

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION

During the first years of life, children gain knowledge and understanding of their environments. They develop skills in:

- Logic
- Reasoning
- Observation
- Imagination
- Problem-solving

Learning about arts, social studies, mathematics and numeracy, and science is facilitated and mediated by development of cognitive skills that include:

- Attention
- Memory
- Sensory awareness
- Analysis
- Interpretation

Exploration, play, repetition, and elaboration are key elements that support development of these complex brain processes. Children connect learning experiences with their life and see the relevancy of knowledge. A child's culture is foundational to how the child learns to use these process skills.

RATIONALE

The early childhood years encompass significant development of the child's brain as well as the emergence of language and thinking. At birth, a child's brain is nearly 30% developed; and by age 5, the brain is over 90% developed (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). This rich and unique time of growth creates the foundation for later academic learning. Indicators in this domain are aligned with the Idaho K-12 Standards and are grounded in evidence-based practices for early childhood development.

GENERAL DEFINITION

For the purposes of the *Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines*, **Domain 4: General Knowledge**, is divided into sub-domains:

- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science
- Social Studies
- Family, Community, and Culture
- Creative Arts

MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

Mathematics and numeracy skills include skills for using numbers and quantity, spatial relations, numerous mathematical operations, measurements, and properties of ordering. These skills are

essential for children to effectively navigate everyday mathematical situations (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2009).

SCIENCE

Scientific thinking and knowledge skills include observation, building an understanding of cause and effect in the natural world, and making predictions. It is the development of scientific thinking that helps children apply and test their knowledge through methodical inquiry and verification. By acquiring scientific knowledge, children gain an understanding of and information about their surroundings.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Developing knowledge of social studies supports children's explorations of how people interact with and relate to people nearby and around the world. Social studies include:

- History and historical reasoning (includes concepts about time, past, and future)
- Geography (includes weather, land forms, and impact of geography on humans)
- Economics (includes understanding very basic concepts of money markets)
- Ecology (includes the natural world around us)
- Technology

The goals in this section are based on recommendations from the Idaho State Department of Education Social Studies Position Statement (2010-2016).

FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURE

General knowledge in this topic includes how children develop awareness of themselves in relation to their families, their near community, and their cultural foundations.

CREATIVE ARTS

Children's ability to express and represent themselves through movement, music, theater, and visual arts are an outgrowth of cognition. Expressing and representing ideas through the arts is paired with an understanding and appreciation of the arts. The arts give children ways to express their feelings, experiences, and meanings in ways that go beyond the limits of spoken and written language. This includes learning the symbolic and cultural arts traditions of their community and culture.

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES, LANGUAGE, AND DIVERSITY

Children differ in their rates of acquiring general knowledge and in the ways in which they learn, remember, and understand. For example, some children favor logical reasoning to tackle a learning task, while others take a creative or movement-based approach. Differences in children's cognitive approaches are common, and should not be viewed as deficits. Some children who have disabilities, developmental delays, or who are at risk for developmental delays, sometimes require adaptations to support acquisition of general knowledge.