



On the Road to School Readiness

*Office of Head Start
Summit*

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Baltimore, MD

**Aligning State
Standards, the Head
Start CDEL
Framework, and
Our Work with
Children and
Families**

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In this presentation, we will discuss

- State early learning standards
- Reasons early learning standards are important for Head Start Programs
- Parameters of alignment
- Potential areas of mis-alignment with the Child Development and Early Learning Framework
- Advice for programs

State Early Learning Standards (ELS)/Early Learning Guidelines (ELG)

What are state ELS/ELGs?

- A document that articulates a state's expectations for what children should know and be able to do before entering kindergarten
- Typically developed under the auspice of
 - State department of education
 - State department of human services
 - A collaborative entity created for the purpose of developing the ELS/ELGs

Who has state ELS/ELGs?

- All 50 states and many territories have ELS/ELGs for preschool-age children
- 30 states and 4 territories have ELS/ELGs for infants and toddlers (ZERO TO THREE, 2010)



How were the ELS/ELGs developed?

- Most often a collaborative stakeholder group that included:
 - State agency representatives
 - Higher education faculty
 - Advocacy groups
 - **Head Start staff**
 - Parents
- The developers typically consulted a variety of materials:
 - State's own K-12 standards
 - Other states' standards
 - Developmental theorists
 - National framework or standards
 - ✓ **Head Start Outcome Framework**
 - ✓ National Education Goals Panel
 - NAEYC's document describing DAP
 - Other assessments or early childhood curricula
 - Standards from other countries or providences – particularly British Columbia

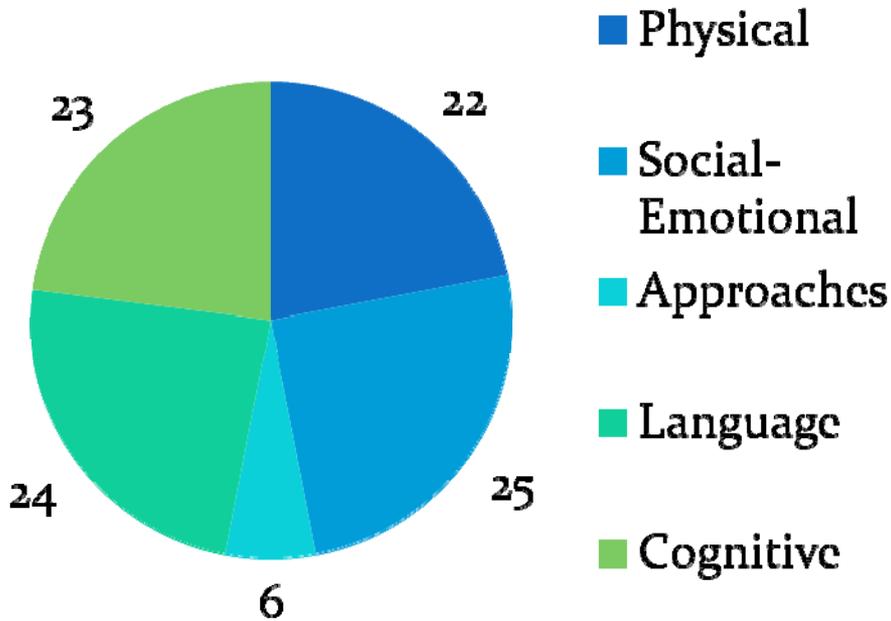
Who uses ELS/ELGs?

- Pre-K program
 - Mandated by law: 8
 - Mandated by regulation: 14
 - Voluntary: 17
- Voluntary in licensed child care: 39
- Voluntary in family child care: 39
- **Voluntary in Head Start: 38**
- IDEA
 - Voluntary in 619: 26
 - Voluntary in Part C: 21
- Voluntary in Even Start: 27

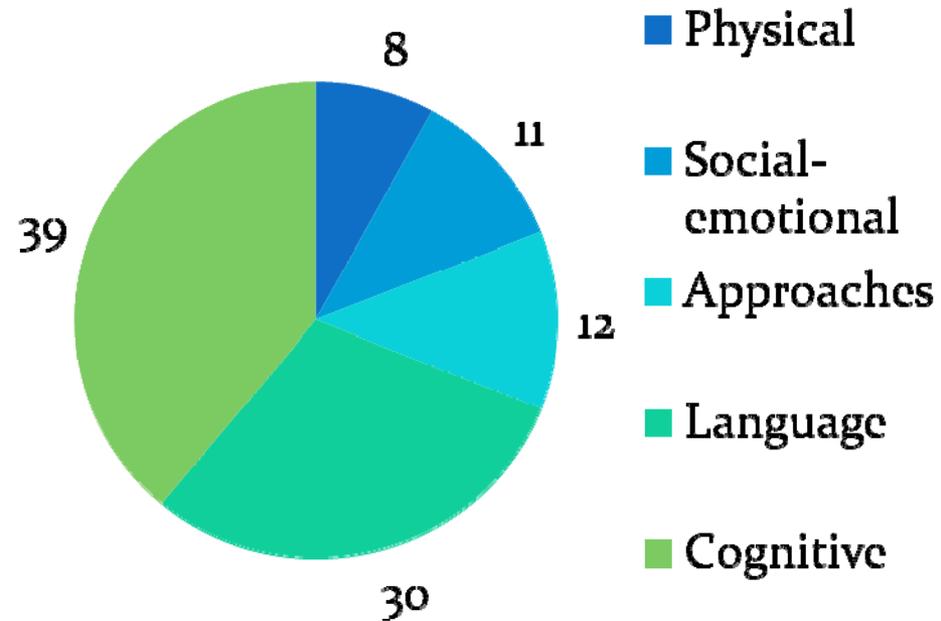
» Scott-Little, Lesko, Martella, & Milburn, 2007

What content has been addressed in ELS/ELGs?

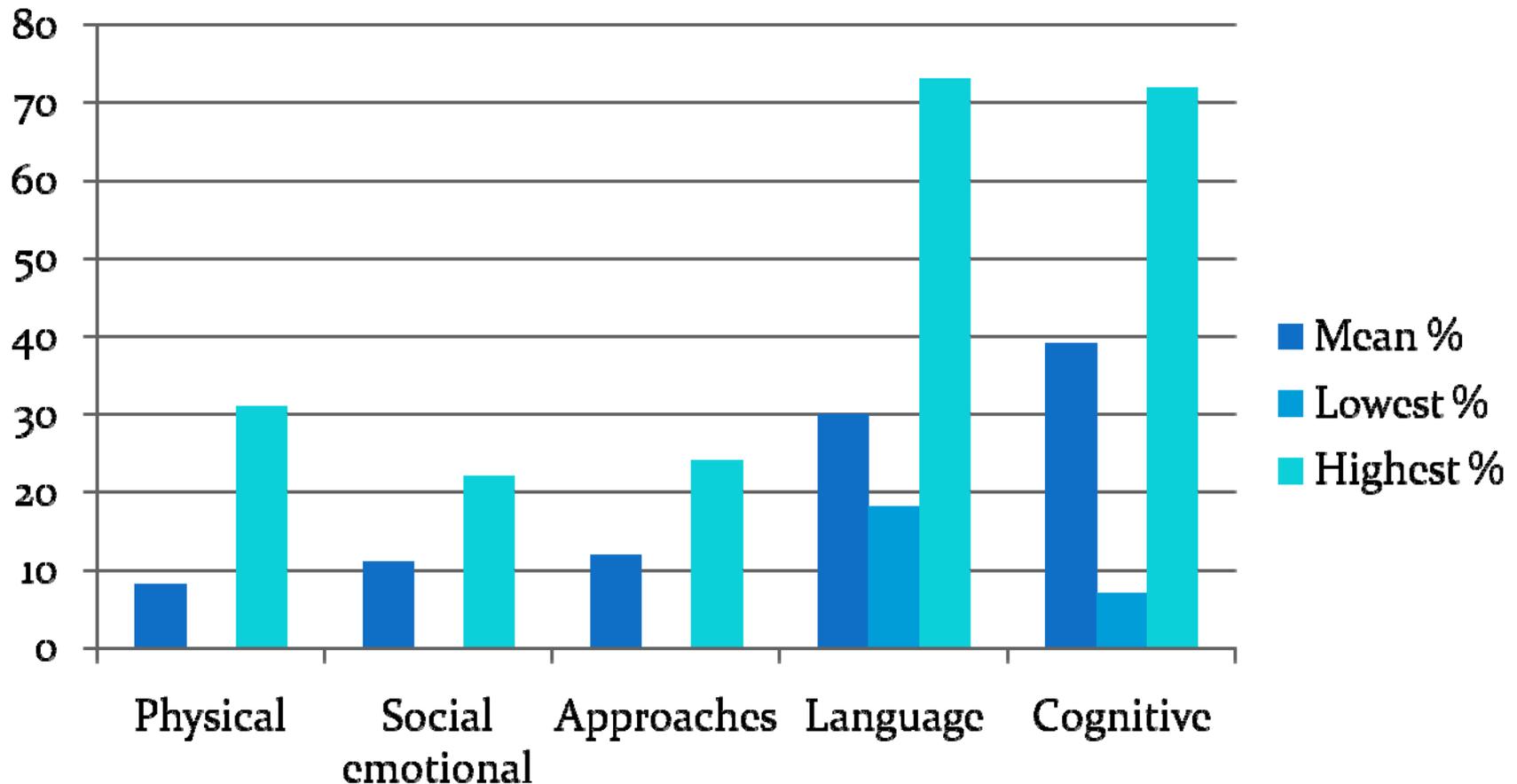
Infant-Toddler ELGs



Preschool ELS



Variation across states in domains addressed in ELS/ELGs



“Take aways” from ELS/ELG studies

- Lot of work at the state level to develop and implement these documents
- Head Start has been somewhat involved in the process
- Most of implementation efforts have focused on state-level programs but increasingly see federally-funded programs as target audience
- Content of the state-level documents varies a good bit across the states

Why do the ELS/ELGs matter to Head Start Programs?

Reason 1: Congress says so

- HEAD START ACT as amended 2007 (42 USC 9801 et. Seq) promotes use of/alignment with ELS in:
 - Professional Development
 - Qualified staff
 - School readiness goals for children
 - Curriculum
 - Head Start Collaboration Directors' responsibilities

Reason 2: Our children deserve it



- Common expectations from ELS/ELGs help make sure all children starting from the same place

Reason 3: Alignment of goals and curricula is the “heart” of smooth transitions



Defining and Evaluating Alignment

Alignment is

- The proper adjustment of the components of an electronic circuit, machine, etc., for coordinated functioning

– Dictionary.com



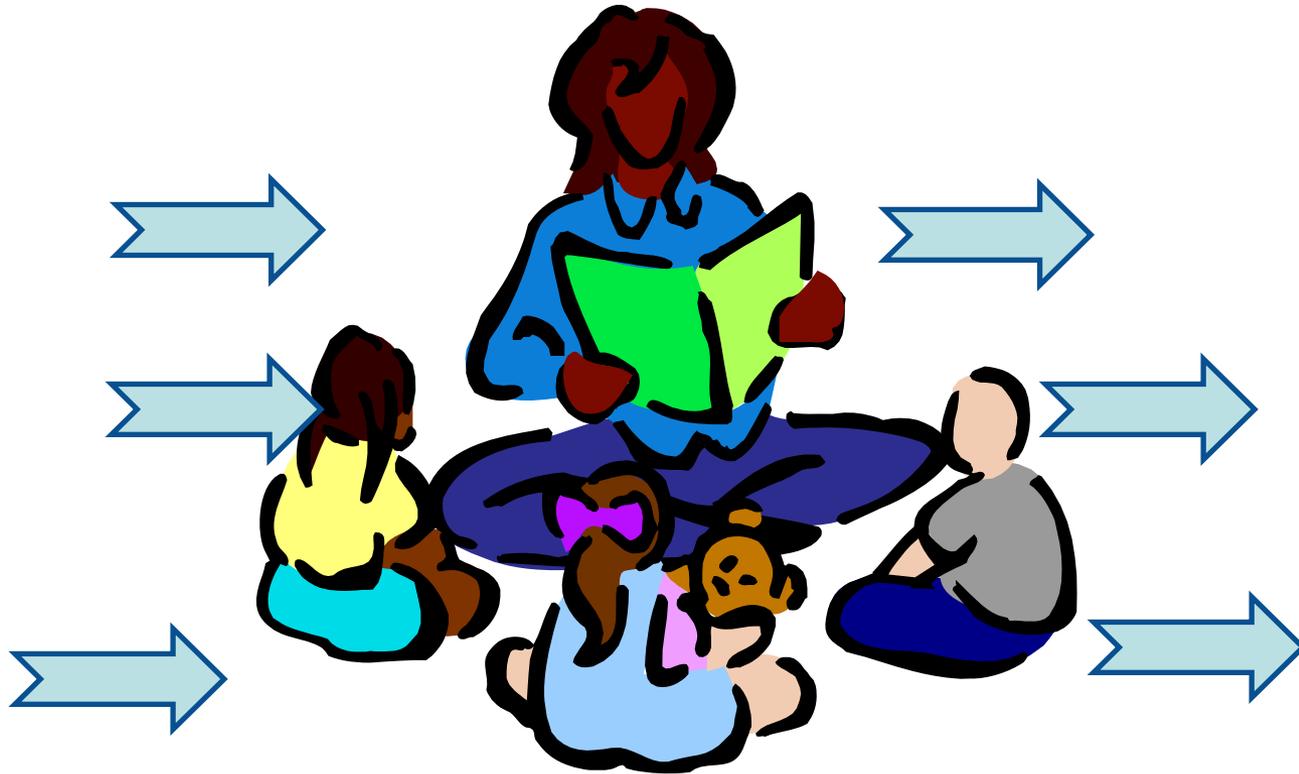
In Head Start alignment means

- Coordinated functioning of
 - Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework
 - State Early Learning Standards/Early Learning Guidelines
 - Goals and objectives for individual children, for classrooms, and for the program
 - Curriculum used in teaching
 - Assessment used in gauging children's learning & development
 - Communication with parents and families

Mis-alignment means potential for



Alignment means potential for



There's more to
alignment than meets
the eye

Parameters for evaluating
alignment

Many alignment analyses are low complexity matrices

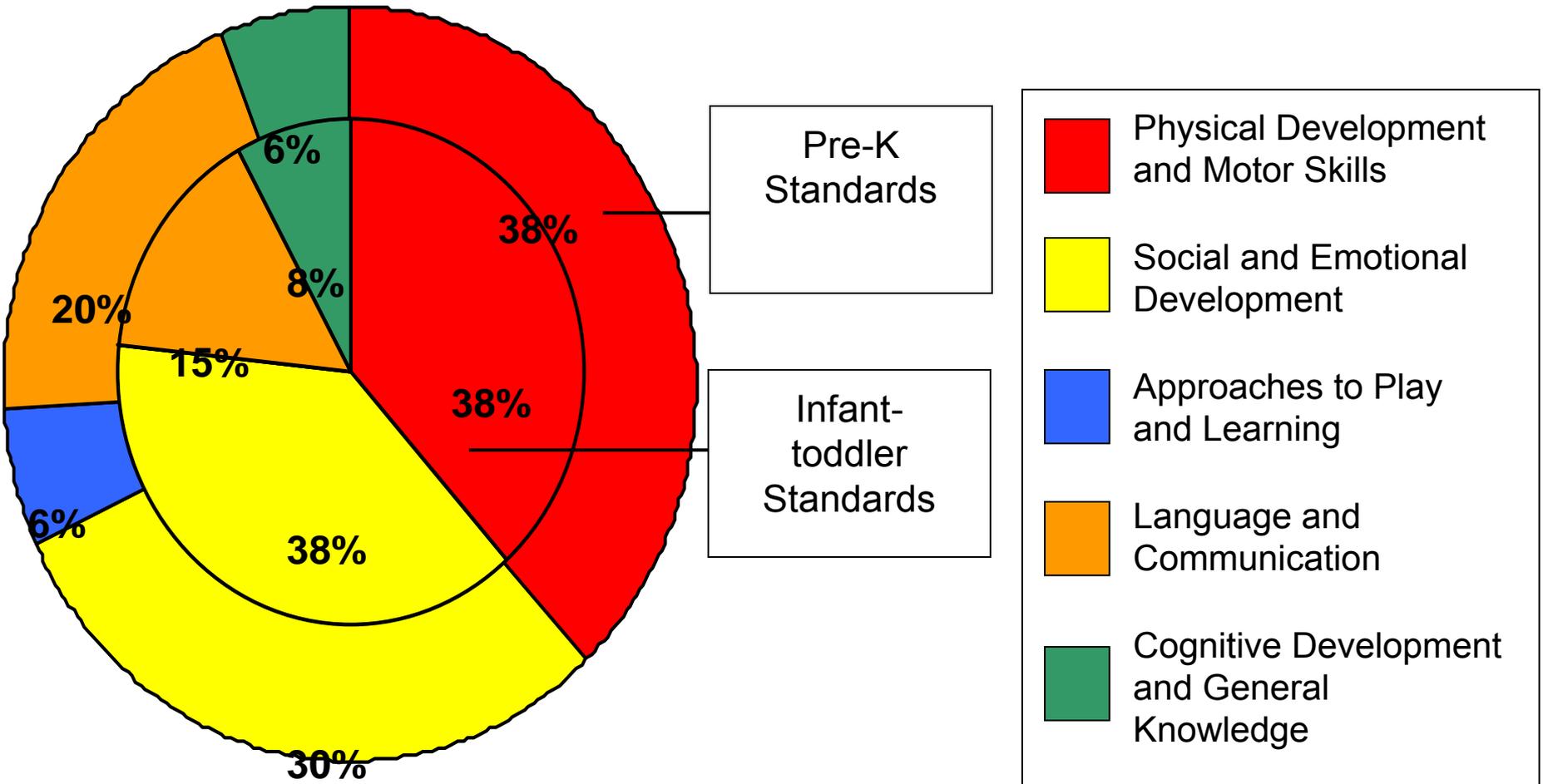
One Document	Another Document	Aligned?
Draws pictures with crayons	Develops fine motor skills	√
Knows own name		
Identifies words that rhyme	Plays with words, sounds, and rhymes	√

Need to evaluate alignment on several parameters

- **Balance:** the degree to which the two documents address the same domains
- **Depth:** the degree to which the two documents address the same specific skills and knowledge within a domain
- **Difficulty:** the degree to which the expectations within the two documents reflect a similar level of difficulty or age-level

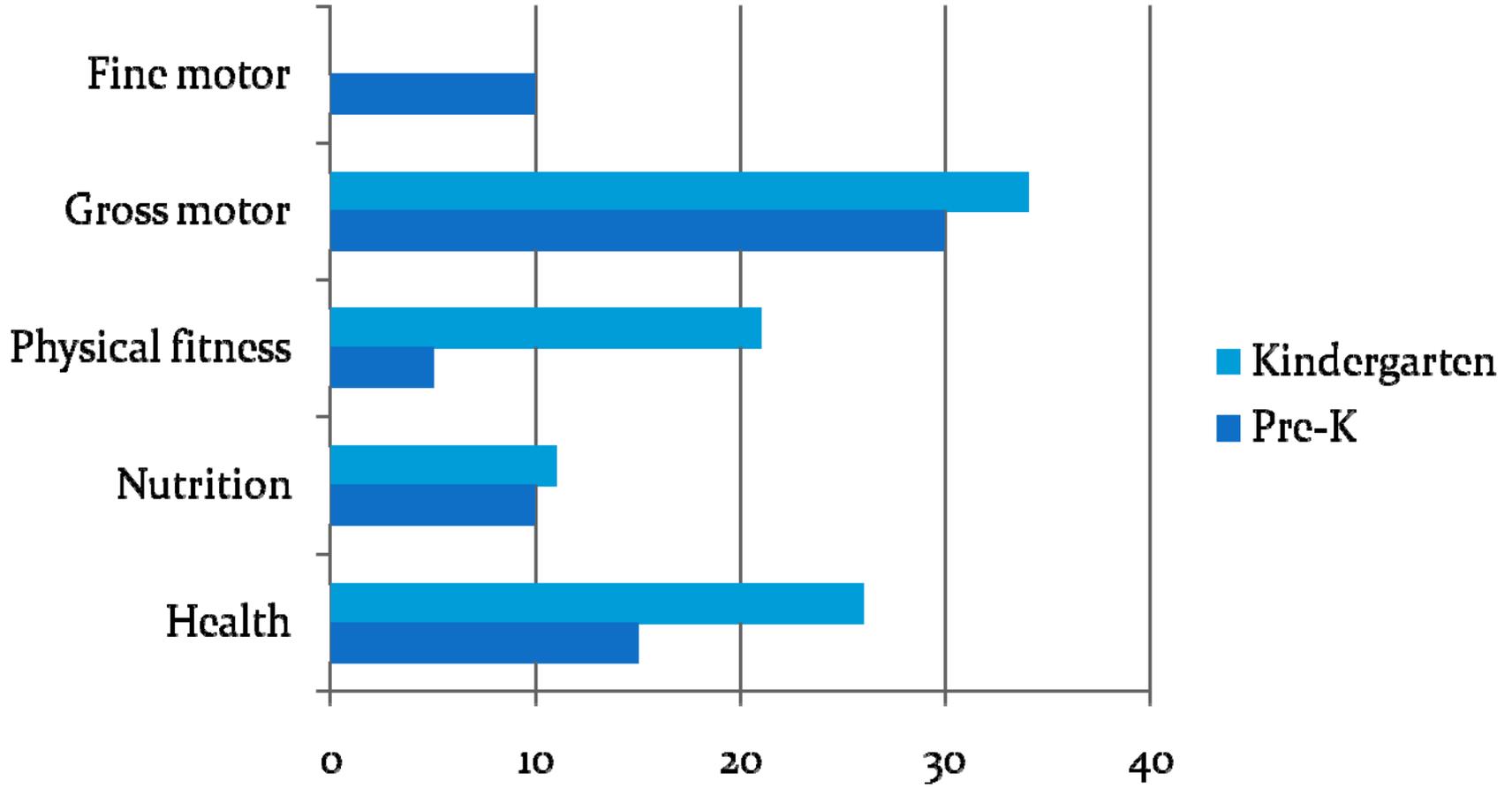
Examples from Pennsylvania study

Balance



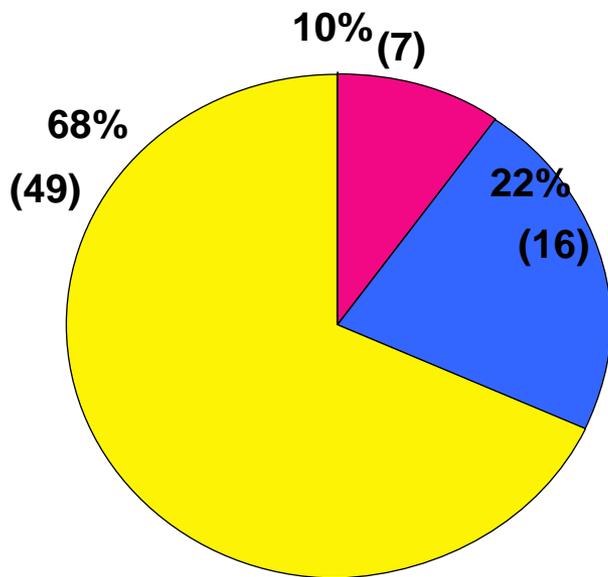
Scott-Little, Kagan, Reid & Greenburg, 2008

Depth within physical domain



Difficulty: Infant/Toddler vs. Pre- Kindergarten Total

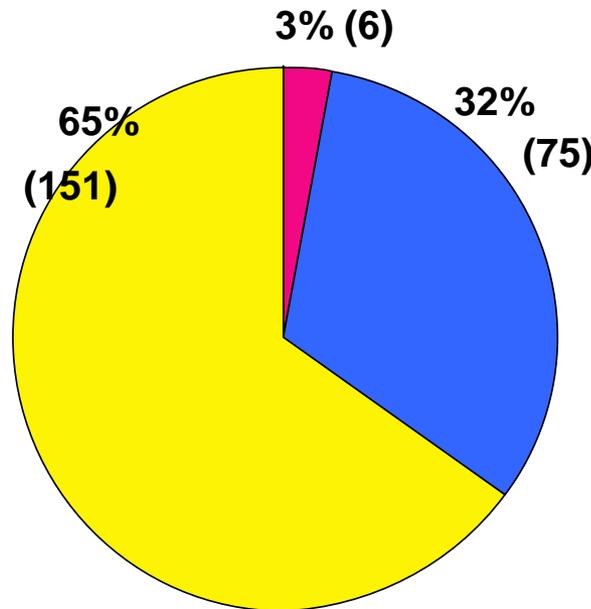
Percentage of Standard Indicator Pairs



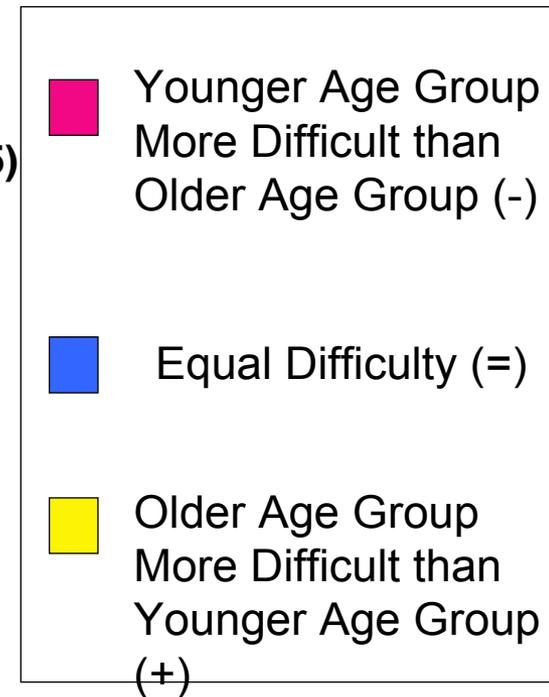
*96 Unpaired Indicators

Difficulty: Pre-Kindergarten vs. Kindergarten Total

Percentage of Standard Indicator Pairs



*184 Unpaired Indicators



Potential areas for misalignment between the Head Start Framework and State ELS/ELGs

Balance

- Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework
 - Physical Development & Health
 - Social & Emotional Development
 - Approaches to Learning
 - Language Development
 - Literacy Knowledge & Skills
 - Mathematics Knowledge & Skills
 - Science Knowledge & Skills
 - Creative Arts Expression
 - Logic and Reasoning
 - Social Studies Knowledge & Skills
 - English Language Development
- State ELS may
 - Have a lower percentage of physical and health
 - Have lower percentage of social-emotional
 - Have higher percentage of cognitive development and general knowledge but omit logic and reasoning
 - Omit English Language Development

Depth: State ELS/ELGs may

- Physical development and health
 - Emphasize health knowledge and practice less
- Social-emotional
- Approaches to learning
 - Include some of the approaches to learning concepts in social-emotional
- Language and communication
- Cognitive development
 - Address additional areas of science and social studies

Difficulty

- State ELS/ELGs may have standards that are less difficult than the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework



Special considerations for use of standards with dual language children

- Continued use of home language is very important
- Teachers should plan activities and interactions that support their learning in all domain areas as well as their ability to learn English
- DLL children can demonstrate competency in any domain in either language
- Assessments should be culturally and linguistically appropriate and should use the language or languages that most accurately demonstrate the child's knowledge and abilities

Special considerations for children with disabilities

- Some additional alignment considerations
 - ISFP/IEP
 - OSEP Early Childhood Outcomes
- Should be working toward the same knowledge and skills described in the Head Start Framework and state ELS/ELGs
- May require more individualized/intense instruction, accommodations, and/or assistive technology
- Look for small and incremental progress

“Take Aways” From Framework/ELS Alignment Considerations

- The Head Start Framework and state ELS/ELGs should be used together to set goals for children and to make decisions about curricula and assessments.
- There may be some examples of mis-alignment between the two documents.
- Special consideration should be given to how the Head Start Framework and ELS/ELGs are used with Dual Language Learners and children with disabilities.

Advice to programs

Programs should

- Get involved in the ELS/ELG revision/development process
- Study your state's documents carefully
- Attend training and take advantage of resources provided by the state
- View alignment and use of standards as an on-going process that requires a lot of thought and good communication between Head Start and other programs, support staff, teachers and parents/families

A final thought

- Use of state's ELS/ELGs can be an important tool to improve children's transitions to public school
 - Working toward same goals as children in other programs
 - Support for cohesive system of school readiness goals, curriculum, and communication with parents



Resources Related to ELS/ELGs

- www.earlylearningguidelines-standards.org
- <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov/resources/EarlyLearningGuide.htm>

References Cited

- Kagan, S. L., Scott-Little, C., & Frelow, V. S. (2003). Early learning standards for young children: A survey of the states. *Young Children*, 58 (5), 58-64.
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- ZERO TO THREE. (2010). Infant/toddler early learning guidelines fact sheet. National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative. Washington, DC: Author. Available at <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov/resources/EarlyLearningGuide.htm>



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