

# INFANT/TODDLER EARLY LEARNING GUIDELINES FACTSHEET



## WHAT ARE EARLY LEARNING GUIDELINES?

Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) or standards describe expectations about what children should know (understand) and do (competencies and skills) across multiple domains of learning during specific age ranges. Currently, 33 States and 3 Territories implement ELG that describe outcomes for infants, toddlers, and young children. Early Learning Guidelines specific to infants and toddlers are currently developed by 20 States and 3 Territories (AR, CA, CNMI, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, GU, KY, LA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MS, NC, ND, NE, OH, PA, PR, WV). Early Learning Guidelines are established in a birth through age 5 framework in 13 States (AK, AL, IA, ID, IN, KS, NH, NM, OR, TN, VA, WA, WI). The purpose of this factsheet is to document the various ways States and Territories represent infants and toddlers in their guidelines.

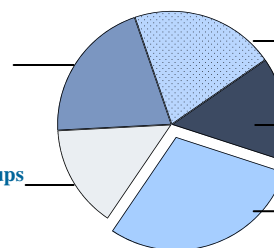
## AGE GROUPS

States and Territories consider a variety of ways to divide the age groups ranging from one broad age group (i.e., birth to 36 months) to more than six age groups. Most ELG are divided into age groups that are broad enough to allow for normal variation in development, but still narrow enough to have meaning.

Infant/Toddler (I/T) ELG are primarily divided into 3 age groups.

**Five or More  
Age Groups**  
AL, CT, ID, MD,  
ND, PA, TN

**Four Age Groups**  
FL, GA, GU, LA,  
NM, WI



**One Age Group**  
AR, IA, IN, KY, MI, NH, OR

**Two Age Groups**  
AK, NE, PR, VA, WA

**Three Age Groups**  
CA, CNMI, DC, DE, KS, ME,  
MN, MS, NC, OH, WV

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Identifying a target audience has “implications for the level of language used; the types of strategies or examples that illustrate skills; dissemination and implementation; training; and development of supplemental materials.”<sup>1</sup> All of the ELG analyzed describe early childhood education (ECE) professionals as their target audience. Families are described as the target audience for ELG in approximately 80% of States and Territories. About a quarter of States and Territories also target other audiences, such as policy makers, early interventionists and child welfare workers.

## ENVIRONMENT/CULTURE

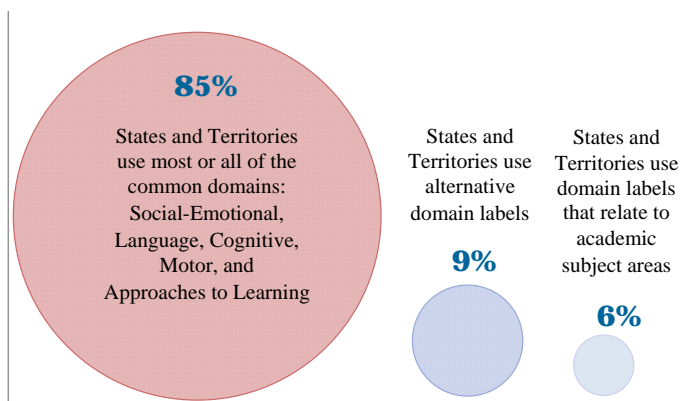
Most ELG describe the role caregivers and families play in creating an environment that will interest and support I/T learning and development. Most States describe strategies that ECE professionals can implement to build relationships and support natural curiosity and play. The importance of reflecting the family’s values and culture is also encouraged in most ELG.

**79%** States and Territories provide caregiver strategies that may include vignettes or examples.

**74%** States and Territories describe the importance of cultural diversity.

## DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS

Developmental Domain Categories



Language used to name the domains in all ELG is common to early childhood professionals and understandable to people with no training in the field. Most States sub-divide the domains providing more detailed content which reflects that I/T learning is multi-dimensional. Multiple domains are used in ELG, and the most common labels are: Social-Emotional, Language, Cognitive, Physical/Motor and Approaches to Learning.

Maine and Michigan use alternative domain labels that reflect the commonly used domain labels. For example, Michigan uses the domain label “Well Being” and Maine uses a domain labeled “Strong and Healthy Bodies” and both reflect physical health. Mississippi and Indiana use language that reflects subject areas such as math, science, literacy, etc.

## INCLUSION

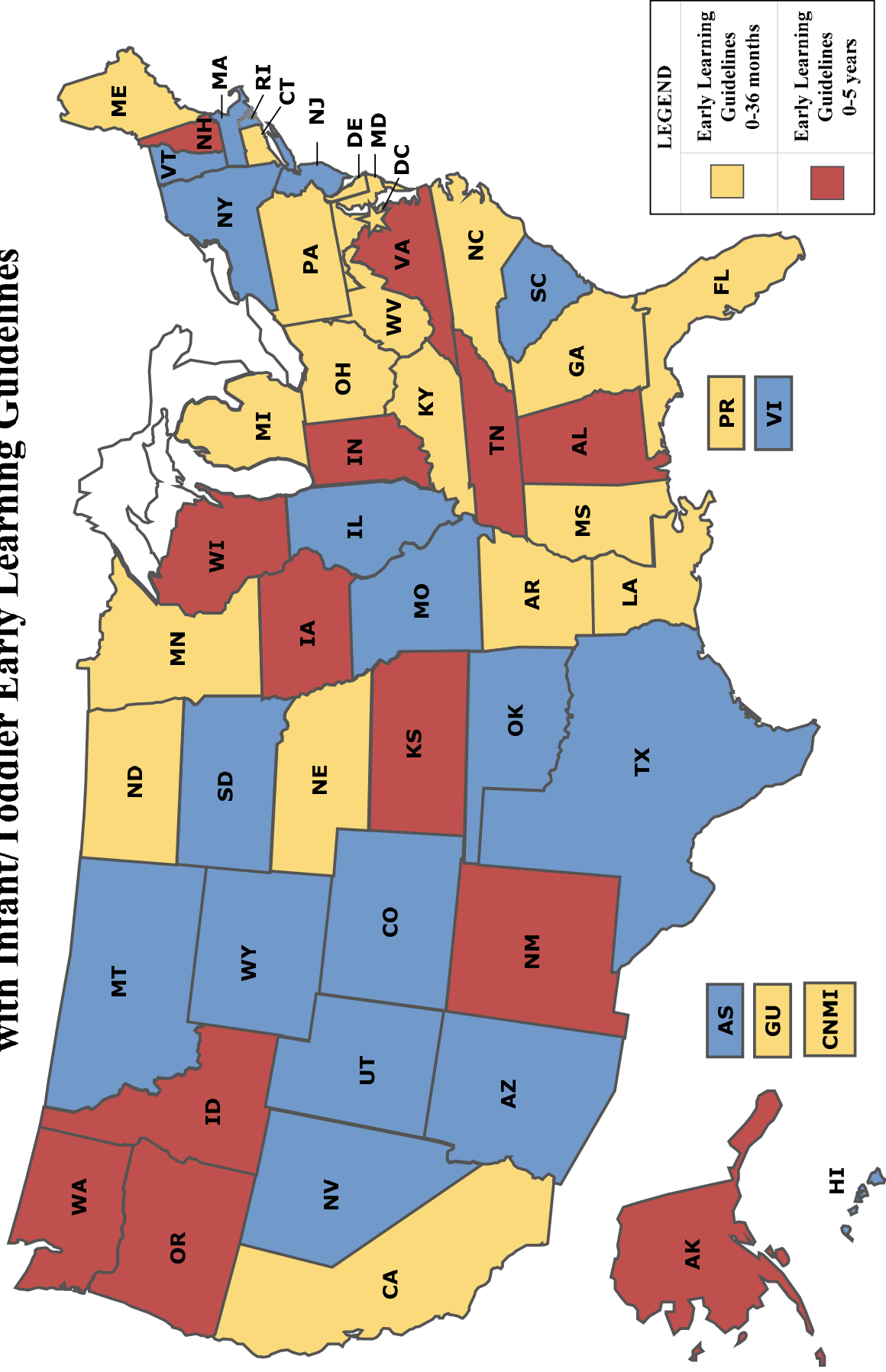
Inclusive guidelines focus on how programs can be individualized and may offer examples or resources for caregivers and families.

References to young children with special needs are explicitly included in the ELG for 23 States and 2 Territories (AK, AL, AR, CA, CMNI, FL, GA, GU, IA, ID, IN, LA, ME, MI, MN, NC, ND, NE, NH, OH, OR, PA, VA, WA, WI).

<sup>1</sup>Petersen, Sandra; Jones, Lynn; McGinley, Karen A. (2008). *Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: Recommendations to States*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.

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## 36 States and Territories with Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines



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<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/itcc/>

DECEMBER 2010



A project of the  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,  
Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care

