important that early learning experiences support children to be creative thinkers, who are able find novel ways of solving problems and who are willing to take risks. The process of learning should be stressed and not the product. Children should be encouraged to ask questions and actively explore their environment. Children's flexibility should be fostered so they're able to be resilient and don't shy away from novel experiences and new ideas. Children should be provided with many opportunities to be critical thinkers and engage in higher order thinking skills. They should be encouraged to ask questions and be critical consumers of information. Young children should be encouraged to be purposeful and reflective as they help plan their learning experiences, set goals for themselves and learn from their mistakes. Additionally, relationships are an important foundation for children's learning and experiences. Young children should be encouraged to interact with peers and

adults through cooperative learning experiences. Again, like the guiding principles of the Early Learning and Development Standards, these essential dispositions are applicable to the entire developmental range of early childhood, birth through age 8. When these core ways of approaching life and learning are fostered, children are supported to become competent, lifelong learners who will be ready for the 21st century. We know that these essential dispositions overlap with some of the areas covered by the ELDS domains of development. But these essential dispositions are raised up and set aside because adult practices and approaches are so critical in influencing the development of these dispositions. On your screen you should now be seeing the domain wheel of the Early Learning and Development Standards. This graphic shows how these domains of development connect between birth and age 8. The inner purple band denotes the developmental domains applicable to infants and toddlers, birth to age 3. The green band denotes preschoolers, age 3 to 5. And the outside red band denotes kindergarten through third grade. You'll notice that there are some differences in the labels of the domains across the developmental levels. For instance, early language, communication and literacy for infants and toddlers becomes language and literacy domain for preschool. The Early Learning Standards Workgroup that developed the Early Learning and Development Standards felt that it was very important that the names of the domains reflect what is appropriate at various ages. In an effort to prevent misunderstandings about things such as infants doing math problems as opposed to discovering and exploring math-related concepts. Social studies is the only domain that does not appear in the birth to age 3 range because social studies begins with an understanding of oneself, and then an ability to think about others. The foundations for social studies are included in the areas of social and emotional development and cognition for infants and toddlers. You will notice that there is a mention of supplementary dual language development framework. The supplementary dual language development framework applies to children learning multiple languages. You may also have noticed that there are two domains pertaining to social and intellectual habits in the red K-3 band that are noted to be under development. Keep your ears open for news about new Connecticut Standards for K-3 in the areas of social and emotional development, and also cognition, which will also include approaches to learning, self-regulation and reasoning. These standards, which we are calling "social and intellectual habits," will be for kindergarten through grade 3 are currently in draft form and are being reviewed by national experts so stay tuned. We just explored the domain wheel and will now explore how the standards within the domains are presented. For each domain within the Early Learning and Development Standards document there is a chart, which includes the set of standards associated with that domain. For the purpose of clarity, all of what is included in these charts would be considered the standards, what children should know and be able to do. They are broken down into parts to make them easier to use. At the top of the chart, as you can see, is the domain name. In the most recent version of the document, we have color coded the domains so they can be easily located. For example, just as it is shown on this slide, the domain of Language and Literacy is in red. Under the domain name are the age ranges. This example only includes ranges from 18 months through 5 years because it is easier to see on our slide. Please note that within the document there will also be the age ranges of 0 to 6 months, 6 to 12 months and 12 to 18 months. I'll mention a bit more about the age ranges in a moment. The next part of the standards that you see labeled on this slide is the strand which appears in the middle colored bar. This is a way of breaking the larger domain into parts. Each strand in a domain is labeled with a capital letter. An example of how a strand can be broken down would be that the physical development health strand

can be broken down into gross motor skills, fine motor skills, adaptive or self-help skills and physical health status. Another example would be the strand that you see on this slide. It's broken down into the interest engagement in books that you see here, but if you look at the actual ELDS document, you will see that it also includes understanding of stories and information, as well as stories or information maybe shared through oral storytelling, sharing of pictures and/or books. Below the strand you will see the label of learning progression. This is a further breakdown of the strand into additional components. There are indicators across the various age ranges that show the stages which children typically progress as they grow and learn in this area. For some learning progressions, there will be one indicator for each age range. For some, there may not be indicators, as this is appropriate for some of the age bands. For yet other learning progressions, you will see there may be more than one indicator at a given age range. The example here was chosen as a basic example with one indicator for each age band across this learning progression. The indicators are written to reflect skills that are typical for the end of the age range presented. As previously mentioned, these standards are meant to be guides and not gates. The Early Learning Standards Workgroup of the Connecticut Early Childhood Cabinet felt strongly that we should include ranges. This is intended to reflect that children do not develop at the same rate. Remember, when using the ELDS it's also important to note that the skills delineated are typical of the skills that are likely to be demonstrated at the end of the age range presented. When looking at the Early Learning and Development Standards you may have noticed that each indicator is preceded by letters and numbers. The letters and numbers are there to provide locator information for the indicators. As you can see, the letter refers to the domain, in this case Language, a C would be for Cognition, SE for Social Emotional development, PH, Physical development and Health, CA, Creative Arts, M, Mathematics, S, Science and SS is Social Studies. The numbers refer to the age range and position of the indicator. In this example, we see L.24.11. This stands for 11th indicator, in the 24 to 36 month range in the domain of language. It's important to remember that the numbering is only significant for location purposes within the document and really has no other significance. As I mentioned previously, the Early Learning and Development Standards are appropriate for children who are dual language learners. In addition to using the domains on the wheel, we have also included a dual language development framework. This framework considers a general progression of second language acquisition while young children are still continuing to learn their primary language. This is a general framework and we recognize that there is a great variation in the experiences children have with multiple languages, including children who are learning more than two languages and for children for whom no one language can be considered a first or primary language. Considering where children fall in learning a second language can be very helpful in planning how to support them. This is especially important in circumstances when a caregiver or teacher does not speak the child's first language. You've now had the opportunity to get a little of the background information about the new Early Learning and Development Standards and the way they were designed and set up. You know what they are, child standards, what children should know and be able to do birth through age 5. Now I'll take a little bit of time to discuss the ways that Early Learning and Development Standards will be a useful tool for your school and for your district. The Early Learning and Development Standards can be used as a tool to build communication and common language between community early learning programs and public schools. When adults speak the same language, it makes transition between schools, programs and grades easier for children and their families. Examples of different vocabulary between birth to five

programs and K-12 can be as apparent as child versus student, director versus principal, or less obvious like intentional versus standards driven, play versus project-based, or hands-on kinesthetic or cooperative learning, or social and emotional development versus character education. When educators share the common language of standards, they're better able to effectively communicate across grades and across programs. The idea of common language is an important step in both horizontal alignment within a grade level and vertical alignment between grades. Preschool presents with many complexities in horizontal alignment as programs are diverse and can be located and administered in a variety of different ways. For example, we have community-based preschool, public school preschool, Head Start programs, publicly funded preschool programs and privately funded preschool programs in Connecticut. Kindergarten, as a grade, is typically less complex with not nearly the range of different types of programming that we see in preschool. Common language between programs will help build a strong continuum of high-quality education in a community. Common language will help to strengthen relationships and communication between grades and programs. Additionally, parents will enter the public school system with a better understanding of what their child knows and is able to do and will be better able to support the child's learning experiences as well as communicate more effectively about their child with a kindergarten teacher. The Early Learning and Development Standards can assist in the creation of pathways and alignment between pre-K and K when kindergarten and pre-kindergarten teachers share common understanding of child expectations and use this information to develop developmentally effective instruction as well as the formative assessments they use to develop the instruction. The Early Learning and Development Standards can be the foundation for developmentally effective instruction that will afford young children the opportunity to enter kindergarten with the fundamentals they will need to be successful learners. Preschool teachers can pass commonly understood information to kindergarten teachers, and kindergarten teachers will have a better understanding of the expectations in preschool. Common professional development opportunities about the Early Learning and Development Standards and early childhood instructional strategies can further encourage and buoy this dialogue. Learning progressions, including the kindergarten common core standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, are included in Appendix D of the Early Learning and Development Standards. The Early Learning and Development Standards are crucial for supporting entering kindergarten students. Since the common core state standards present what children should know and be able to do at the end of the kindergarten year, the ELDS can be especially helpful, as they contain the comprehensive learning progressions that developmentally lead up to the expectations of the common core. Not all children enter kindergarten with the same skills, knowledge or experiences. In order to effectively plan for instruction, it's important to have a good understanding of the foundational skills that precede the common core state standards. This is a sample of the alignment between the Early Learning and Development Standards and the common core state standards. This tool will be helpful for communities engaged in aligning practices from age 3 to grade 3, and for kindergarten teachers looking to support incoming children. It's important for dialogue between preschool programs in the community, public school preschool and kindergarten teachers to have a dialogue about what children should know and be expected to do in both grades, as well as an opportunity to share transition information. This alignment can also assist with conversations about developmentally effective instructional practices. Being able to have a shared dialogue and experiences will help to build and strengthen the common language that I've spoken about. The child standards and the Early Learning and

Development Standards can be used as a resource to help to develop individual education programs, IEPs, including goals and objectives for children in lower elementary grades who have developmental concerns. The Early Learning and Development Standards present a continuum of development from birth to age 5. These comprehensive developmental child standards can be a resource for writing standards based IEPs. IEPs can be developed using standards that are aligned to the common core as well as other Connecticut standards for children whose performance in any developmental domain falls outside of the range of what would be considered expected for their age. Having a set of developmental learning progressions that begin at birth and that are aligned to the common core all in one place, will make it easier for teachers and families to set goals for children performing in developmental ranges that precede the common core and other state standards. The Early Learning and Development Standards also include Action Guide pages. An Action Guide page has been developed for each domain. As you can see, these Action Guide pages are designed to provide adults outside of the classroom, and this can be families and other caregivers, with helpful, concrete examples of what they can do to support a child's development. The Action Guide pages contain helpful ideas for both children in the infant/toddler developmental range, birth to age 3, and preschool children, age 3 to 5. These adults strategies to support child growth and development may also be helpful for adults working with children age 5 and older that are delayed in their development. Please remember that these pages should be adapted if they're used for this purpose. We wouldn't want to be handing a family of a 6- or 7-year-old suggestions that are labeled for infants and toddlers or preschool-aged children. The information can and should be adapted to meet the individual needs and context of specific children and families. The Action Guide pages of the ELDS are intended to be used as handouts, and you're welcome to make copies and distribute them in any way that you feel would be beneficial. Feel free to use the Action Guides, or any adaptations of the Action Guides, as an addition to your community communications strategies, or as handouts to families and caregivers of your students. We are working to link evidence-based strategies to support children's growth and development with the Early Learning and Development Standards. Some of these strategies may be specific types of experiences that help children to learn something new, or they may be a way in which adults help them, such as by modeling how to do something. Work on how evidence-based strategies connect to the Early Learning and Development Standards is currently under development. The domain Action Guides included in this document are the broadest level of this guidance. We anticipate the next phases of this guidance to be available in the near future and will be sure to publicize their availability. Some of you indicated that you're familiar with the Preschool Curriculum Framework, the PCF. And some of you may be familiar with the assessment that went with the PCF that you've heard mentioned as the precursor to the new Early Learning and Development Standards. The assessment tool that went along with the PCF is the Preschool Assessment Framework, the PAF. The new Early Learning and Development Standards replaced the PCF, but a new assessment tool to replace the Preschool Assessment Framework has not yet been developed. If your program is currently using the PAF, you should continue to use it. A PAF to Early Learning and Development Standards crosswalk has been developed to assist you with the PAF's continued use. A copy of the PAF to ELDS crosswalk is included in the webinar materials and is also available on the Office of Early Childhood website. There's also another version of this introductory webinar that was designed especially for teachers of infants and toddlers and/or preschoolers that can be accessed at the Office of Early Childhood website. The PAF to ELDS crosswalk includes the thirty

performance standards of the PAF, and lists learning progressions from the ELDS which are aligned. It also includes special notes and considerations. I would also direct you to the learning progressions which are not addressed in the PAF. These are listed at the end of the crosswalk document. If the classrooms you work in or supervisor are not currently using the PAF, we suggest that you continue to use your current assessment tools with attention to alignment to the new ELDS. Since the new ELDS are based on sound research about child development, most assessment tools should be able to align to the learning progressions in the Early Learning and Development Standards. So after considering what you've heard today, I ask that you respond to our second and final poll, which is, "Do you plan on using the new Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards?" So we'll give you a few minutes to respond to that. And Michelle, I'll ask you to make the poll results visible when most people have voted. Well, it looks like many people voted and it looks like about 70% of our attendees plan on using the Early Learning and Development Standards for instruction at the beginning of kindergarten, also for transition to kindergarten about half, and it looks like almost 40% for writing standards-based IEPs, and we have a few that aren't sure. We hope that the information that we've provided you with today has helped given you a better understanding of the new Early Learning and Development Standards and how they will benefit both your school, your classroom and your school district. So, right now I would like to open it up to any questions about the Early Learning and Development Standards or about alignment age 3 to grade 3.

[MICHELLE LEVY] So, Andrea, we do have a couple of questions in the chat area. Anyone else who has questions, please feel free to type those in and I will consolidate those and relay them to Andrea. Andrea, one of the questions was related to whether you consider rote memory practices an important component of learning for early learners recognizing that a goal is higher order thinking.

[ANDREA BRINNEL] Thank you, Michelle. Well, we do know that sometimes there is an overemphasis on rote learning skills and, as we talked about the Early Learning and Development Standards, we really are talking about those higher order thinking skills, that when children are able to perform at those higher developmental levels, most of the time the rote learning skills really will come. So, we strongly recommend that from an instructional viewpoint, that concentrating on higher order thinking skills as opposed to rote learning skills is really what's going to help children learn and grow.

[MICHELLE LEVY] Andrea, there was also a question regarding plans for assessment tools related to the new Connecticut ELDS.

[ANDREA BRINNEL] Well, that is, they will be in the works. We do not have any new assessment tools as of yet, and actually, I'm going to turn this over to you for a second, Michelle. Perhaps you can fill people in on what's going on with the new kindergarten inventory that is in the works.

[MICHELLE LEVY] Certainly. I'd be happy to share that information. Connecticut is currently involved in a seven state consortium looking and working on a new kindergarten entrance assessment. To date, the process has involved looking across all of the states involved and finding our common ground as far as standards in the early childhood realm and looking to jointly look across these states at a common kindergarten entrance assessment. The work is just getting underway and the plans in the future involve a formative tool which will provide information for planning ongoing curriculum and instruction across the birth to age 5 range and potentially some tools that might be useful in that formative realm in kindergarten. So, that work's still kind of getting going. The focus currently is on that kindergarten entrance assessment, which is critical since our previous, or current kindergarten inventory, is based on the Preschool Curriculum Framework. We actually had one other question I wanted to relay and if other folks had them, please type them in here. We had a question regarding recommendations for educators around encouraging a child's first language. The participant had some great ideas about how they supported and encouraged the first language, but found that sometimes children were hesitant to use their first language in educational settings, so what could they do to provide that encouragement?

[ANDREA BRINNEL] Well, I think it's very important that the dual language learning framework that's included with the ELDS is something that's very important to be reviewed. We have noted the importance of making sure that children's first language is valued and children continue to learn in their first language. So whatever opportunities you can provide within your classrooms and within your schools for children to be able to see or experience their first language will be very beneficial. And also being able to speak with parents and letting them know the importance of a child continuing to work and think in their first language while their being supported in their second language. Research has shown us that there's not a finite bubble of learning language, sort of inside of a child's head, that they can be learning a first language while they're learning in their second language and that stopping learning in your first language is not beneficial for the second language learning, that it really is very important to continue to be able to look at that initial first language learning.

[MICHELLE LEVY] Alright. Another question has come up regarding how there term "system" fits into everything you've been talking about here. About whether this is part of a system. Kind of looking for some thoughts of that. I'll let you present that and if there's a follow up question I will watch for that as well.

[ANDREA BRINNEL] So, when I speak about a system and creating a continuum, I'm really talking about being able to look at that range of learning, and in Connecticut, we commonly refer to the initiative that we have as "Age 3 to Grade #." And it's not that we're discounting the importance of learning at the infant/toddler years, but we know we have, sort of this little bubble in the middle of age 3 to grade 3, preschool and into grades K through 3. And the research is showing that building a continuum of high quality that helps children move seamlessly from being 3-year-olds to 4-year-olds to 5 to 6 and 7 and 8. So going from preschool into Kindergarten and through First, Second and Third Grade, the lower elementary grades, really does improve student performance. When teachers and children sort of have that same conceptual framework as they move through, and they're able to have conversations as children are either within an age level, which is that horizontal alignment, and then people are able to have really deep conversations about effective instructional practice between grades and have common understandings of what children should know and be able to do, it really helps create a system. A system does not mean that any one particular facet of the system owns it. So it doesn't necessarily mean that when we talk about a system age 3 to grade 3 it's only inclusive of public schools. It's inclusive of the entire community and that's where, as I had said earlier, it does get sort of complex, particularly with 3- and 4-year-olds, because we have such a broad range of where those 3- and 4-year-olds can be. Anywhere from in Family, Friend and Neighbor care to Head Start to state-funded to public and private, so it's really difficult sometimes to make all of those parts work together. But this is where I have personally seen public schools sometimes acting as almost the hub in their community, of being able to draw in everybody that's working with the youngest learners in a community to begin having those conversations about how to create a system.

[MICHELLE LEVY] Finally, we have a question regarding whether the ELDS will be available on IEP Direct.

[ANDREA BRINNEL] That is something we can certainly look into and we will add to our list to explore.

[MICHELLE LEVY] Great. Looks like we have... Well, I'm sorry. I'm reading through the questions here. One other question that has come up is regarding the expectations or the timeline for implementation of the new Early Learning and Development Standards.

[ANDREA BRINNEL] Well, the Early Learning and Development Standards are... they're published. They're a public document. And they can be used at any time. We are suggesting that people begin the implementation, and I think whatever standards you are using now, I do know that there are programs that, you know, began their implementation immediately. There are other programs that are doing training and having some common discussions over the summer and their implementation is starting in September. So, I think you have to look at what exists in your system, what standards you're planning by

and then decide what will work best in your system to do that switch over. But, as I said, the standards are available. You can start using them any time that works well for your system. And, again, as was mentioned in the webinar, they're based on very solid developmental science of what children should know and be able to do. So, if you're currently using any form of early learning standards, it should not be difficult to switch over because, in essence, child development hasn't changed a great deal. What we have done, we think, is been able to package a very comprehensive set of standards for you that are highly aligned with the common core standards to make it simpler in the long run for programs to be able to use the Early Learning and Development Standards.

[MICHELLE LEVY] Andrea, we also had a question regarding the kindergarten entrance age. The current entrance age in Connecticut is for children who are five on or before January 1st of a school year and there have been various proposals out at different times, but someone asked a question regarding the status of that entrance age.

[ANDREA BRINNEL] Well, at this point, you probably know, you know, have the same information Michelle and I have about where that stands legislatively. I know there have been proposals over the past several sessions. We would encourage everybody to really think about how entrance age, related to the Early Learning and Development Standards, is that that whatever the kindergarten entrance age is, we need to meet children where they are. So we're very hopeful that these Early Learning and Development Standards, regardless of when the entrance age to kindergarten is or if it is changed, will be able to help you with planning for effective instruction for any child when they enter kindergarten.

[MICHELLE LEVY] Wonderful. Somebody did ask a question about SEAS. I didn't know the name of that acronym, but it may be related to the IEP Direct question.

[ANDREA BRINNEL] I'm not familiar with that acronym either.

[MICHELLE LEVY] Okay. Feel free, I think Andrea, if you want to change the slide and make sure people have our contact information, certainly any further questions can be directed to either Andrea or myself at the email addresses there. As we go through the several webinars, we've been working to kind of pull together some frequently asked questions that we've had in both the webinars for the early care and education field, that was also open to everyone, and these more targeted webinars we're holding for early elementary. So, we'll certainly put together those and post those or email them out to participants.

[ANDREA BRINNEL] So when the webinar ends, you will get a brief survey for you to do at the end to send back to us so we can gather some information about what you've learned and what your needs are, and I want to thank you all for attending and thank you so much, Michelle, for handling the technical duties and all the questions. It's much, much appreciated.

[MICHELLE LEVY] Thank you, everyone.