
Early English Language Development Standards

The Background:

The World Class Instructional Design and Assessment organization (WIDA) recently released Early English Language Development Standards (E-ELD) for use by early childhood practitioners, including child care, Head Start, and preschool/prekindergarten educators.

These standards are different from the WIDA *K-12 English Learning Standards* and *Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards* (TN-ELDS) because they support the English learning needs of children from two and a half years of age to five years of age (see Table 1 below).

- The WIDA standards support the English learning needs of children in grades K-12.
- The Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS) do not fully address the learning needs of the children who are not only continuing to learn their home language but also learning English within the classroom environment.

Adoption of these standards would enhance teachers' understanding of how best to support these youngest students learning of English in a culturally and developmentally appropriate manner. These standards are aligned with the WIDA K-12 standards approved on second reading by the State Board of Education in October 2013 for implementation in Tennessee schools. The E-ELD standards also align with the revised Early Learning Developmental Standards (ELDS) adopted in August 2012. Finally, adoption of these standards allows Tennessee to work more meaningfully to close the achievement gap for the limited English proficient subgroup.

Once these standards are adopted, professional development opportunities will be designed and offered to early childhood education providers to support implementation of these standards in the early childhood classrooms. The University of Tennessee Chattanooga has submitted a letter of support for adopting the E-ELD standards and is interested in working the Department of Education to plan professional development opportunities next year.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of the standards on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.