



**Illinois  
State Board of  
Education**

**Early Childhood  
Professional Learning**  
THE CENTER: Resources for Teaching and Learning  
EClearningIL.org

## Lesson Planning FAQ

### General Questions

How frequently should lesson plans be completed?

- At minimum, weekly for compliance purposes. Refer to your research-based curriculum for guidance as some recommend weekly or daily.

Do lesson plans need to be saved?

- For compliance purposes, programs should have record of six weeks of consecutive lesson plans from the current year for each classroom.
- Additionally, check with your program/district, as they might have requirements related to this practice.

What are the required components of a lesson plan template?

- The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) does not mandate use of a specific lesson planning form. Teachers can use templates from their research-based curriculum that aligns to the IELDS or generate their own template. The templates should support the components of developmentally appropriate lesson planning as outlined by ISBE:
  - Reflection and Analysis: A space for teachers to document observations from the week that can be used to inform the following lesson plan (supports compliance requirement: use of assessment data to inform lesson planning).
  - Curriculum Content: Keywords or phrases from Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS) benchmarks or curriculum objectives for each activity and for materials added to interest centers on the lesson plan form.
  - Individualization: Weekly individualization for a minimum of 25% of children in the class, with individualization for all children at least monthly.
  - Routines and activities from the daily schedule including, but not limited to: large group, small group, outdoor, learning centers, transitions, and family engagement.

Should studies/projects or themes be used?

- ISBE supports the use of project approach and project-based learning that allows for child-led investigations.
- If using Creative Curriculum, studies are used, not themes.

Is a “question of the day” required?

- ISBE does not require use of a “question of the day.” However, the curriculum should be implemented with fidelity. If it is part of the curriculum, then it should be planned for and included on the lesson plan.

Should transitions be included on the lesson plan?

- Teachers should be intentional about planning for transitions and keep children actively engaged when moving from one activity to the next. Transitions provide an opportunity to integrate curriculum content and learning.

Does the posted lesson plan and the teacher lesson plan have to match?

- The activities should be the same. You may have more detailed lesson plans for yourself or substitutes.

How often should changes be made to learning centers?

- There is no requirement for how often materials need to be changed or added to centers. Intentional teachers use systematic observation to inform planning and make changes based upon their observations. Follow the cues of children to decide when and where to add materials or change centers to enhance children's play and keep them engaged.

Is it required to list children's names for each small group?

- For compliance purposes, it is not required to list children for small groups. As a best teaching practice, it is important to plan for how you are grouping children.

Can a district use one lesson plan for all classrooms?

- If you are using a scripted curriculum, teachers should still use systematic observation and analysis and reflection to adapt lesson plans for each classroom.

**Curriculum Objectives and IELDS Benchmarks** (The term "curriculum objectives" refers to the curriculum content or skills being targeted as learning outcomes. Different curriculums use various terminologies to describe skills).

Should lesson plans use curriculum objectives or IELDS benchmarks?

- Keywords or phrases from curriculum objectives (that have been aligned with the IELDS) or keywords or phrases from IELDS benchmarks may be used. Refer to the IELDS for Preschool-Focused Concepts/Keywords Handout if using benchmarks.

How many curriculum objectives or IELDS benchmarks should be listed for each activity on the lesson plan?

- At minimum, it is required to have at least one keyword or phrase from a benchmark or curriculum objective for each activity. Consider the main focus of the activity and why you are doing it to determine which objective(s) or benchmark(s) to choose. While at least one is required, too many (more than three) can lose focus of the activity.

Is it allowable to use assessment objectives instead of IELDS benchmarks or curriculum objectives?

- The requirement is to use keywords from curriculum objectives that have been aligned to the IELDS or keywords from the IELDS benchmarks. In the case of a program using

Creative Curriculum and GOLD, the curriculum objectives and assessment objectives are the same. Some programs might use Creative Curriculum with Work Sampling or the Early Learning Scale (ELLS) as the assessment tool. In this case, the curriculum objectives and assessment objectives are not the same and the requirement stated above should be followed (use curriculum objectives or IELDS benchmarks).

Is it appropriate to list all IELDS benchmarks on the sides of the lesson plan and highlight all of the benchmarks that apply for the week?

- No, keywords or phrases for each activity should be listed next to each activity, so it is clear to teaching staff the focus when implementing the activity and supporting learning.

### **Individualizing**

What does it mean to individualize?

- ISBE uses the following two definitions to explain individualization:
  - *DEC's Recommended Practices Individualized Instruction*: instruction that is tailored to meet a child's needs, background, interests, and phase of learning with respect to the current target behavior, and learning style and history.
  - *ECERS-3 Individualized Teaching*: involves responding to variation in the abilities, needs, and interests of children in the group; working with individual children in a systematic way that involves determining the child's ability to do a task or learn a concept; providing support and encouragement; using appropriate strategies that respond to the child's needs and interests; and assessing the success of the child in completing the learning task.

How often should individualization be planned for?

- Teachers should utilize systematic observation and analysis and reflection to support highly individualized lesson plans. For the purposes of compliance, teachers are required, at minimum, to plan and document for 25% of children each week, with all children being planned for within a month.

How is individualization documented on the lesson plan?

- Individualizing can be planned for in a variety of contexts including, but not limited to, choice time, transitions, small group, large group, outside time, and read alouds.
- Initials or first names can be used. If sharing lesson plans with families, names or initials should be removed.
- Refer to confidentiality regulations established by your district/program to ensure compliance with their policies.

How thorough should individualization plans be?

- It is most beneficial for individualization plans to document the skill, context, and strategy used to support the individual child as it guides adults in how to support the child. For example, Layla: Teacher will model use of prepositions under, next to, and between when joining in and commenting on Layla's block play during choice time.

Will listing the names of children by group be sufficient documentation to show individualization?

- No, in order to meet individualization requirements, the lesson plan must document a specific strategy being used to support an individual child's need.

How do I plan for children with IEP goals on my lesson plans?

- Objectives from IEPs should be embedded within the daily routines and activities of the classroom, when possible. The same system for documenting individualization can be used for children with and without IEPs.