Transcription of Early Learning and Development Standards Webinar

ANDREA:

Welcome, everyone. We are so happy that you could make it here this evening to attend this webinar on Connecticut's new Early Learning and Development Standards. My name is Andrea Brinnel, I'm a consultant at the new Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and I will be handling the questions and the technical aspects of today's webinar. I'd like to introduce you to our presenter today, my colleague, Michelle Levy, who is also a consultant at the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. Michelle has had many years of experience in the field of early childhood, both in private programs and in public schools. She has worked in a variety of settings including special education, and brings a lot of experience in her role as the lead in Connecticut for our early learning standards. So I'd like to turn this over to Michelle, but I'd also like to remind you that everybody is on mute. We would appreciate any and all questions, but we ask that you put them in the chat box, that you should see at the bottom right-hand corner of your screen [this is a recorded webinar and this chat box is disabled]. Feel free to send me the questions privately and I will keep track of them or you are more than welcome to have them appear to the entire audience. We have reserved about fifteen minutes at the end of the webinar for questions and answers, and in the event that we don't get to everybody's questions, I will be tracking them all and we will make sure that we find a way to get back to anybody who has a question. So why don't I turn it over to my colleague, Michelle Levy.

MICHELLE:

Thank you, Andrea. I am thrilled that the technology is allowing us to reach so many people today through the webinar. Today I am going to provide you with information about Connecticut's new Early Learning and Development Standards. The ELDS, as we are commonly calling them, include what children birth to age five should know and be able to do. They're intended to help families, communities and schools work together to support children's growth and development. The ELDS were developed through a workgroup of Connecticut's Early Childhood Education Cabinet over the course of approximately two years. Over 100 early childhood professional from Connecticut participated in the alignment and development work. And I see in some our participant names that some of the folks who participated in that process are listening in today. Others participated in focus groups related to implementation, a roll out, of the Early Learning and Development Standards, which this webinar is a part of. We also engaged national experts who provided input, which helped us to improve the Early Learning and Development Standards. So, I just want to provide you with some information about the materials that are included as a part of the webinar today. One of the documents included is a copy of the Early Learning and Development Standards. The version in the materials is the most recent version. It is marked as "proof." This does not mean "draft." Rather, it means that we are working to finalize some of the pieces; the layout, typographical errors, looking at formatting issues, etc. We anticipate finalizing the document and moving to publication within the next month or so. In the materials for the webinar, there are also some other documents available. I will be referring to them during the webinar and explaining their purpose. You're welcome to print whatever is useful to you. And the tools and materials that are available on the webinar will also be available on the Office of Early Childhood

website and our final slide has the address for that website. So, one important note that I want to share before we begin, the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards are new. They offer opportunities for us to deepen our understanding about children's growth and development over time. They're really a great tool to develop common language to communicate about children's progress across ages and sectors. But I really want to stress to everyone out there who's already working in the field, that this new tool does not mean that everything you're doing is going to change, or needs to change. This is a tool and we think you're going to find it very useful as you begin to incorporate it into your work. But it does not represent an abrupt and sudden change of everything you are doing. Child development hasn't changed drastically. We do have access to new research that shows us what children can do at various ages, and one of the most dramatic examples is in the area of math. There's been research that shows children can understand mathematical concepts much earlier than we previously thought. But the ways in which we approach and engage children in developmentally effective practices has not changed a great deal. As new research comes out about what's effective and appropriate, we incorporate that. But, many of the practices that you're currently using are going to continue and, hopefully, as you learn about the new Early Learning and Development Standards, you will see how they can be helpful to you in your work and that you can begin to incorporate them in meaningful ways. So, I'm going to spend some time sharing aspects of the document, and the features, I'm then going to share some information about how it fits into the process of using an assessment and thinking about planning. And we will also share some ideas and steps for beginning to incorporate them into practice. I'm going to begin by sharing some information about the guiding principles. The guiding principles are an important part of the ELDS. They appear early in the document. I want to point them out because I think it's critical that people who are using the standards refer to them. They were created for two reasons and they were one of the first parts of the Early Learning and Development Standards that were created. And that's because they guided the development of the ELDS. They informed the implementation or use of the standards, but they also informed the development process. These principles are based on developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant practices. They include statements about practices that are appropriate and effective in the field of early childhood. The principles are divided into four broad categories addressing the characteristics of young children, the critical roles of families, early learning environments and communities in supporting children's growth and development. An example of a guiding principle related to the characteristics of young children is that young children are unique in their growth and development. An example of a guiding principle related to families is that families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children. Other examples of guiding principles in the ELDS include that early learning environments reinforce the importance of the cultural context of young children, families and communities. And finally, I'll share one more example related to communities and that guiding principle is that communities strategically plan to meet the needs of children and families. The guiding principles really stress the common goals and the common efforts of families, learning environments and communities. Next, I'm going to share some important aspects of the ELDS. The alignment to state and national documents was very integral in the development of the new ELDS. By considering how they can connect to other sets of standards, we set the stage for cross sector communication and understanding. So in the development, we drew from the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. The ELDS were also designed to reflect a true progression of skills building to the common core state standards in English language arts

and mathematics. We also considered Connecticut's current K-12 learning standards in science and social studies, as well as other national work in those areas of study. One point of clarity, the ELDS are Connecticut's standards. They are not the preschool common core. There are no preschool or early childhood learning standards that have been created at the national level that were similar to the common core state standards. As I mentioned previously, the second bullet on this screen addresses engaging national experts to provide input on our standards. The National Association for the Education for Young Children worked with Connecticut to engage twelve national experts to review our draft standards and to provide input. That input was used to make revisions and improve the work. The result of those revisions is what is in the proof copy provided in the materials for today. One of the main goals for the ELDS is to provide a common language for communicating about children's growth and development and to provide a basis for planning the ways adults in their lives can support them. We know that not all of the adults in a child's life have the same knowledge and background in child development. Therefore, we've included information for each domain of development in a section titled, "Taking Action to Support Early Learning and Development: What Can I Do?" These domain action guides can be used by families, care providers, librarians, or others who are thinking about the areas of development, what they mean and how they can support children's growth and development. Later on in the webinar there will be an example of what those pages look like, but we wanted to share that those do exist and are at each of the domain levels that that information is shared. Finally, the ELDS are designed to be appropriate for all children and all settings. They are appropriate for home day care, for center-based settings. As I just mentioned, components of the document may be useful in other settings, such as libraries or doctor's offices. The ELDS are also appropriate for children with special needs and children who are dual language learners. Because the Early Learning and Development Standards span from birth to age five, they reflect a broad range of developmental ages and stages. I'll share later on in the webinar more information about how we've worked to support people who are helping children who are dual language learners. We'll share some more information about some features of the document related to that. 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 in different domains of development. However, we know that especially in the early years, there is a great variability in the ages in which children acquire certain skills. The ELDS include age bands, because this information helps us think about when we might generally expect skills to emerge. These age bands can also help us think about when it might be appropriate to provide some extra support, or to communicate more with parents and other settings around children in a particular 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 block children from accessing programs, from moving to new opportunities, nor should they keep children back from gaining knowledge and skills they're ready to move on to. Another aspect of the document that I want to share, are the essential dispositions. You can see from this slide that these dispositions include being creative, flexible, being inquisitive, becoming critical thinkers and social learners. We also want to foster children to act with purpose and to reflect upon what they've done. When these core ways of approaching life and learning are fostered, children are supported to become competent life-long learners, ready for the 21st century. These dispositions overlap somewhat, with some of the areas covered in the domains of development. But they are set aside as adult practices and approaches over time and across contacts are so critical to

influence and support the development of these dispositions. This slide shows what we affectionately refer to as the domain wheel. It includes the areas or domains of development addressed in the ELDS. It also shows how they align to kindergarten to grade three standards. If you hopefully can see the small print here if you're viewing on an individual computer, if you are viewing in a group you may need to look at the document at a later point, but I am going to point out a couple of things you might notice when you look at this wheel. A few of the domains, while similar, have slightly different names for the age range of birth to three years old than they do for children in the three to five year age range. It was important to the early learning standards workgroup that the names of the domains reflect the type of learning or exploration that children are engaged in across the age ranges and to ensure that there weren't any misunderstandings. They wanted to ensure that the language of the domain fit with the developmental progressions included in the standards. We weren't showing that we were pushing down practices or areas that weren't appropriate. Therefore, we have early scientific inquiry, which builds to science. Early mathematical discovery, which builds to more knowledge and skills in the area of mathematics. Social studies is the only domain that does not appear in the birth to three age range because social studies begins with an understanding of one's self 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 in birth to three. Finally, you will note that in the areas of social and emotional development and cognition, standards in kindergarten through grade three are under development. That work is going on and we're working closely with the Department of Education in developing standards around social and emotional development and cognition which includes approaches to learning and executive function, as well as symbolic representation. The last slide shows the domains, and for each domain in the ELDS document, there is a chart. So, I'm going to walk you through how the document is laid out so that hopefully you can get the feel for the document. Just for the purposes of clarity, all of what's included in this chart would be considered the standards. They're broken down into various parts, which I'm going to introduce to you here. So hopefully, that will make them easier to use. Some of the language and layout may take a little while for all of us to get used to, soon it will be really familiar and everybody will get the hang of it. So at the top of the chart, you will see the domain name. In the most recent version, which is included as a document, as a resource in this webinar, we have color coded the domains so that you can easily find them. Each domain has a different color of the bars so that you can easily spot where they change when you move from one to the other. Under the domain name, are the lists of the age ranges. This example only includes the age ranges up to 24 months, simply because it made it easier to fit and to be able to see all the pieces. However, within the document, there will also be age ranges of 24-36 months, 3-4 years, and 4-5 years. So the chart would actually continue on, on the right-hand side. I'll mention a little more about the age ranges in a moment as we talk about the numbering system, but for now know that appears across the top. The next part of the standards you'll see labeled on this slide is this "strand." The strand appears in that middle colored bar. This is a way of breaking down that larger domain into meaningful parts. An example would be in the domain of physical development and health is broken down into gross motor skills, fine motor skills, adaptive skills and physical health status. Below that, you will see the label of "Learning Progression."

[NO AUDIO]

There are indicators across the various age ranges that show the stages through which children typically progress as they grow, develop and learn in this area.

[NO AUDIO]

In other learning progressions, you may see there may be more than one indicator at a given age range. So the example here was shown as a simplistic example, but there will be some variation there. The indicators are written as to reflect skills typical for the end of the age range. As was mentioned previously, these standards are meant to be guides, not gates. To that end, the early learning standards workgroup felt very strongly that we should include ranges to reflect that children do not all develop at the same rate. However, it's important to know that the skills are typical for the end of the age ranges they're included in. I just wanted to explain briefly what the numbering system is. It was simply a rather arbitrary system to make sure that we could refer to the various indicators in a short-hand way. That was created simply by using the domain and having an abbreviation for that. In the case of "CA," that stands for "Creative Arts." This second number, in this case a six, stands for the end of that age range, so in this case, it was a 0-6 month age range, so "CA.6." The final number is simply the number in order of the indicators in that age range. So in this case, the "10" would reflect the tenth indicator in the age range within that domain. So I've shared a little bit about the document, and the features of the document. And I want to also put the standards in some context. Early learning standards, or the ELDS, provide the foundation for supporting children's growth and development, but they aren't used in isolation. The ELDS are part of a cycle of intentional teaching. And you can see this graphic on the screen now, it is a pictorial representation of the cycle of intentional teaching. With an arrow pointing at where the early learning standards are in a part of this graphic. Adults plan experiences that will support growth and development, they then observe or assess children, and then they adjust what they're doing. This occurs in families, in home settings, and in classrooms. In order to be meaningful and relevant, that cycle of intentional teaching must also incorporate children's interests, the family, and the cultural and community context. A simple example of intentional teaching in the context of a family would be a family that takes their child to the park. They're going to work on gross motor skills and specifically they want their child to learn to use the slide. Upon observing that their three-year-old is having some trouble climbing the stairs to the slide, they may support them to do this. They may physically help them move their legs and stand behind them so they can climb. Or they may take them to a smaller slide so they can master climbing the smaller slide first, before returning to the larger slide. It's an example of adjusting what they're doing based on the observations that they made of the child's progress. In a home or day care setting, or classroom setting, an infant/toddler or preschool teacher might plan a specific small group experience focused on one or two learning progressions. Because the teacher knows the children in the group are at different levels, they can adjust what they're doing to meet the individual needs within a group. In an infant and toddler room, some children may be putting objects into a large container, while another child may have a smaller opening into which they can fit an object. In a preschool classroom, a teacher working on mathematic skills, may have observed that one child is able to count on their own while others need support to maintain one-on-one correspondence. These are all examples of the cycle of intentional teaching. And as I shared, it's also important to draw upon children's interest, the family and cultural context. Children learn best when they are engaged in

meaningful experiences that interest and excite them and that's where the interest, family and cultural context are still important. This is all to say that standards really form the basis for our planning, but without considering the individual children and the other aspects, they will not have the impact. So we've shared about the document, we've shared a little about the context of standards in a cycle of intentional teaching, now we're going to talk a little about how we might get started in incorporating the standards. We are going to actually do a poll to ask you for some input. (Please note that this is a recorded webinar and the poll function is not active in this recording.) The question for this poll is whether or not you are currently using early learning standards. If you happen to be viewing this webinar in a group, you can give the group consensus or the majority answer to that response. We just want to get a sense of our audience and how many are using standards now. (Please note that this is a recorded webinar and the poll function is not active in this recording.) You may be using current Connecticut standards, you may be using Head Start standards, other documents that articulate what children should know and be able to do. As soon as, we have about a minute and number of people have participated, I'll close that poll and I'll share the information with you. And then I'll provide some ideas about getting started with incorporating the new ELDS into the work that you do. So far, we have a few more votes coming in here, responses to the poll. I'm going to close that out now and I will share. (Please note that this is a recorded webinar and the poll function is not active in this recording.) 92. We have good participation here, 93% of folks have participated in that poll and 94% of those you listening and participating are using, currently using, standards, learning standards. There's about 10% who aren't, so we are going to share information relative to transitioning as well as beginning to use standards for the first time. So we have information for everyone. So, we're going to start broadly with what are some steps to take to begin to incorporate the Early Learning and Development Standards. One of the first things is simply to explore the document. Begin to learn what's in there, the way it's structured, the information that is provided. You can begin to consider how your current curriculum practices align with the new standards. Looking at the learning experiences, the current materials, the environment and how the standards are reflected, that as well as your teaching practices will help you begin to see how you can incorporate the standards into your practice. You can begin to plan experiences for children in your care to promote development across these learning progressions. You may begin with a particular domain. You may decide to explore. You may take skills from a variety of domains. You may implement a learning activity that you know has been successful and begin to think about what skills from the Early Learning and Development Standards you are addressing in that favorite activity. So this is about the early learning standards, but as we shared with the cycle of intentional teaching, assessment is also a key piece of working with young children. So I'm going to actually launch another poll here related to assessment. (Please note that this is a recorded webinar and the poll function is not active in this recording.) This question asks what assessment you are currently using. There is an option for "None" and there is an option for "Other." We do ask that if you are using "Other," if that is your response, that in the chat you indicate what the other tools are. (Please note that this is a recorded webinar and the poll function is not active in this recording.) We included the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework as a tool that we know is put out by Connecticut and is connected to the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework, which are current standards for preschool. We also included Teaching Strategies Gold, which we know a number of early care and education programs that are using that tool. We included the Hawaii Early Learning Profile as a tool that

is used with infants and toddlers by some programs. We have a fair number of people responding "Other" and a large group that is currently using the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework. I see a few votes coming in and I'm going to close out the poll in just a minute and share the results with you and we'll talk a little about assessment. (Please note that this is a recorded webinar and the poll function is not active in this recording.) Okay, I'm going to close that poll now and share it. Looks like we have about 79, just shy of 80% of participants who are using the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework, a small number using Teaching Strategies Gold and the Hawaii. We have 17% using "Other" and 8% not currently using a tool. So we will share some information specific to the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework, but we have other information that will be helpful to those of you who are not using a tool and some ideas for those of you who are using other tools. If you are currently using an assessment tool, whether it is the Preschool Assessment Framework, Teaching Strategies Gold, the Hawaii or something else, you should continue to use your current tools and consider their alignment to the new ELDS. If you are currently using the Preschool Assessment Framework, you can use the crosswalk between the PAF and the ELDS to help you incorporate the new ELDS into your planning. This document is provided as a tool within the documents for this webinar and is also posted on the Office of Early Childhood website. I'm going to share an example of that on the next page. The text on the slide may be a little small to read if you're viewing in a group, but we wanted to at least share a sample from that document. The document is titled "Using the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework with the new Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards." This document includes the 30 performance standards on the Preschool Assessment Framework. It lists the learning progressions from the ELDS that are aligned to each of those performance standards. It also includes special notes for considerations. As those of you who are using the PAF already know, it includes four benchmarks across the age range from two and a half years to six years of age. The ELDS incorporates multiple age ranges from birth to five. Because these are guides, the standards, the ELDS, are guides to help us support children in their growth and development, the use of these tools together can be very helpful. It did not make sense for us to try to align benchmarks on the PAF to indicators in the ELDS because there are different structures and different purposes to these documents. Therefore, we show which learning progressions are aligned to the various performance standards. It's suggested that those of you who are using the PAF continue to do so, but that you also refer to the learning progressions for additional information and details about supporting children's growth and development. It will be especially helpful for children who fall in the first benchmark or below because there will be learning progressions that begin at birth, so that's a place where the Early Learning and Development Standards will be very useful. You may also want to pay close attention to the learning progressions that are not addressed in the PAF. They're listed at the end of the crosswalk document. There aren't a lot of standards from the ELDS that are not aligned to the PAF. In general, the Preschool Assessment Framework is more general, and there's more detail within many of the learning progressions of the ELDS. That's generally the case. For those of you who are not currently using assessment tools, you can begin to observe children's skills in the areas of development covered in the ELDS. You can discuss what you observe with other teachers and with families, and begin to plan about supporting children and moving to the next stage of development. I'm going to share with you a sample observation sheet. I want to stress this is not an assessment tool, this is simply a chart based on the Early Learning and Development Standards which may be used to note observations of children related to the domains in

the ELDS. Remember, good observations of young children are objective. They state what you see and what you hear. Objective observations do not include things such as what you think a child feels or thinks, but focuses on what is observable. The entire document of this observation sheet with pages for each domain is available in the webinar materials and on the Office of Early Childhood website. Because this is just a very general tool and form, it's in a format that you can change and adjust to meet your own needs if you want to begin using some observation related to the standards. For those of you who are using other tools, we suggest that you begin to look very closely at how the tool that you are using aligns to the ELDS.

And for everyone, watch for information from the OEC about tools aligned to the new ELDS and consider using one of these tools. This is really a slide indicating that in the future we are beginning work on a new assessment tool, so in the future, there will be a new tool aligned to the ELDS. More information will be forthcoming about a timeline and the features of the new tool. I can tell you a little information, however, today. Currently, Connecticut is just beginning work with a consortium of seven states to develop a tool. There is funding from the federal government and as this work progresses, we will share updates. We do know this new assessment will be designed as a tool for adults to plan how the they can support young children from birth to age five. The plan for this tool also, or this system, also is to connect to a new kindergarten entrance assessment. And it also includes some components or additional pieces of the assessment system that will go up to age six. By having a whole system of assessment where we can plan for young children's growth and development from birth to five, have a kindergarten entrance assessment connected will really facilitate communication and collaboration as children transition to kindergarten. So it's very exciting work that is progressing, and I said as some of the timelines and information become available we will be sharing more about that.

So as we've talked about standards, the document, how that fits in an assessment, I want to now talk a little about how we support children and their growth and development.

It's really important to keep remembering that the ELDS will only articulate what children should know and be able to do, assessments help us determine how children are progressing, but it's what the adults do to support children in making progress along the learning progressions that is so critical.

High-quality learning activities or experiences are meaningful.

They incorporate skills from multiple domains of development from a higher order of thinking and address the essential dispositions we mentioned earlier.

Learning standards frequently break skills down into very separate areas.

We can talk about gross motor development and fine motor development and language acquisition, and those very important aspects of development, but this is not how children learn.

If we look at the picture of the girl on the slide, you can see that she's likely working on her gross motor skills.

She's also probably learning some vocabulary, perhaps related to the color names of the blocks she's stepping on.

She may be counting as she moves along.

There may be a component of social and emotional development being addressed if there are other children participating in this activity.

Perhaps she worked on some of her self-regulation and impulse control when she had to wait her turn to go through the obstacle course.

Perhaps the adults approaching this activity will allow her to think of new ways to move through the obstacle course, promoting flexibility and creativity.

It's those things that happen everyday in homes and in classrooms that make the difference.

We hope that we're providing you with tools that will help you do this, but it's really important to think about how it comes together for the children.

So to that end, we are working to link evidence-based strategies to support children's growth and development with the ELDS.

Some of these strategies may be specific types of experiences that are shown to help children learn something new.

They may be the strategies that adults use to help them, such as modeling to a child how to do something new.

Work on these on how the evidence-based strategies, as I said is under development, so the domain action guides that I shared earlier, and I'm going to show you an example in just a moment, are really the broadest level of this guidance.

So I'm going to show you an example here. This is what the domain action guide for cognition looks like. As you can see, there's some brief information at the beginning about what this area covers and then there's some strategies for supporting growth and development for the broad age ranges of infants and toddlers and preschoolers.

The next, more detailed, phase of the guidance, I'm going to show you an example of.

And these are just a couple of examples drawn. The format and layout of these has not been finalized.

But, some examples of what some more detailed guidance might look like is around mathematics and in the strand of counting and cardinality.

At 12-18 months, there's a couple of strategies there...singing and asking questions.

Whereas, at 3 to 4 years, children may be asked to collect things for this specific number of items.

So this is some of the more detailed pieces that will be coming out.

Hopefully, sometime this spring.

So, I had also shared with you that the ELDS are very appropriate for use with dual language learners.

I'm going to share a feature of the document specific to dual language learning.

This is a dual language development framework.

In addition to looking at the domains on the wheel, this framework has been included to reflect a general progression of acquisition of a second language.

While children are still continuing to learn their first or primary language.

It's a very general framework and we know that this language of first and second language or home and primary language does not fit with all children.

But in order to capture the information we needed a basic layout and premise.

And we think that the information in here will be useful for a variety of circumstances as long as those using it are keeping in mind that variation that children may be introduced to a second language at various times. They may be learning two languages simultaneously.

But the information here, in general, can help those working with young children who are learning more than one language begin to think about how that occurs over time and how that might impact their use of language in various settings and their use of language as you see them displaying skills in the other areas of development.

One example of what is reflected in this framework is that many children are able to use social language at a much earlier stage than they're able to use language for more complex concepts, so they may appear to, very socially, be engaging in the use of a new language, but they may not have the knowledge and depth of vocabulary to begin to use it for learning more complex concepts.

So I urge you to explore that aspect of the document, especially if you're working with dual language learners.

One final aspect of the document that I wanted to highlight is included in the appendix, is the alignment to the common core state standards.

I mentioned earlier that the Early Learning and Development Standards reflect a progression of skills, which build over time and fit well with what is in the kindergarten common core.

We also think that the Early Learning and Development Standards are crucial for entering kindergarten students.

The kindergarten common core state standards are end-of-the-year goals for the end of kindergarten.

Not all children enter kindergarten with the same skills, knowledge or experience.

And so to really effectively support children, these Early Learning and Development Standards can show those necessary foundational skills that will help support their growth and development across the kindergarten year with their ultimate goal with the end of the year.

I'm going to show you briefly, here is what the documents look like in Appendix D.

The Common Core State Standards are only in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

And therefore those are the two areas covered in this document.

We have included the three to four year indicators and four to five year indicators that align to those kindergarten common core state standards.

As Connecticut proceeds with work on science standards and considers adoption of the next generation science standards, which are comparable, a national set of standards that Connecticut is exploring, we would also look at doing similar alignments to standards in both social studies and science as that work progresses.

But the common core state standards are in use currently and we felt that it was very important to include this alignment in the document from the onset.

As we mentioned previously, these standards really can play a foundational role in children's learning pathways.

The work of all of these professionals and groups have really provided Connecticut with strong birth to five early learning and development standards that are clearly connected to the K-12 standards.

Curriculum assessment and instruction will follow based upon these standards and hopefully there will be clear connections and progressions there as well.

It's a great opportunity to connect across sectors within the birth to five age range as well as across those ages and into the early elementary grades.

And now I am going to move on into questions.

Andrea has been reviewing the chat.

ANDREA:

(Please note that this is a recorded webinar and the chat function is not active in this recording.)

So I would ask if you have any questions if you can put them up in the chat, and I had a few here, so we will field these and if you have any additional ones we still have about fifteen minutes left.

So we have had some specific questions about particular progressions and what I've asked Michelle is that if people have questions about a particular progression in a particular domain, that this really

wouldn't be a great time for us to answer those questions because it's really very, very detailed and not everybody has the same questions, so I suggested that those be emailed to us and we'd be happy to get in touch with people to clarify a particular progression. But general questions that we've gotten is, there are questions about how this will align with Connecticut guidelines and what does this mean with respect to the infant toddler guidelines and the preschool curriculum framework?

MICHELLE:

Okay. That's a very good question.

The Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework were our standards previously for preschool.

So those standards are being replaced with the new Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards.

So at this point we are transitioning to the new standards.

Likewise, the infant and toddler guidelines. The infant and toddler guidelines reflected, or is a document that was developed through the Department of Social Services.

And it included not only what children birth to three should know and be able to do, but also included great information about supporting young children's growth and development, so there was information about what you might expect of children at different ages, but also about how you can have a great learning environment to support their growth.

There were also parent information pages.

So, collectively the documents that we are working on will replace that and will reflect similar information from birth all the way to age five that's connected and reflects that continuum.

We've drawn heavily from that great work that was already done on the infant and toddler guidelines and really worked to incorporate that, strengthen it and move it into this learning progression that covers the whole age range.

ANDREA:

There have been several questions about the availability of this presentation in the future, and I'd just like to share with everyone that we are recording this session. We're recording actually several of the sessions that we're doing and then we will pick the sharpest, best one. I think we had some problems with audio cutting out on this one, I could see from the chat, and have that available, made available to anybody that would like to use this presentation again in their program or rewatch it. So you will be hearing about that when we're done with all of the presentations, so I would gather around the end of the month.

I do have a couple other questions coming in here.

Michelle, you gave an example of using an observation sheet.

We have a participant who wants to know how often you would see it used, as a weekly or bi-weekly tool for individualization after reflection, so it really is a question about assessment. So I would include with that, we've had a couple of other questions about, we have these new Early Learning and Development Standards, how does that fit with the PAF?

MICHELLE:

So, we did talk about here, about the Preschool Assessment Framework and that they are aligned, so these are the learning standards, which reflect what children should know and be able to do.

Assessment tools are how we measure children's growth and development.

They're tools about how we can look and watch, observe and document how children are making progress.

We may not observe or it may not be easily assessed, easy to assess, every skill that's included in the standards, but the information in the standards is really about all of the aspects that we want to promote for young children's growth and development.

So, assessment tools are based on standards.

They reflect sometimes examples of how you might see a particular standard exhibited and are generally set up as a tool specifically for that purpose, to see how children are doing.

Andrea, your audio cut out a little there for me at the beginning of the question, so if I didn't answer all aspects of your question, please let me know so that I can make sure I address all of what was asked.

ANDREA:

Sure. And I really, I had responded privately to a bunch of participants, I'm really not sure why we're having this cutting out. I can only think it has something to do with our internet connection, so I apologize.

You did get the essence of the question.

Thank you for asking, Michelle.

We do have another question about having the Early Learning and Development Standards translated into Spanish and possibly other languages.

MICHELLE:

Yes, we definitely have that in our plans, our planning currently, and some of this depends on availability of the resources, but our current plans are to translate the document of the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards into Spanish, along with other supporting materials.

Certainly, the domain action guides, we have plans to translate those into multiple languages, so these can be shared more widely across various audiences.

So, we are looking at the most commonly spoken languages in Connecticut and we'll try to incorporate as many of those as possible, but there are plans for translation of this, of the ELDS document, in Spanish.

ANDREA:

And there are some questions about additional training and professional development opportunities. We actually have somebody who asked if there will be something similar to training wheels.

MICHELLE:

We are currently planning additional professional development related to the standards.

We are in the process of developing the content, so this was our first, very awareness-level introduction to the document, and informational session.

The next stages will include some professional development for people who are new to standards, who will begin to just incorporate the Early Learning and Development Standards, as well as information supporting programs that are making a transition.

So, the planning is still underway.

We are hoping to have a training of trainers sometime this spring.

And are still sorting out the details of actually rolling it out either later this spring into summer of next year, but we are planning that, the details are still coming out as far as what resources we have and exactly how that will, how programs will be invited or be able to participate and how we can reach a broad audience through that professional development.

ANDREA:

And I do see that there is some interest as to how people will find out about it and we do have all of your contact information now based on participating in this webinar, so I'm sure we'll be sending out information about any opportunities in a variety of ways including using email lists that we have acquired by using these webinars, so that was a great question.

I have another question here, Michelle, about will there be a curriculum that will be available that are aligned with the Early Learning and Development Standards.

MICHELLE:

Typically, we are now the Office of Early Childhood, I know as being part of the, previously, as being part of the Connecticut State Department of Education, the Department of Education didn't engage in writing full curriculum, or engaging in that.

So much of what's important for curriculum, which is how you're actually, what you're actually doing with young children, is related to their interests, their culture, the community, the context and what we know about them as individuals.

So, I don't anticipate that there will be a full curriculum, so the standards will articulate what children should know and be able to do.

We will provide great information about strategies and ways to support their growth and development, but how that really looks for individual programs and classrooms, will still be a lot of individual input and program input into how that comes into play in classrooms.

So, at this time I don't anticipate a curriculum.

We do have some documents that, we have a Connecticut Preschool and Kindergarten Curriculum Guide, which is a document, a checklist, that can help people think of all the aspects that should be included in curriculum, how to begin to plan for what is actually happening in classrooms.

ANDREA:

Uh. We seem to have lost Michelle here. Uh, nope. There. You're back. Okay.

So, Michelle, if you could briefly explain a little bit about assessment and there's questions about when we will get a new assessment.

MICHELLE:

I don't have a clear timeline at this point on the new assessment tool.

Which is one of the reasons we're really stressing that looking at the alignment of current assessment tools that people are using and having them consider how that's aligned to the Early Learning and Development Standards.

We are part of the seven state consortium, led by Maryland. WestEd, which is a very reputable, nationally known educational organization, is doing a lot of the work on tool development.

John Hopkins University is also involved in this consortium and doing some of the professional development that will come along with that assessment.

Through that work, there is very clear timelines for the kindergarten entrance assessment portion of that tool because the funding supporting that work was really focused on that piece.

But everyone in the consortium, I think is very committed to the entire assessment system, which goes from birth to 72 months.

I just don't have the same detail about the timeline.

We are just engaging in that work.

We've had just a few phone calls and, related to that, and we're embarking on that, so we will update as soon as we have more information and a projected timeline for that tool.

We will certainly be sharing that.

ANDREA:

Okay. That looks like we have fielded the questions that we've gotten so far.

Certainly, you can be in touch with either Michelle or myself after the webinar if any questions come up, we would be happy to get back to you.

Please remember to stay on when the presentation ends.

You will have a short survey to take and evaluation at the end and it will help us prepare for future webinars and we really appreciate you taking time, especially on an evening, to listen to this webinar, and we hope to hear back from you.

(Please note the survey function is not active in this recording.)

And I do see we have one more question. There are some people who missed part of this webinar, and yes, there will be a recorded version available probably about the end of the month that people will be able to listen to.

We still have another session on Saturday that still has some spaces available if you know of other people that would be interested in listening in to this webinar.

But I would like to very much thank Michelle Levy for the presentation and thank you all of you for participating this evening.

MICHELLE:

Thank you, everyone.

-END-