PEOPLEPLACE
COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Toddler Program
1 ½ - 3 year olds

Preschool Program
3 – 5 year olds

Revised 2016

Table of Contents

Table of Contents
continued

Appendix D
  Assessment information provided to parents
  Sample release of information form
  Information about selected tools made available to parents

Appendix E
  Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers: Guidelines for Learning & Development
  Maine Early Childhood Early Learning Guidelines
  NAEYC Standards and Criteria

Appendix F
  Local Referral and Support Services

Mission

Our mission is to:

"...provide a family-oriented early childhood education that incorporates parental involvement in preschool programs and childcare services, offers supplemental educational programs for children and adults; and participates in activities designed to promote the general health and welfare of the community and its families."

--Bylaws, Article II

Philosophy

We see Peopleplace as a "community of learners" – children learning from their environment, from each other, from teachers and parents; teachers and parents learning from the children and from one another. The primary goal of our program is to help children develop personal integrity and fulfillment while facilitating and supporting cognitive, physical, social and emotional development through play. Peopleplace is committed to developing a love for learning in each individual child; broadening the child's foundation for knowledge, and building upon that foundation with skills that are relevant and appropriate. Peopleplace is a supportive and safe space which shifts and changes as the people within it grow – creating a circle of children, parents and staff learning together with respect for our likenesses and differences.

The Peopleplace curriculum is consistent with prevailing professional opinion and research on how children learn; it is a developmental, interactive, constructivist approach to learning. We consider play the most important avenue for learning. Play allows children to transform their experiences and ideas, thoughts and feelings, questions and understandings into symbolic representation. Through play they make connections and find clarification and personal meaning. It is one of the most profound means available to children for constructing and reconstructing knowledge. Our educational philosophy and approach to curriculum and its implementation is also consistent with the practices set forth in the National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation criteria and many of NAEYC's publications and position statements (available in the office), the State of Maine licensing requirements, Maine's

Early Childhood Learning Guidelines (preschool) and Infant/Toddler Guidelines for Learning and Development.

Guiding Principles

Our work is influenced by an early childhood educational philosophy known as the **Reggio Emilia Approach.** This approach includes the following principles: the image of the child, the teacher's role, the environment as an educational force, the role of observation & documentation/assessment, emergent curriculum and the collaboration among children, parents, teachers & the community through relationship and partnership. The program at Peopleplace incorporates these core principles and gives expression to them in a way that is developmentally appropriate and individually responsive to the children and families which it serves. We are committed to respecting and supporting the language, beliefs, experiences and values of the families in our programs, as well as the community in which we live.

Providing children opportunities to express their knowledge through language, music, movement, art, symbolic representation, construction, and dramatic play is an integral part of the curriculum.

The Image of the Child:

We believe that children are competent, capable and curious. They are rich with wonder, resourcefulness and an eagerness to learn and experience through exploration and inquiry.

Our programs focus on each child in relationship to other children, the family, the teachers and the community. Relationships, communication, and collaboration are emphasized to build our community. These social building blocks are considered vital components of the curriculum in order to support and nurture each child's well being, development and learning.

Through play, we offer children a wide range of experiences and media by which they can:

➢ explore,

➢ investigate,

➢ question,

- ➢ discover,
- ➢ develop and communicate their:
  - ▪ ideas
  - ▪ interests
  - ▪ current knowledge
  - ▪ understandings
  - ▪ feelings
  - ▪ imagination
  - ▪ creativity.

The Role of the Teacher:

- ➢ Is welcoming and supportive of children and their families.
- ➢ Provides materials, activities, learning opportunities and a classroom routine, in an atmosphere and environment that promotes relationship, interaction with materials and others (children and adults) and the construction of knowledge consistent with what we know and believe about how young children learn.
- ➢ Presents children the opportunity to make choices based on their interests and abilities.
- ➢ Promotes children's learning through asking open ended questions that encourage thought, discussion, reflection and extended exploration.
- ➢ Recognizes that children construct knowledge through repeated experiences and that children build upon what they already know and are able to do.
- ➢ Meets children where they are and guide them towards new accomplishments while maintaining their interest and active involvement.
- ➢ Interacts with children in ways that support, encourage and nurture a positive self concept, creative self expression, decision making, problem solving and a joy of learning.
- ➢ Emphasizes trust, respect, safety, personal responsibility, cooperation, collaboration, self regulation, problem solving and conflict resolution.
- ➢ Develops and constructs an integrated curriculum that includes: individual, small and large group experiences.

- ➢ Promotes physical well being and motor development.

- ➢ Encourages positive attitudes towards learning.

- ➢ Supports growth of development in the cognitive, language, physical, social & emotional domains.

- ➢ Includes general knowledge and various subject matter disciplines (literacy, math, science, social studies and the arts) in developmentally and age appropriate ways.

The Environment and Materials:

- ➢ Is both supportive and reflective of the identity and purpose of our programs.

- ➢ Meets children's needs.

- ➢ Facilitates and supports learning and growth in all developmental domains and content areas.

- ➢ Encourages communication, encounters, relationship and interaction.

- ➢ Encourages child initiated investigation, independence, making choices, and problem solving.

- ➢ Is aesthetically pleasing and well organized.

- ➢ Rich with engaging and open ended materials.

- ➢ Consists of spaces created to invite curiosity, exploration and experimentation.

Activity and learning centers:

- ➢ Are purposefully provisioned to provide the resources children need to play, work and learn.

- ➢ Provide spaces for a variety of groupings, as well as quiet spaces for individual play.

- ➢ Foster a sense of being cared for and valued by both the children and adults.

- ➢ Create a caring learning environment where each child feels a sense of belonging and community, as well as a personal history with the space.

Display and documentation is shaped by the life of the classroom and its members (children, parents and teachers) and communicates respect for the work of the children and adults such as:

- ➢ Works in progress,
- ➢ Finished work,
- ➢ Images of the children and their families,
- ➢ Documentation representing the life of the classroom,
- ➢ Projects,
- ➢ Extended explorations
- ➢ Special events.

Curriculum materials and visual displays:

- ➢ Reflect the lives of the children and families in the program.
- ➢ Represent the diversity found in society and the world at large (including gender, age, ability, ethnic or national heritage, religion, culture, occupation, etc).

Teachers are attentive in their selection and arrangement of materials, seeking to:

- ➢ Respond to and represent families' home values, beliefs, experiences and languages from information gathered from the Family Focus Sheet, snack conversations (communal), family photo displayed in classroom, birthday celebrations, etc.
- ➢ Nurture a climate of respect for and appreciation of differences as well as a sense of community and commonality.

The environment invites children to engage in a variety of activities and explore a wide range of materials that:

- ➢ Range from simple to complex.
- ➢ Have multiple uses.
- ➢ Address various skill & developmental levels.
- ➢ Support children's different approaches to learning (learning/working styles).
- ➢ Foster creativity and control.

- ➢ Provide concrete hands-on direct experiences.
- ➢ Are developmentally and individually appropriate, safe (yet appropriately challenging).
- ➢ Facilitate creative play & interactions.

Objects from the natural world supplement the basic early childhood educational materials that support the program's curriculum content areas (language & literacy, early math, science & technology, health & safety, social studies, the creative and representational arts) and developmental domains (social/emotional, language, cognitive, physical).

The environment provides the foundation for the program, and includes not only its physical properties, but also how we use and move through it:
- ➢ Arrangement of interest areas
- ➢ Flow of the day
- ➢ Rituals and routines
- ➢ Attitude towards time
- ➢ Composition of and scheduling of group activities
- ➢ Support for transitions
- ➢ Extended explorations and project work, etc.

Other sections of the Curriculum Framework and Assessment Plan further elaborate on the process of planning for the environment and materials. (See also: Teaching Team and individual Teacher job descriptions). Records of Team Planning Meetings as well as the Classroom Portfolio document the process of integrating curriculum and assessment to inform the planning process for curriculum development in ways that best meet the needs and abilities of individual children in our programs.

Observation, Documentation and Assessment:

Using photographs, representational work samples, transcripts of conversations, anecdotal records and teacher reflections, teachers observe and document the following:

- The children's play, work, interactions and classroom experiences.
- Children's interests, pursuits and the underlying themes that children are exploring.
- Their questions and understandings.
- Developmental issues.
- Evidences of the children's thinking, learning and program participation.

The teaching teams use the information gathered, along with the information gathered from families, to guide curriculum planning through collaborative consideration, discussion, reflection and projection. Reviewing the 'traces' and 'artifacts' of the children's thinking, conversations and play enables teachers to project possible curriculum extensions and in depth exploration of topics and/or activities and make decisions about possible changes to the environment, daily schedule, interest area arrangements, styles of interaction, curriculum & teaching strategies and/or other aspects of the program.

The display of documentation in the classroom is used to inform and engage parents in the daily life of the classroom, making learning visible and giving them a glimpse into the understandings, questions, discoveries, challenges, accomplishments, feelings, ideas and relationships of the children. Documentation invites them to join in an ongoing discussion about classroom life and provides a starting point for conversations with their children about their school experiences. It also may highlight important events and experiences, curriculum and developmental domains, in depth explorations or project work.

Sometimes documentation is used with the children to revisit and/or recreate experiences. This may help deepen and expand their understanding of themselves, their abilities and their relationship to the ideas and experiences of others – discovering new perspectives about themselves and their classmates as thinkers, learners and creators with a shared history. It can also provide a mirror for children to revisit and reflect upon their experiences.

On an individual basis, observation and documentation is used to support and address important learning and developmental goals. Knowing what the children can do on their own and what they can do with skilled adult prompting and support, decisions are made based on each child's current understandings and skills in the various content and developmental areas. The teaching team works collaboratively during the planning process to assess what children are ready to learn next and the instructional methods that might help the child achieve these goals.

Curriculum content, instructional strategies and assessment are integrated in the planning and implementation of our programs. A variety of methods, both formal and informal, are used to gather information about individual children's learning and development in the social-emotional, physical, language and cognitive domains. Assessment information is used for a variety of purposes, including: planning for children's program experiences as individuals and as a group; adapting the curriculum (materials, strategies, interactions, content, etc.) to support and build on children's interests, abilities and strengths; developing individual learning goals for all children and assessing their progress and communicating with families. {*See Assessment Plan*}

Emergent Curriculum

As the teachers observe the work, play and 'evidences' of the children's thinking, they become able to identify possible avenues of exploration and study that are 'emerging'. At times these avenues may be based on a recurring theme or activity (e.g. construction sites, tadpoles, blocks castles, puzzles), a topic the teachers know is of interest to children (e.g. puddles, emergency workers, sea creatures) or a developmental task or challenge (e.g. taking turns, letter recognition, making independent choices). The topics or themes can emerge from the expressed ideas, questions, interactions or activity of the children, conversations with families, or can be 'provoked' or introduced by the teachers.

The teachers receive these emergent ideas from the children and after collaborative discussion, reflection, projection (predicting what *might* happen) and planning – return them to the children for further exploration and study. Team planning is an essential component of emergent curriculum. The team considers the observations and documentation that they have collected, seeking to meet the children where they are and create opportunities for the children to deepen their thinking, represent their understandings and make new connections. They act as mediators between the children's current understanding and what they are on the threshold of understanding or being able to do. The curriculum emerges as the children and teachers work together; the teachers actively listening to the children's ideas and desires, recognizing and responding to their educational and developmental needs and then acting upon these considerations in their curriculum planning, the organization of the environment, the flow of the day, the materials selected and the activities facilitated.

'Projects', also emergent, are in depth explorations or studies of concepts, ideas, needs or interests which arise from within the group. They may last for a week, a month, or be ongoing throughout the year. Projects may be as open ended as exploring the properties of glue or experiencing trees; or may be as specific as learning how and where animals build their homes or how water gets to our faucet. Social-emotional issues and developmental tasks which surface for groups of children may also be used as the starting point for ongoing exploration (e.g. friendship & play skills, using scissors, power struggles, running). Things in the physical environment (e.g. animals, an uprooted tree, the social environment (e.g. a new sibling, seeing firefighters at work) a serendipitous or unexpected event (e.g. a thunderstorm, a child brings in a butterfly) often emerge as possibilities for further study also.

When planning for projects with older groups, the teachers guide the children through the decision making process about the direction the exploration might take, the ways in which the group will 'research' the topic and the mediums and materials that will be used to represent their work. Brainstorming, sharing knowledge and experiences through discussion, negotiation, problem solving, critical thinking, making predictions, testing out hypotheses,

experimentation, play, revisiting, revising and recreating understandings are all part of this collaborative process.

Emergent curriculum is an organic process that evolves naturally from the adult-child interactions and observations of the teaching team. It includes and responds to the interests of the children as well as their educational and developmental needs. It is process oriented rather than product driven and is child centered. Emergent curriculum also allows the teachers to change and modify the program easily in response to ideas, events, questions or challenges that arise – creating a flexible program that best meets the needs of the children.

Collaboration and Partnerships

As a cooperative, Peopleplace was founded on the importance of parental involvement in the early learning of their children. Parents participate in almost all aspects of our center, from the classroom to the board level. The children, parents and staff are partners in learning, and our educational 'system' at Peopleplace is based upon and depends on the relationships, collaboration and communication among all the participants. Each teaching team works closely with their parent group in ways particular to their program to form a strong partnership based on reciprocal relationships. Daily interactions and communication, periodic program updates, parent meetings, parent-teacher conferences and documentation (of individual children's participation and experiences, and of the overall program) are some of the ways in which the teachers facilitate and build upon this foundation.

(See other sections of the staff handbook for further explanation of the many ways in which parents participate in the life of the school. Teachers should also familiarize themselves with the parent handbook, the parent guide to working in the classroom, promotional information and other materials which explain the role of parents at Peopleplace.)

Foundational Concepts

PEOPLEPLACE: A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

"Peopleplace is a supportive and safe space which shifts and changes as the people within it grow – creating a circle of children, parents and staff learning together with respect for our likenesses and differences. We seek to provide early childhood educational programs that reflect and respond to the interests of the children and the wide range of backgrounds, experiences and learning styles represented." (staff mission statement revised 9/05)

Programs are designed to support and nurture:

- ➢ A love of learning and the construction of knowledge.
- ➢ Individual and family well-being and parental involvement.
- ➢ Relationships, interactions and communication.
- ➢ Curiosity, creativity, imagination and the having of ideas.
- ➢ Exploration, experimentation and investigation.
- ➢ Problem solving and critical thinking.
- ➢ Self expression through the 100+ languages (Reggio Approach).
- ➢ Growth, development & learning in all developmental and curriculum domains.
- ➢ Building of skills that are relevant, meaningful and developmentally appropriate.

In addition, each teaching team has identified key concepts particular to their individual program:

Pre-school program (a.k.a. the upstairs program) 3 - 5 year olds

1. Communication
2. Community

3. Change

Toddler program (a.k.a. the downstairs program) 1 ½ - 3 year olds

Learning through process and exploration

1. Relationships in all directions – building trust
2. Curriculum reflects the children's interests
3. Environment as teacher

Development and Learning

Developmental and Curriculum Domains

"Approaches to Learning"

Social/Emotional Development

Cognitive Development

Language Development

Physical Development

Symbolic Representation/Creative Arts

Play

Sub Categories

Music, Movement & Dramatic Play

Early Literacy

Early Mathematics

Scientific Inquiry & Knowledge (Science and Technology)

Self, Family, Community, and the World (Social Studies)

Motor Development

Health, Safety, Self-Help Skills

Thinking, Reasoning, Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

Conflict Resolution (Peer Problem Solving)

Listening and Understanding, Speaking and Communicating

Friendship and Play Skills

Cooperation and Collaboration

Working Styles

Developmental Expectations and Curriculum Goals

<u>**Approaches to Learning**</u>

- ➢ Persisting

- ➢ Managing impulsivity

- ➢ Listening with understanding and empathy

- ➢ Thinking flexibly

- ➢ Thinking about thinking (metacognition)

- ➢ Striving for accuracy

- ➢ Questioning and posing problems

- ➢ Applying new knowledge to new situations

- ➢ Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision

- ➢ Gathering data through all senses

- ➢ Creating, imagining, innovating

- ➢ Responding with wonderment and awe

- ➢ Taking responsible risks

- ➢ Finding humor

- ➢ Thinking interdependently

- ➢ Remaining open to continuous learning

See Appendix E

Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers: Guidelines for Learning & Development

Maine Early Childhood Early Learning Guidelines

NAEYC Standards and Criteria

Establishing Developmental and Learning Goals

Assessment and curriculum goals & objectives are linked together, informing and influencing each other, creating an integrated system that works to support and enhance children's learning and development. The curriculum goals and objectives guide the assessment of children's progress, and assessment information enables the curriculum to support individualized learning for all children. The curriculum informs decision making about what will be assessed, and assessment helps teachers to know how the curriculum may need to be adapted or expanded so that each child will benefit. Assessment of children's progress towards developmental and learning goals provides teachers with information about each child's interests, skills, needs and strengths. Teachers can then modify or change aspects of the curriculum (daily learning opportunities and activities, the program schedule or routines, groupings, the choice of materials or equipment, the environment, content, interactions and teaching strategies) to best meet the children's developmental capabilities and current knowledge / experience.

Ongoing and systematic observation, documentation and assessment of each child in all developmental and learning areas is vital to planning for and implementing high quality programming for children. Curriculum and assessment informs the planning process for individual children and the group as a whole by providing teachers with current, relevant and meaningful information to help them determine what is necessary to further each child's developmental and learning goals. The cycle of observation, documentation and assessment is followed by evaluating and interpreting the information in light of curriculum goals and objectives, planning for and implementing the program in response, and re-evaluating after continued observation, documentation and assessment. This 'circle of inquiry' leads to positive

outcomes for children as teachers construct a developmentally appropriate and individualized plan for supporting and enhancing each child's learning.

At the beginning of the school year, teachers will compile all available assessment (formal and informal) information available on each child, and then observe the children with developmental and curriculum goals in mind – documenting their observations & interactions, and collecting samples of the children's work. Initial developmental and learning goals will be designed for each child and the group as a whole based on the above sources of information. Through the sharing of observations & documentation and evaluating its significance, teachers then make plans to support and build on each child's strengths, needs, interests and abilities for future learning. Teaching teams will share their observations daily, determining their significance for the next day's plans. At weekly team planning meetings teachers will review current assessment information, identify progress, determine what is next for each child and work together to plan for and modify the curriculum to best meet individual and classroom goals. On a trimester basis, teams will review progress and update goals for children and the group, and make plans for addressing them. This process provides the basis for programming decisions that respond to and attend to children's strengths and needs across all developmental levels, linking assessment results for individual children and the program to curriculum goals and teaching strategies.

The Assessment process provides teachers with the necessary information to determine and report on children's progress. Summary information on all children helps teachers evaluate the program as a whole and plan for further development and improvement of all aspects of the curriculum framework.

Program Evaluation

Regular program evaluation helps insure that goals are being met and that children and families are benefiting from participation. Informal evaluation for individual classrooms occurs continuously as teaching teams observe the classroom program, reflect on their observations and determine their significance in light of the program's goals and objectives. Evaluation goes hand in hand with planning, and is based on the consideration of many factors: our educational philosophy, policies, goals, objectives, curriculum guidelines, organization and use of space,

arrangement of materials, communication with parents and care giving and/or instructional performance of the staff. Evaluation is not so much to judge what is, as to nurture and support what could be. Growth and improvement are the major focus. Teaching teams will assess their progress and plan accordingly on a daily, weekly and quarterly basis. A year end program review by each teaching team will be part of a center-wide yearly program review and improvement plan.

Assessment

Assessment Plan Overview

"Ongoing assessment is the process of gathering information in the context of everyday class activities to obtain a representative picture of children's abilities and progress."

Key characteristics and components of ongoing assessment:
- ➤ Evidence based, systematic, ongoing and organized.
- ➤ Aligned with curriculum and program goals and developmentally appropriate expectations specific to each program/age group.
- ➤ Addresses all domains of children's learning and development.
- ➤ Is developmentally appropriate and embedded in classroom activities.
- ➤ Is considered by the teaching team at their weekly planning meeting to inform curriculum and program planning for individual children and for the group of children as a whole, taking into account developmental and curriculum domains.

Through assessment teachers:
- ➤ Monitor & document children's developmental and learning progress over time.
- ➤ Identify & highlight children's knowledge, skills, interests, needs and strengths.
- ➤ Describe children's progress towards specified learning goals.
- ➤ Communicate with families about their child's program participation and progress.
- ➤ Gain information to inform the educational decisions that affect individual children and the group as a whole: planning, implementation and evaluation of

the program regarding curriculum development, teaching strategies, interactions, classroom activities & experiences, daily schedule & routines, groupings, materials and the environment.

➢ Identify children who may benefit from additional developmental evaluation, special services or support.

➢ Partner and communicate with families and other involved adults regarding children's participation, development and learning across all domains as well as incorporating their observations, perspectives, family cultural context & values.

➢ Adapt and individualize the program to support children's specific needs, interests & abilities.

➢ Plan for program development and improvement; evaluate effectiveness & progress.

Assessment is the process of discovering and identifying what children know and where they are in any particular aspect of their development and learning as a basis for deciding how they can be supported in their growth, development and learning. We believe curriculum content, instructional strategies and assessment should be integrated in the planning and carrying out of our programs. All assessment activities should result in benefits to children and be based on what we know about development, individual differences and cultural differences. Assessment methods should be developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, tied to children's daily activities, supported by professional development, inclusive of families, fit the interactive style of our curriculum and be connected to specific, beneficial purposes. Components of appropriate assessment include parental input and conferences, systematic and anecdotal observations of children's work, play, behaviors & interactions, samples of children's work, records of conversations, and information from both formal and informal procedures – providing multiple sources of data. Assessment obtains information on all areas of children's learning and development: social-emotional development, language development, health & physical development (including self-help skills), cognitive development & general knowledge and approaches to learning / learning-working styles.

Observation is the process of collecting data to determine its significance in planning for individuals and the program. Being skillful in observation and documentation is a key factor in the process of assessment. It is the link between Theory (knowledge of child development and learning) and the Practice of Teaching (creating a learning environment and interacting with students).

Key questions for teachers to keep in mind:

➢ What are the children doing and thinking?

➢ What should we assess? (What is developmentally and educationally significant?)

➢ What did we learn about the child, group of children or the program?

➢ How should we use what we learned to plan the curriculum with specific goals for social-emotional development, language development, health & physical development (including self-help skills), cognitive development & general knowledge and approaches to learning / learning-working styles?

➢ In what ways do we involve parents in the assessment and planning process?

➢ In what ways do we encourage, document & support ongoing communication with parents regarding their child's program participation and progress?

<u>OBSERVATION</u>

INDIVIDUAL   **GROUP/PROGRAM**

What are children thinking?

What are children doing?

What is developmentally +/or educationally significant?

What do I want/need to learn about the individual, group or program?

↓

<u>DOCUMENTATION</u>

Systems, methods, tools, organization, focus and 'collection.'

Work samples, conversations, systematic & anecdotal observations,

formal and informal methods, including parent input.

↓

<u>ASSESSMENT</u>

Systematic, ongoing & organized.   Evidence based.

Developmentally appropriate & embedded.

Highlights children's interests, strengths, knowledge & skills.

What children know and can do.

Setting goals based on information gathered for individuals

and the program.

↓

<u>EVALUATION</u>

Reflection and analysis.

Describes growth and progress towards specified goals.

Aligned with curriculum and program goals & is developmentally appropriate.

Addresses all domains of learning and development.

Informs program planning and curriculum development.

Annual Assessment Timeline

August
        Letter to families from teachers included Family Focus Sheet
        Pre-service training in assessment

September
        ASQ distributed to families
        Teachers observe children
        Preschoolers do self-portrait and or work sample

October
        Begin to set individual child goals
        Fall parent conferences
        Classroom parent meeting
        Domain/skill checklist

January/February
        Domain/skill checklist

April/May
        Domain/skill checklist
        Spring parent conferences
        Toddler transition meeting and visits upstairs
        Kindergarten readiness

June
        End of year narrative
        Year End Program Review
        Portfolios Completed

All months
        Portfolios are updated regularly
        Planning meeting notes are filed after each meeting
        Confidential information is placed in a child's file immediately
        Documentation of activities, projects, daily events

Using Assessment Information

<u>Confidentiality Policy</u>

   Individual child assessment information is only to be shared with parents or guardians, center administration and specialists who may work with the child. Any confidential information about the individual child and their family is kept in a private file in the Teacher Office or in the Director's Office. Families will be informed at the start of each school year, and/or other appropriate times, of the confidentiality policy regarding their child's personal assessment information, including: who may have access to children's screening and assessment results, as well as reasons for their access; regulations governing access to files, procedures used to keep records confidential, how and why children's individual screening results and assessment information will be represented, used and interpreted. A consent form for sharing assessment information with other relevant providers, agencies or programs will be given to families when indicated. All information, verbal or in writing, will be provided in English and primary language used by families.

<u>Communication with parents regarding assessment</u>

   All communication, verbal or in writing, will be facilitated in an appropriate and timely manner, in ways that are sensitive to family values, culture, identity and home language. Program staff will provide families with information at the beginning of the school year, and/or as appropriate, regarding screening and assessment purposes, methods, conditions under which children are assessed, interpreting assessment results, how results are used to provide learning opportunities for their child and the training that teachers have received regarding assessment. Parents will also be given access to and information about the specific instruments used.

<u>Ongoing parent teacher communication</u>

> ➢ Parent Teacher conferences are scheduled at least twice a year (fall and spring), as needed or upon request of the parent or teacher.

- Teachers are also available to communicate with parents informally on a daily basis, and parents may request to schedule further time to talk with teachers when it is convenient to both.
- On a trimester basis, teachers will provide parents an update, verbally or in writing, about their child's program participation and progress. At these times teachers will also solicit information, questions, observations and feedback from the parents about their perspective of the child's participation and progress, as well as any relevant information about the child and their family that parents deem appropriate and beneficial to their child's school experience.
- The teachers and parents work together as a team (along with any specialists involved) to communicate regularly regarding each child's progress, accomplishments, difficulties in the classroom and/or at home, as well as plan learning activities.
- Teachers work to achieve consensus with families about assessment methods that will best meet the child's needs. Supplemental learning activity suggestions may be provided to parents as deemed appropriate (e.g. Ages and Stages Learning Activities).

Sharing assessment information with families

At the beginning of school year or upon child's entry into program, in writing (parent handbook) and first classroom parent meeting (written hand-outs):
- Overview of the assessment process, purposes and uses of assessment
- Conditions under which children are assessed
- Choice of standardized (ASQ) and teacher developed methods and tools for assessment
- Scoring (standardized); how information is recorded/represented, interpreted and used for individual children and classroom groups
- Child files, children's portfolios and classroom portfolios: content, use, quarterly updates
- Who has access to assessment information and why, how assessment information is kept confidential
- Training staff has received regarding assessment

- How assessment and curriculum are linked: curriculum planning and development for individuals and classroom groups
- Curriculum goals and objectives: Peopleplace philosophy and goals, program foundational concepts, State of Maine Early Learning Guidelines, appropriate developmental expectations
- Timeline for process: including parent-teacher conferences, mid-year and year-end reports; as well as what will be covered in each format
- Parents as partners in the assessment process

Children's Files and Portfolios

- Children's files and personal portfolios are updated quarterly, at approximately 9 week intervals. Dates for the quarterly intervals, as well as mid-year and year-end reports for each school year will be determined by the beginning of school and made known to the parents.
- Children's files and portfolios should always be current for parent conferences (whenever they occur) and for parent meetings or other occasions in which parents will be gathered in the classroom (special occasions, events, etc.)
- Children's files and portfolios are available for review by parents upon request

Peopleplace utilizes a portfolio system, as well as individual child files, to organize information over the course of the year about individual children and their program experience. Work samples, anecdotal records, photographs, child selected items and other artifacts that document and demonstrate children's learning and development are included in their portfolios. The portfolio notebooks are readily available to children and parents in the classroom and are used to illustrate the growth and interests of children over time in the program. The portfolio becomes the property of each family at year's end.

Child Files should begin with:

All collected personal & family information

Any personal communications to & from families (documented)

Screening results (ASQ & ASQ-SE, when returned)

Initial observations & documentation with individual learning and development goals/objectives

The following are guidelines for the contents and organization of the children's personal/private files and portfolios. ***Any observations, information, interpretations, analysis, descriptions of performance/progress or comments about an individual child are confidential and are kept in the child's private file. (see confidentiality policy)***
Child files are kept for the duration of the child's enrollment, and for at least 6 months after the child has withdrawn or "graduated".

Throughout the school year the following will be added to the child file:

Personal and family information

Parent comments & communications

Communications between teachers and parents, written or notes of verbal

Conference notes & summaries

Assessments/progress reports

Narrative reports*

Systematic & anecdotal observations re: individual child*

Interviews* (depends on nature)

<u>Preschool Portfolios</u>

Child self and family portrait 4xs per year

Work Samples: including items such as…

Drawing/artwork; writing/dictation; photos of children's play/work; interviews*

Art work

Beginning and end of year photo portrait of each child

MECLG domain observations

Activity Records (choices & interests)

Center or activity based observations*

Small group write-ups*

Transcripts of conversations*

Exploration/project write-ups*

Child selected artifacts

Toddler Portfolios

First week art work

First day photo

The 4 domains described with photo documentation

Relevant articles about Toddler play

Varied examples of artwork throughout the year

Photos of the child's birthday

Varied photos of their experiences and peers

2 individual "learning through process and exploration" observation forms with photo
    documentation

*Teacher comments included with the above should be objective, factual, give context or other
relevant information, describe process or a group experience, an activity center, a curriculum
area, a project or a developmental domain.
*Any comments, observations, information, analysis, interpretation etc. that is subjective,
reflective or interpretive about an individual child and their performance/progress belongs in
their private file.*

Selection of Assessment Tools:

      Peopleplace has a long history in this community of early childhood educational
programming that is active, constructivist, developmentally appropriate, and for the last several
years, influenced by the Reggio Approach. We have chosen not to use a packaged curriculum,
rather an emergent or negotiated curriculum, based on the interests, needs, abilities, strengths,
ideas and experiences of our children. Within the context of this approach to curriculum

development, we are also dedicated to providing programming that addresses the central aspects of child development (social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive).

Teacher developed methods of observation, documentation and assessment designed to fit the interactive and dynamic style of our curriculum are used in conjunction with standardized tools to provide systematic, consistent and reliable information about children's development, learning and progress. We have adopted the use of the **State of Maine Early Learning Guidelines** (for preschoolers and infants/toddlers) for the basis of our curriculum goals and objectives, along with the philosophy and goals (**Foundational Concepts**) that are particular to our context and community of learners (children and parents). In addition, we are committed to meeting the **NAEYC** standards and criteria.

To involve parents in the assessment process, we use the **ASQ** and occasionally the **ASQ-SE** as developmental screening tools and to provide teachers with base line developmental information for children as they enter our programs, enabling teachers to begin to develop individual plans for children's program participation. From this we are also able to compile and summarize the information for the classroom group as a whole, which also provides teachers with important information from which to base their initial program planning efforts.

The following table demonstrates the compatibility of this 'system' of Curriculum and Assessment:

Downstairs Program (1 ½ - 3 yrs)		
Infants and Toddlers Guidelines for Supporting Learning and Development	NAEYC	ASQ & ASQ SE
Development into Social Beings	Social/Emotional Development	Social/Emotional Personal-Social
Development of Strong and Healthy Bodies	Physical Development	Gross and Fine Motor
Development of Curious Minds	Cognitive Development	Problem Solving
Development of the Ability To Communicate	Language Development	Communication

Upstairs Preschool Program (3-5 yrs)		
Maine Early Learning Guidelines	NAEYC	ASQ & ASQ SE
Approaches to Learning	Approaches to Learning	Problem Solving
Personal and Social Development	Social/emotional Development	Social/Emotional Personal-Social
Health and Physical Education	Physical Development Cognitive: Health and Safety	Gross and Fine Motor
Early Language and Literacy	Language Development & Cognitive: Early Literacy	Communication
Mathematics	Cognitive: Early Mathematics	*Content Areas not Specific to ASQ*
Science	Cognitive: Science	
Social Studies	Cognitive: Social Studies	
Creative Arts	Cognitive: Creative Expression And Appreciation for the Arts	

STAFF TRAINING ON ASSESSMENT will include:

Purposes and uses of assessment
- ➢ For individual children
- ➢ For class as a whole/program
- ➢ For program planning, development, improvement and accountability; decision making; linking assessment with developmental and curriculum goals; adapting teaching strategies, activities, materials and the environment to tailor program to individual and group strengths and needs and meet goals for development and learning
- ➢ Screening and referral
- ➢ Communicating with parents

Observation and documentation
- ➢ Settings, procedures, methods
- ➢ Formal (standardized tools) and informal methods
    - ▪ ASQ & ASQ-SE
    - ▪ Checklists based on the MELG's
    - ▪ Anecdotal notes and photographic evidence
    - ▪ Individual portfolios
    - ▪ Kindergarten readiness – assessment related to local school district
- ➢ Identifying children's interests, strengths and needs
- ➢ Setting goals
- ➢ Tracking and describing progress
- ➢ Organizing, compiling, interpreting and using assessment info
- ➢ Integrating assessment info with curriculum goals and program planning
- ➢ Contents and organization of child files and portfolios
- ➢ Classroom portfolios

Communicating with families
- ➢ Assessment process, purposes, uses, tools, timelines, reports, conferences, portfolios, developmental and learning domains and goals,
- ➢ Developmentally appropriate expectations
- ➢ Sensitivity to family values, culture, identity and home language
- ➢ Confidentiality and disclosure
- ➢ Including parents in the assessment process

Position statements (NAEYC):
Curriculum, Assessment & Program Evaluation
Code of Ethical Conduct
Confidentiality

Sample Schedules, Forms and Tools Index*

Toddler Program

Flow of the Day
Program plans and projections form
Daily documentation form
Individual goals & objectives form
Family Focus Sheet
Planning Meeting documentation form

Preschool Program

Flow of the Day
Program plans and projections form
Daily documentation form
Individual goals & objectives form
Family Focus Sheet
Planning Meeting documentation form

*To be updated yearly and/or when appropriate

All Programs

Samples of ASQ & ASQ-SE forms (with copy of letter to parents)
Mid-year and Year-end report forms

APPENDIX B

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Project Zero's Definitions of Working Styles

APPENDIX C

Position statements (NAEYC):

Curriculum, Assessment & Program Evaluation

Code of Ethical Conduct

Respecting and Responding to Diversity

Screening & Assessment of young English-language learners

APPENDIX D

Assessment information provided to parents

Sample release of information form

Information about selected tools made available to parents

APPENDIX E

Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers: Guidelines for Learning & Development

Maine Early Childhood Early Learning Guidelines

NAEYC Standards and Criteria

APPENDIX F

Local Referral and Support Services