

# Essential Indicators

## Introduction

For New Mexico PreK, 28 outcomes and 65 indicators guide teachers as they plan curriculum appropriate for four year olds. When using New Mexico PreK Observational Assessment Tools, teachers observe for 23 of these indicators as essential indicators in the seven different learning domains. These are the indicators that teachers observe and report.

Rubrics describing a child's progress toward each essential indicator clearly identify each child's level of accomplishment.

After viewing this section, you will be able to:

- recognize New Mexico's 23 essential indicators; and
- apply rubrics to assess children's progress toward those indicators



## Indicators in Action

It's important to take time to become familiar with the language of the domains, outcomes and indicators. Familiarity with assessment terminology will help you recognize easily and immediately when you see an indicator come alive in a child's performance of tasks and interactions with others.

The language of the indicators is behavioral and specific so it clearly describes how children are progressing.

Although many other indicators may be evident in your observations of children, you need only to observe for and record the 23 essential indicators. If you have young children with special needs in your PreK classroom, you may also need to record two more indicators, numbers 24 and 25 about the child's gross motor development.



## EI Examples

Observe these two children as they play and interact with each other. Identify and list essential indicators you observe.

### Clip 1

This clip illustrates Essential Indicator #1 - in the Physical Development, Health, and Well-being domain - *Coordinates eye-hand movements using beads, laces, pegs, puzzles and other manipulatives and small objects, and when dressing and undressing.*

### Clip 2

This clip illustrates Essential Indicator #13 - in the Aesthetic Creativity domain - *Communicates ideas and/or feelings through creative activities.*

### Clip 3

This clip illustrates Essential Indicator #18 - Self/Family/Community domain - *Plays and interacts with various children sharing experiences and ideas with others.*



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## Identifying Rubric Ratings

Not every child will accomplish every indicator. Indicators guide teachers by setting expectations for children's learning and performance. With those expectations, each child can be described as performing at some point on a continuum of progress toward an indicator. Therefore, it is essential to identify what that point of progress looks like by assigning a rubric rating. In that way, each teacher and parent can see it clearly in the child's actions and understandings.

Rubric ratings capture the small steps of a child's progress toward an essential indicator.

- 1 Is the child *not yet demonstrating* the indicator?
- 2 Is the child just *making first steps* toward the indicator?
- 3 Is the child *making progress* toward the indicator?
- 4 Is the child *accomplishing* the indicator?
- 5 Is the child *exceeding expectations* of the indicator?



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## Observable Descriptions

To ensure that PreK teachers throughout New Mexico are consistent in their ratings, teachers assign one of five ratings for each essential indicator. Five clear, observable descriptions have been written to capture steps of progress from not yet demonstrating through exceeds expectations. These are called Rubrics and numerical ratings are given to each.

First, teachers look at the Rubrics that describe the expectations for children in their PreK year (four-year-old expectations). These are numbered 2, 3 and 4 and describe performance that can be "reasonably expected" of a 4-year-old child.

If the child's performance is OUTSIDE or does not match Rubrics 2-4, teachers look at Rubric 1 or 5.

If a child is not yet demonstrating the indicator, he or she is assigned a rating of 1.

If a child is showing first steps toward the indicator, he or she is assigned a rating of 2.

For making progress, the rating is a 3. And for accomplishing the indicator, the rating is 4.

If a child is exceeding expectations, he or she is assigned a rating of 5.

Here's an example of rubric descriptions for the essential indicator #4 in the literacy domain, which is – Converses effectively in his or her home language, English, or sign language for a variety of purposes relating to real experiences and different audiences.

A child **not yet demonstrating** would be observed combining 3 signs or words following the subject-verb-object word order.

A child **making first steps** would be observed using 3 to 4 word sentences to express him or herself.



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A child **making progress** would be observed using 5-6 word sentences to express ideas.

A child **accomplishing** would be observed using complex questions and/or statements of seven or more words to present and get information.

A child **exceeding expectations** would be observed using 2 connected sentences to express ideas and reply with relevant information to questions and comments of others.

Here's another example of rubric descriptions, this time for the essential indicator #14 in the scientific conceptual understandings domain, which is -- *Uses senses to investigate characteristics and behaviors in the physical and natural worlds and begins to form explanations of observations and explorations.*

A child **not yet demonstrating** would be observed to play with materials of different textures (for example, sand, water, leaves) and conditions (wet, dry, warm, cold, etc.) with adult encouragement.

A child making **first steps** would be observed using obvious sensory information to explore the world, reacting more physically than verbally.

A child making **progress** toward the outcome would be observed "using one sense (such as sight only, or smell only) in a sensory experience, making 1-2 simple comments describing the experience"

And a child **accomplishing** the outcome would be observed "using 2 or more senses, as in this case, touch and smell, to explore the world making 1 or more detailed comments describing sensory experiences"

A child **exceeding expectations** would be observed conducting small hands-on/multi-sensory experiments with adult guidance and using observation and verbal questioning and comments to investigate and draw conclusions.

If these five rubrics do not match the child's performance, the teacher refers to the Early Learning Guidelines Continuum. If the child does not match Rubric 1 on the PreK Essential Indicators with Rubrics, the teacher looks to the 3-year-old rubrics on the continuum or even to the older toddler rubrics.

If the child does not match Rubric 5 on the PreK Essential Indicators with Rubrics, the teacher looks to the kindergarten rubrics on the continuum.

Any performance before Rubric 1 on the continuum is scored as a "1" and any performance beyond Rubric 5 is scored as a "5".

Inter-rater reliability is established for each of the essential indicators through the 5-point rubric descriptions.

## Rubric Practice

Watch this brief video clip; focus your attention on Skylar, the girl at the left in purple, and Shosha, the girl at the right in turquoise.

Note essential indicators and rubric ratings as you observe. You may replay the video as many times as you'd like.

**Challenge 1:** Which rubric rating would you assign to Shosha for EI # 18 - (Plays and interacts with various children sharing experiences and ideas with others)?

The best choice is Rubric 4. Shosha interacts easily with Skylar; Shosha is accomplishing the indicator..

**Challenge 2:** Which rubric rating would you assign to Skylar for EI # 9 - (Uses numbers and counting as a means for solving problems and determining quantity)?

The best choice is Rubric 4. Skylar correctly assigns a number to each item while counting six or more items using one to one correspondence. Skylar is accomplishing the indicator.

**Challenge 3:** Which rubric rating would you assign to Skylar for EI # 4 - (Converses effectively in home language for a variety of purposes relating to real experiences and different audiences)?

The best choice is Rubric 3. Skylar uses 5 to 6 word sentences to express ideas.

