

Making Linkages:

How the British Columbia Early Learning Framework Links
to the Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching

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Purpose of the Resource

The intention of this resource is to highlight the connections and parallels between the British Columbia Early Learning Framework, with its particular focus on children under the age of five, and the Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching, which focuses on children in Kindergarten to Grade 3. This document is of particular interest to primary educators and early childhood educators who together can facilitate a continuity of learning for young children in British Columbia. In this document, the British Columbia Early Learning Framework will be referred to as the Early Learning Framework and the Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching will be referred to as the Primary Program Framework.

The British Columbia Early Learning Framework

In June 2007, the British Columbia Early Learning Framework was finalized providing a provincial vision for early learning.

The purpose of the British Columbia Early Learning Framework is to support and guide adults to create rich early learning experiences and environments that reflect the latest knowledge on how best to support young children's early learning and development. The Framework is a Provincial government document and was developed in consultation with early childhood educators, teachers and early learning experts.



The British Columbia Early Learning Framework is a conceptual framework that begins by articulating the values that define it. These values statements are based on societal values and beliefs about the nature of the child and childhood. It is coloured by the history, circumstances, and context – economic, social, and cultural – of British Columbia.

The foundation of the British Columbia Early Learning Framework is an educational philosophy that views the development of children as holistic in nature, and is framed around an image of children as competent and capable individuals, as persons “with complex identities, grounded in their individual strengths and capacities, and their unique social, linguistic and cultural heritage.”

Pedagogically, it is believed that the child develops optimally through active involvement with the environment and with others by exploring, questioning, experimenting, and debating. As such, the British Columbia Early Learning Framework is not organized as a prescriptive plan for instructional activities, but rather as a flexible educational philosophy that can be adapted at the level of the individual program by well-trained early childhood educators, while still being consistent with the broad vision.

The learning goals embedded in the British Columbia Early Learning Framework aim to encourage in children particular knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions. These include, for example: developing respect for diversity, the ability to work cooperatively with others, a love of learning, self-confidence, and creative expression.

Principles of the British Columbia Early Learning Framework

The British Columbia Early Learning Framework is based on a common set of principles that can guide the practices of early childhood educators, early years professionals, service providers, families, communities, and governments. While these principles may be applied in many different ways, they are intended to be relevant for all children, regardless of ethnicity, gender, culture, language, temperament, ability, special needs or socio-economic status. These principles are listed in brief below:

- Children are born with the innate desire to learn.
- Families are the primary caregivers of children and have the most important role in promoting their children’s well-being, learning, and development in the context of supportive communities.
- Play is vital to children’s healthy development and learning.
- Consistent, responsive and nurturing relationships are essential to the well-being and early learning of children.
- All aspects of children’s development and learning—physical, social, emotional, cultural, linguistic, and intellectual—are inter-related and inter-dependent.
- Language plays a central role in connecting thought and learning.

- Children are active participants in their families and communities.
- The individual, cultural, and linguistic identities of children and families are respected and integrated into early learning settings, programs, and activities.
- The physical environment shapes children’s learning and well-being.

Guiding Documents in the Primary Years

Compulsory schooling starts in Grade 1 in British Columbia; however, the majority of children start their schooling in kindergarten. Kindergarten to Grade 3 are considered the primary grades. The learning goals for the primary grades are guided by the principles in the Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching and Prescribed Learning Outcomes¹ as set forth in the Integrated Resource Packages. Schools in British Columbia use these documents to guide and reflect on their programs and children’s learning.

The Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching

The Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching provides a foundation for educators to foster the continuing growth of children’s knowledge and understanding of themselves and their world. It affirms the need for a safe, caring, stimulating environment where learning flourishes.

The Primary Program Framework supports the belief that children are individual and every child is unique. The Primary Program Framework accommodates a broad range of children’s needs, their learning rates, styles, knowledge, experiences, and interests to facilitate continuous learning. This is accomplished through an integrated curriculum incorporating a variety of instructional models, strategies, and resources.

The Primary Program Framework addresses the development of the whole child. It reflects an understanding that children learn through active engagement and play, and that children represent their knowledge in a variety of ways. It is based on recognition of the individual and social nature of learning and the essential role of language in mediating thought, communication, and learning.

The Primary Program Framework affirms the importance of the early years as the foundation for lifelong learning and the significance of literacy, numeracy, and social responsibility for success

¹ The Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) have not been included in this resource as they are based on subject area learning as outlined in the Integrated Resource Packages (IRP). Notwithstanding, the learning goals of the Framework support the PLO’s by focusing on necessary skills, knowledge, and dispositions children benefit from to be successful in their Primary years and throughout their entire lives.

in school and beyond. It acknowledges the benefits of developmentally appropriate practices in enhancing children's learning and focuses on early identification and intervention for children who are experiencing learning difficulties.

Teachers and parents are considered partners in the child's education. They consult and collaborate to create for the child a climate of respect, success, and joy, necessary for lifelong learning. (2000, Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching, p. 16).



Principles of Learning in the Primary Program Framework

The Primary Program Framework builds upon a set of principles set forth in *The Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan* (1994). While these principles are understood to be fundamental to all levels of education, they are considered central to the Primary Program:

- Learning requires the active participation of the student;
- People learn in a variety of ways and at different rates;
- Learning is both an individual and a group process.

Learning and Development Areas

The Primary Program Framework's emphasis on the "whole child" is consistent with the approach adopted in the British Columbia Early Learning Framework. Both documents acknowledge that all aspects of children's development (emotional, social, cognitive, linguistic and physical) are inter-related and inter-dependent, i.e. development in one area influences development in another area. This is evident by how the documents organize their areas of learning and the corresponding learning goals. When one reads the Learning Goals of the British Columbia Early Learning Framework and the Foundation Statements of the Primary Program Framework, obvious linkages can be found between the two.

Areas of Early Learning in the British Columbia Early Learning Framework

For each area of early learning, learning goals describe experiences for young children to support them in reaching their full potential.

- **Well-being and Belonging**
This area describes experiences to foster children's control of their bodies and build confidence by exploring the world around them.
- **Exploration and Creativity**
This area describes the capacity to explore and create, which is vital to nurturing the zest for life that is the basis of all learning. Supporting children's explorative play is perhaps the most important means to promote meaningful learning in the early years.
- **Languages and Literacies**
This area describes experiences that support development of languages and literacies among young children to provide them with a strong basis for communication and for successful learning throughout their lifetimes.

- **Social Responsibility and Diversity**

This area describes experiences for children to build relationships, to learn about their own heritage and culture and that of others, and to recognize the connection between their own actions and the wider world. These activities help build the ethical foundation for social and environmental health and well-being, now and in the future.

Areas of Development in the Primary Program Framework

For each area of development, foundation statements describe the intentions for student learning which is elaborated on in the Integrated Resource Packages.

- **Aesthetic and Artistic**

This area focuses on how the arts are an essential part of a child's development and how experiences in the arts will help develop important tools children can use to learn across the curriculum.

- **Emotional and Social**

This area describes the importance of emotional and social well-being as it determines the way we feel, think, and act. Emotional and social development is essential for optimal development and learning.

- **Intellectual**

This area is based on the principle that, to attain deeper levels of understanding, learners need the time and encouragement to experience and then talk about, represent, reason about and reflect upon their experiences.

- **Physical Development and Well-being**

This area illustrates how, for children, learning involves whole-body experiences, participation, and play. They need experiences that extend their ability to lead safe, active, healthy lives.

- **Social Responsibility**

This area describes learning opportunities for children to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable them to contribute to the community, solve problems in a peaceful way, value diversity, defend human rights, and exercise their rights.

The following table notes the learning areas of the Early Learning Framework and supporting goals or foundation statements of the Primary Program Framework.

Table 1.1 – The Learning Goals of the British Columbia Early Learning Framework and the Foundation Statements of the Primary Program Framework

British Columbia Early Learning Framework Areas of Early Learning and Learning Goals	Primary Program Framework Areas of Development and Foundation Statements
<p style="text-align: center;">Well-being and Belonging</p> <p>Adults provide an environment where young children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feel safe and respected. ● Learn ways to keep themselves healthy, including nourishment, sleep, and physical activity. ● Feel confidence in and control of their body. ● Enjoy being and choose to be physically active. ● Understand and follow routines. ● Feel a sense of security, self-respect, and self-regulation. ● Express a sense of personal well-being. ● Recognize, accept, and express a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and views. ● Adapt to and enjoy experiences of change, surprise, and uncertainty. ● Feel valued and explore their own strategies for learning. ● Build healthy relationships with both adults and children. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Physical Development and Well-being</p> <p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn and practice safety. ● Take care of and respect her or his body. ● Develop an appreciation and enjoyment of movement. <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Emotional and Social Development</p> <p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a positive and realistic self-concept. ● Develop independence. ● Share, cooperate, and learn from others.

British Columbia Early Learning Framework Areas of Early Learning and Learning Goals	Primary Program Framework Areas of Development and Foundation Statements
<p style="text-align: center;">Exploration and Creativity</p> <p>Adults provide an environment where young children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore the world using their bodies and all their senses. ● Build, create, and design using different materials and techniques. ● Actively explore, think and reason. ● Identify and try possible solutions to problems in meaningful contexts and situations. ● Be creative and expressive in a variety of ways. ● Develop a sense of wonder for natural environments. ● Express a zest for living and learning. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Aesthetic and Artistic Development</p> <p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop enthusiasm and appreciation for the arts. ● Communicate through the arts. ● Respond to the arts in imaginative ways.
<p style="text-align: center;">Languages and Literacies</p> <p>Adults provide an environment where young children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicate thoughts and experiences creatively using many different forms of expression. ● Develop diverse language abilities and the capacity to communicate with others in many ways. ● Be curious about vocabulary, concepts, and written language. ● Engage in sound and word play. ● Use numbers, measurement, and form in meaningful contexts. ● Experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures. ● Express their own points of view and reflect on other's views. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Intellectual development</p> <p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop strategies to facilitate thinking and learning. ● Develop an awareness of the nature and purposes of language and literacy. ● Develop listening and speaking abilities. ● Develop reading and viewing abilities ● Develop writing and representing abilities. ● Develop information processing abilities. ● Develop number sense. ● Develop spatial sense. ● Develop statistical sense. ● Develop a sense of relationships and patterns. ● Develop an understanding of the world.

British Columbia Early Learning Framework Areas of Early Learning and Learning Goals	Primary Program Framework Areas of Development and Foundation Statements
<p style="text-align: center;">Social Responsibility and Diversity</p> <p>Adults provide an environment where young children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and learn about family, community and the wider world. • Express a positive regard for others and respect for self, others, and property. • Participate in the making, following, and re-working of rules, rituals, and procedures in their everyday world. • Understand fairness both for themselves and others. • Begin to recognize discrimination and inequity and to respond appropriately. • Learn to appreciate and celebrate diversity. • Understand that all persons have value; accept and welcome individual differences. • Understand how their own actions may affect nature and the planet. • Show responsibility for themselves and begin to show responsibility for others. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Development of Social Responsibility</p> <p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value and respect diversity and the contributions people make to the community. • Contribute to a collaborative environment. • Develop an awareness of the roles and responsibilities of a member of a community.





Identifying the Connections Between the British Columbia Early Learning Framework and the Primary Program Framework

The Primary Program Framework and the British Columbia Early Learning Framework address similar areas of learning or development as they are both rooted in a similar philosophical orientation. Both can be considered as a continuum across the spectrum from early years through the Primary years. This commonality should perhaps be expected, as both are written as over-arching frameworks for learning.

The Areas of Development in the Primary Program Framework are supported by many learning goals of the Early Learning Framework. For each area of development the respective learning goals of the British Columbia Early Learning Framework are denoted:

Table 1.2 – Primary Program Area of Development: Intellectual Development

<p>Primary Program Area of Development</p>	<p>British Columbia Early Learning Framework’s Learning Area:</p>			
<p>Intellectual Development</p>	<p>Well-being & Belonging</p>	<p>Exploration & Creativity</p>	<p>Languages & Literacies</p>	<p>Social Responsibility & Diversity</p>
<p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies to facilitate thinking and learning. • Develop an awareness of the nature and purposes of language and literacy. • Develop listening and speaking abilities. • Develop reading and viewing abilities. • Develop writing and representing abilities. • Develop information processing abilities. • Develop number sense. • Develop spatial sense. • Develop statistical sense. • Develop a sense of relationships and patterns. • Develop an understanding of the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel valued and explore their own strategies for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be creative and expressive in a variety of ways. • Express a zest for living and learning. • Explore the world using their bodies and all their senses. • Identify and try possible solutions to problems in meaningful contexts and situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate thoughts and experiences creatively using many different forms of expression. • Develop diverse language abilities and the capacity to communicate with others in many ways. • Be curious about vocabulary, concepts and written language. • Engage in sound and word play. • Use numbers, measurement, and form in meaningful contexts. • Experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures. • Express their own points of view and reflect on others’ view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and learn about family, community and the wider world. • Understand how their own actions may affect nature and the planet.

Table 1.3 – Primary Program Area of Development: Physical Development and Well-being

Primary Program Area of Development Physical Development and Well-being	British Columbia Early Learning Framework’s Learning Area:			
	Well-being & Belonging	Exploration & Creativity	Languages & Literacies	Social Responsibility & Diversity
<p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn and practice safety. • Take care of and respect her or his body. • Develop an appreciation and enjoyment of movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel safe and respected. • Learn ways to keep themselves healthy, including nourishment, sleep, and physical activity. • Feel confidence in and control of their body. • Enjoy being and choose to be physically active. • Understand and follow routines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the world using their bodies and all their senses. • Be creative and expressive in a variety of ways. • Express a zest for living and learning. 	<p>No direct link</p>	<p>No direct link</p>

Table 1.4 – Primary Program Area of Development: Emotional and Social Development

Primary Program Area of Development Emotional and Social Development	British Columbia Early Learning Framework’s Learning Area:			
	Well-being & Belonging	Exploration & Creativity	Languages & Literacies	Social Responsibility & Diversity
<p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a positive and realistic self-concept. • Develop independence • Share, cooperate, and learn from others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel safe and respected. • Feel confidence in and control of their body. • Feel a sense of security, self-respect, and self-regulation. • Express a sense of personal well-being. • Recognize, accept, and express a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and views. • Adapt to and enjoy experience of change, surprise, and uncertainty. • Feel valued and explore their own strategies for learning. • Build healthy relationships with both adults and children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively explore, think and reason. • Identify and try possible solutions to problems in meaningful contexts and situations. • Express a zest for living and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express their own points of view and reflect on other’s views. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express a positive regard for others and respect for self, others, and property. • Understand fairness both for themselves and others. • Show responsibility for themselves and begin to show responsibility for others.

Table 1.5 – Primary Program Area of Development: Aesthetic and Artistic Development

Primary Program Area of Development	British Columbia Early Learning Framework’s Learning Area:			
Aesthetic and Artistic Development	Well-being & Belonging	Exploration & Creativity	Languages & Literacies	Social Responsibility & Diversity
<p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop enthusiasm and appreciation for the arts. • Communicate through the arts. • Respond to the arts in imaginative ways. 	<p>No direct link</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build, create, and design using different materials and techniques. • Be creative and expressive in a variety of ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate thoughts and experiences creatively using many different forms of expression. • Engage in sound and word play. • Experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to appreciate and celebrate diversity.

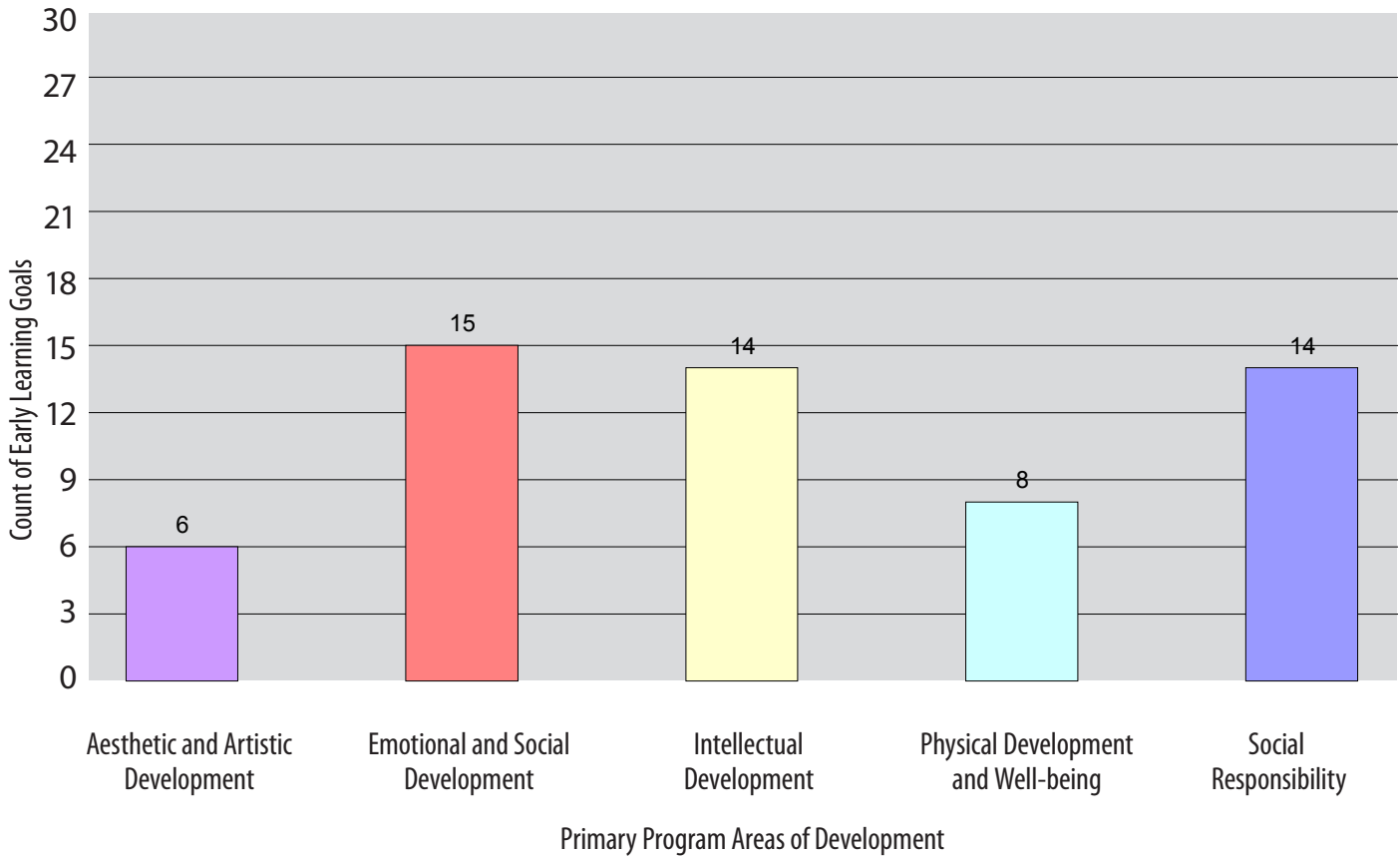
Table 1.6 – Primary Program Area of Development: Development of Social Responsibility

Primary Program Area of Development	British Columbia Early Learning Framework’s Learning Area:			
Development of Social Responsibility	Well-being & Belonging	Exploration & Creativity	Languages & Literacies	Social Responsibility & Diversity
<p>A variety of experiences enable the child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value and respect diversity and the contributions people make to the community • Contribute to a collaborative environment • Develop an awareness of the roles and responsibilities of a member of a community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build healthy relationships with both adults and children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a sense of wonder for natural environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop diverse language abilities and the capacity to communicate with others in many ways. • Experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures. • Express their own points of view and reflect on other’s views. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and learn about family, community and the wider world. • Express a positive regard for others and respect for self, others, and property. • Participate in the making, following, and re-working of rules, rituals, and procedures in their everyday world. • Understand fairness both for themselves and others. • Begin to recognize discrimination and inequity and to respond appropriately. • Learn to appreciate and celebrate diversity. • Understand that all persons have value; accept and welcome individual differences. • Understand how their own actions may affect nature and the planet. • Show responsibility for themselves and begin to show responsibility for others.

The following chart shows the quantitative relationship between the early learning goals and the Primary Program Framework areas of development.

Note: The sum of the table is greater than the number of early learning goals (33) since the Primary Program Framework's areas of development are supported by more than one early learning goal.

Quantitative Summary of the Framework Early Learning Goals Supporting the Primary Program Areas of Development



Identifying how the British Columbia Early Learning Framework supports the Primary Program Framework

As previously noted, there is no one-to-one connection between the early learning goals and the Primary Program Framework areas of development. The following charts demonstrate these relationships. For each learning goal of the Early Learning Framework, the following tables (tables 2.1-2.6) depict how it links to the Primary Program's five areas of development. The accompanying charts also summarize quantitatively how the early learning goals support the Primary Program Framework.

Table 2.1 – Well-being and Belonging Area of Early Learning Supporting the Primary Program Framework

British Columbia Early Learning Framework Area of Learning Well-being and Belonging	Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching				
	Aesthetic and Artistic Development	Emotional and Social Development	Intellectual Development	Physical Development and Well-being	Social Responsibility
Feel safe and respected.		✓		✓	
Learn ways to keep themselves healthy, including nourishment, sleep, and physical activity.				✓	
Feel confidence in and control of their bodies.		✓		✓	
Enjoy being and choose to be physically active.				✓	
Understand and follow routines.		✓		✓	
Feel a sense of security, self-respect, and self-regulation.		✓		✓	
Express a sense of personal well-being.		✓			
Recognize, accept, and express a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and views.		✓			

British Columbia Early Learning Framework Area of Learning Well-being and Belonging	Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching				
	Aesthetic and Artistic Development	Emotional and Social Development	Intellectual Development	Physical Development and Well-being	Social Responsibility
Adapt to and enjoy experiences of change, surprise, and uncertainty.		✓			
Feel valued and explore their own strategies for learning.		✓	✓		
Build healthy relationships with both adults and children.		✓			✓

Well-being and Belonging Area of Early Learning Supporting the Primary Program

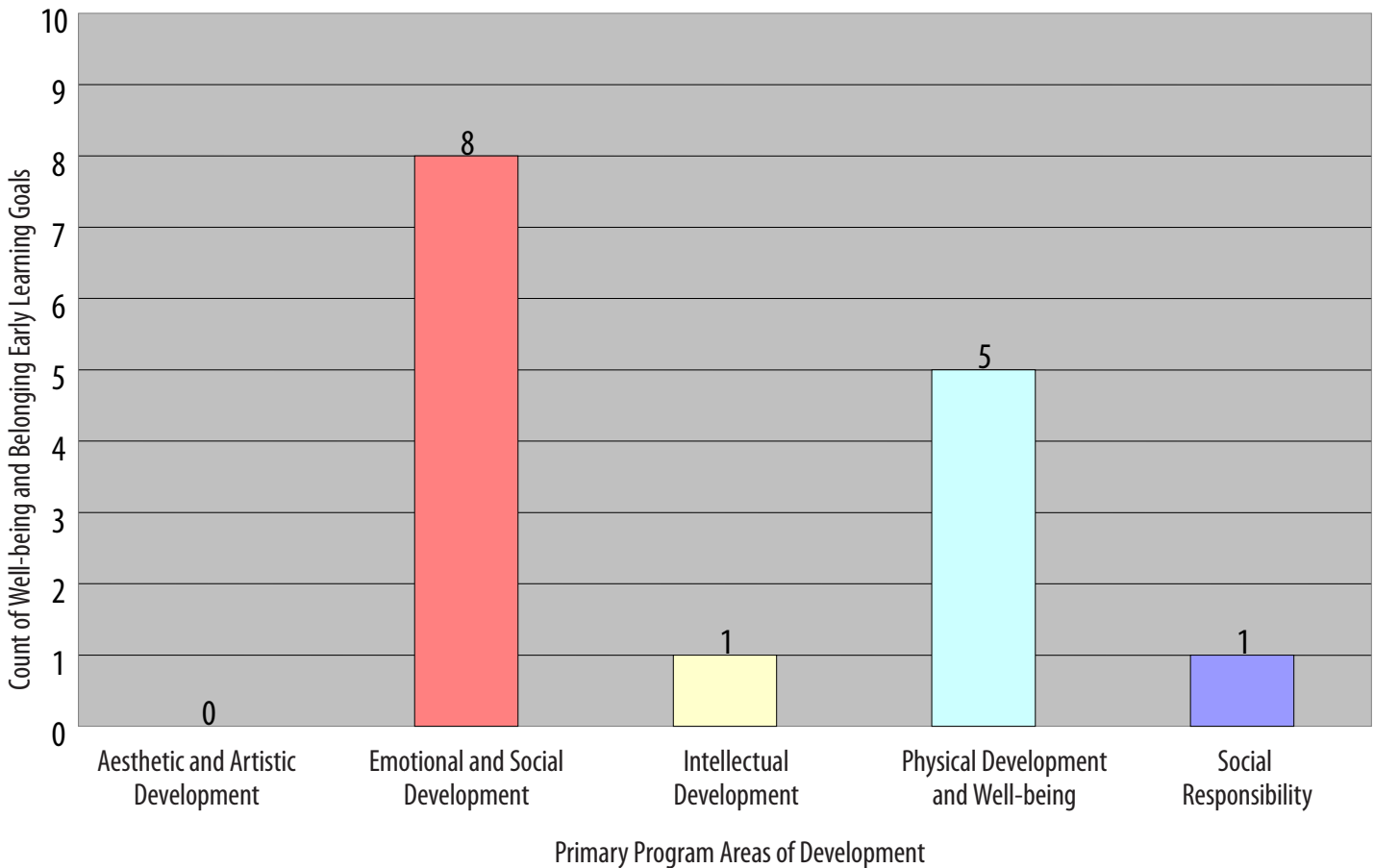


Table 2.2 – Exploration and Creativity Area of Early Learning Supporting the Primary Program Framework

British Columbia Early Learning Framework Area of Learning Exploration and Creativity	Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching				
	Aesthetic and Artistic Development	Emotional and Social Development	Intellectual Development	Physical Development and Well-being	Social Responsibility
Explore the world using their bodies and all their senses.			✓	✓	
Build, create, and design using different materials and techniques.	✓				
Actively explore, think and reason.		✓			
Identify and try possible solutions to problems in meaningful contexts and situations.		✓	✓		
Be creative and expressive in a variety of ways.	✓		✓	✓	
Develop a sense of wonder for natural environments.					✓
Express a zest for living and learning.		✓	✓	✓	

Exploration and Creativity Area of Early Learning Supporting the Primary Program Framework

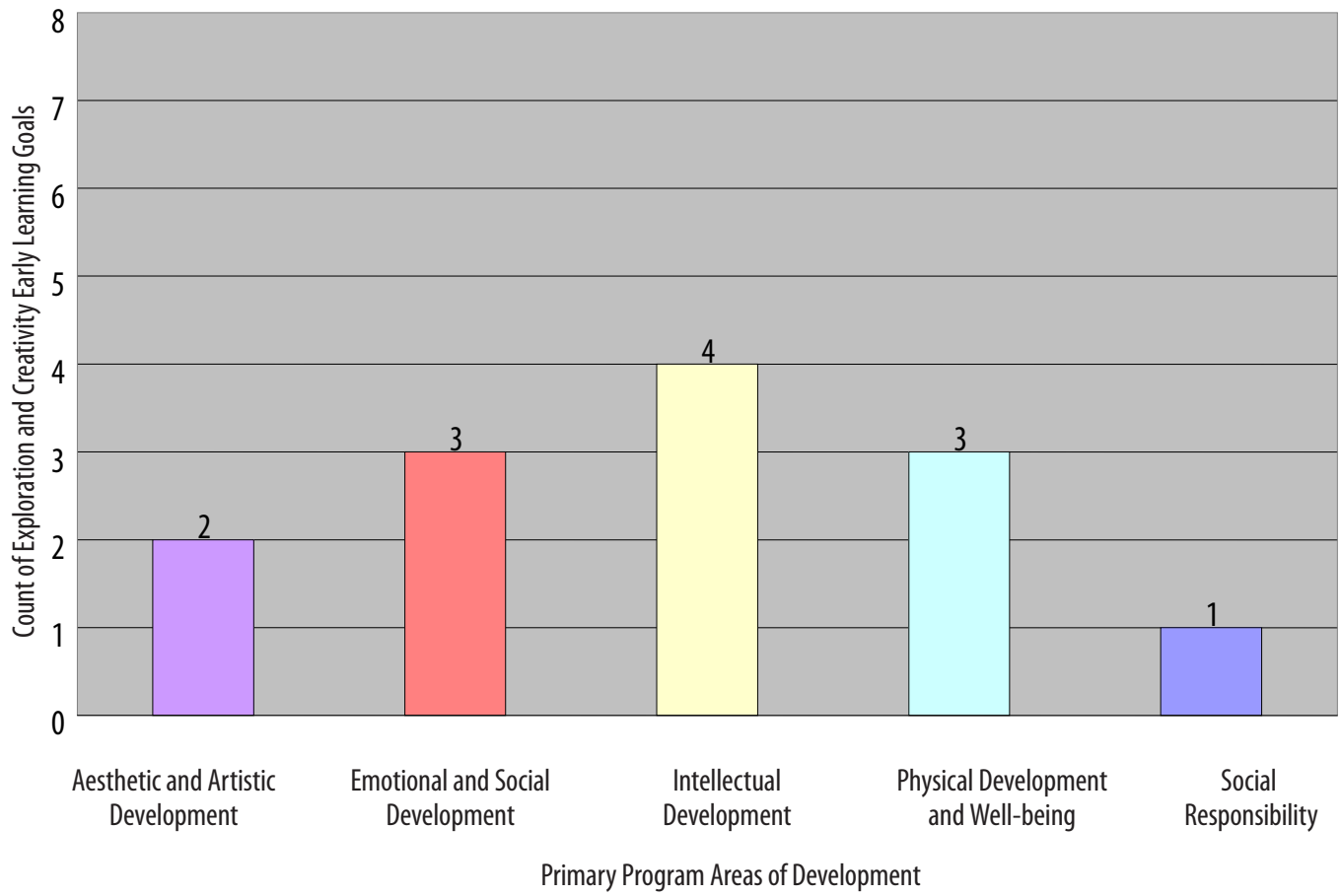


Table 2.3 – Languages and Literacies Area of Early Learning Supporting the Primary Program

British Columbia Early Learning Framework Area of Learning Languages and Literacies	Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching				
	Aesthetic and Artistic Development	Emotional and Social Development	Intellectual Development	Physical Development and Well-being	Social Responsibility
Communicate thoughts and experiences creatively using many different forms of expression.	✓		✓		
Develop diverse language abilities and the capacity to communicate with others in many ways.			✓		✓
Be curious about vocabulary, concepts, and written language.			✓		
Engage in sound and word play.	✓		✓		
Use numbers, measurement, and form in meaningful contexts.			✓		
Experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures.	✓		✓		✓
Express their own points of view and reflect on others' views.		✓	✓		✓

Languages and Literacies Area of Early Learning Supporting the Primary Program Framework

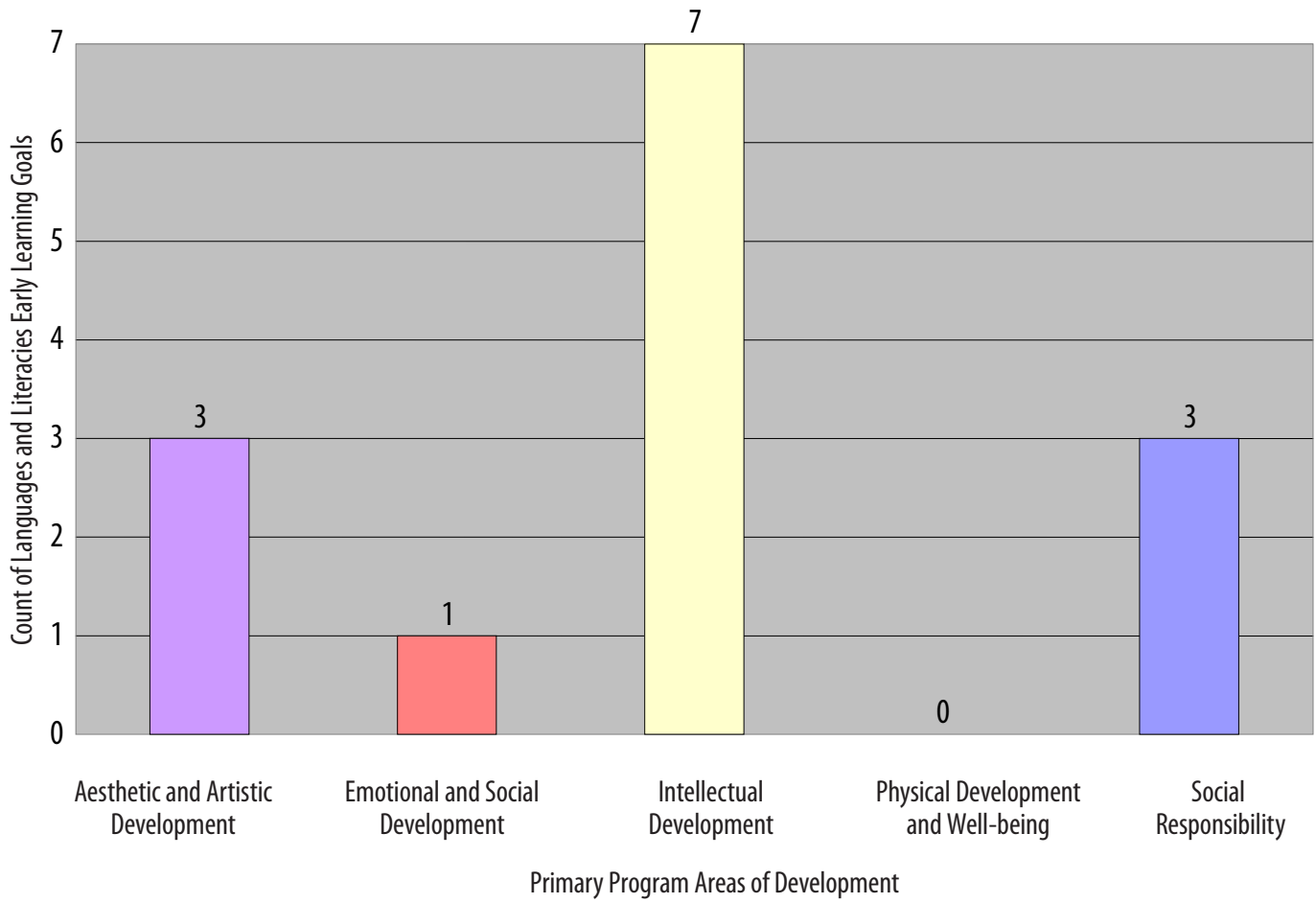
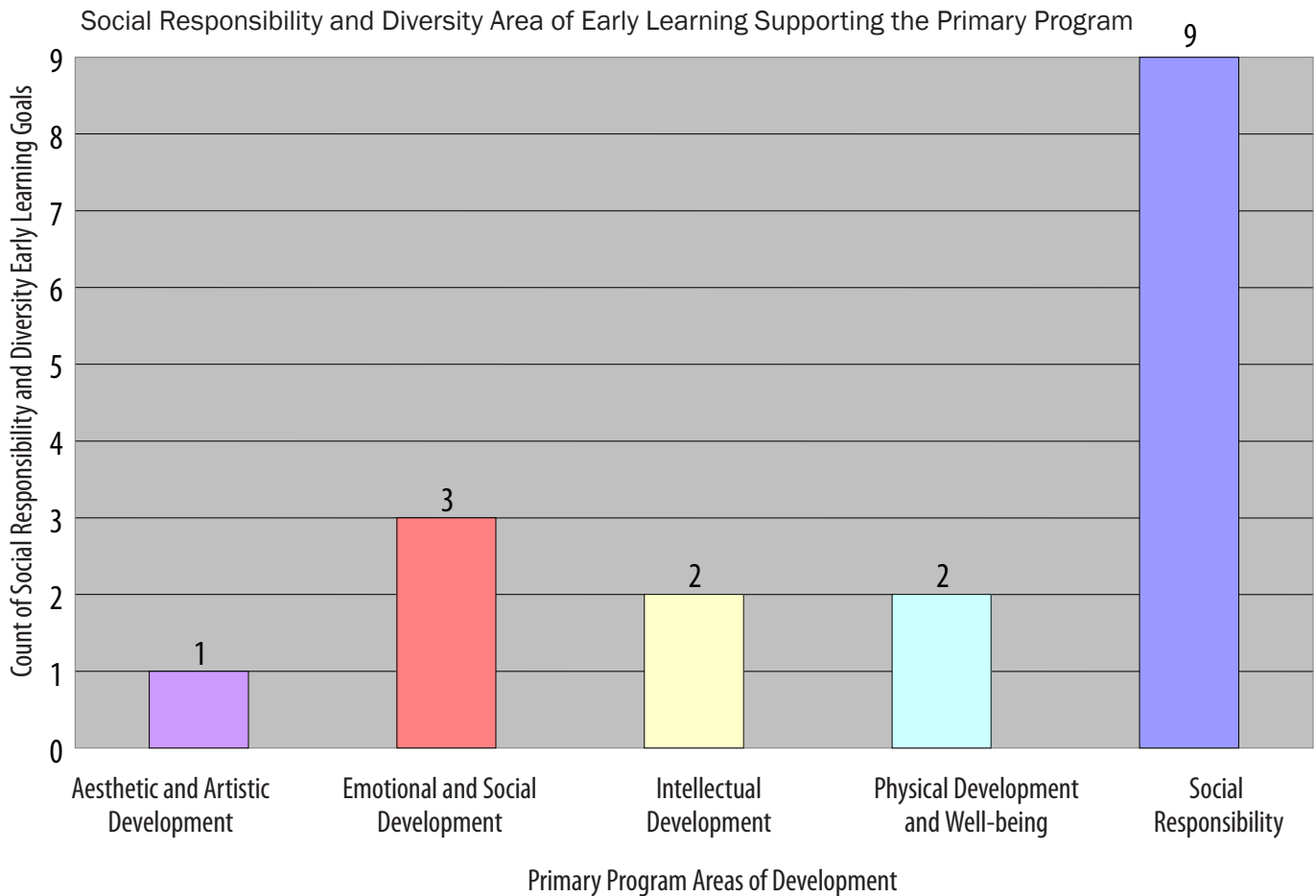


Table 2.4 – Social Responsibility and Diversity Area of Early Learning Supporting the Primary Program Framework

British Columbia Early Learning Framework Area of Learning Social Responsibility and Diversity	Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching				
	Aesthetic and Artistic Development	Emotional and Social Development	Intellectual Development	Physical Development and Well-being	Social Responsibility
Explore and learn about family, community and the wider world.	✓		✓		✓
Express a positive regard for others and respect for self, others, and property.		✓		✓	✓
Participate in the making, following, and re-working of rules, rituals, and procedures in their everyday world.					✓
Understand fairness both for themselves and others.		✓			✓
Begin to recognize discrimination and inequity and to respond appropriately.					✓
Learn to appreciate and celebrate diversity.					✓
Understand that all persons have value; accept and welcome individual differences.					✓

British Columbia Early Learning Framework Area of Learning Social Responsibility and Diversity continued...	<i>Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching</i>				
	Aesthetic and Artistic Development	Emotional and Social Development	Intellectual Development	Physical Development and Well-being	Social Responsibility
Understand how their own actions may affect nature and the planet.			✓		✓
Show responsibility for themselves and begin to show responsibility for others.		✓		✓	✓



Summary

This resource demonstrates how the guiding documents, the British Columbia Early Learning Framework and the Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching, are aligned. The tables demonstrate that the early learning goals support all areas of development identified in the Primary Program Framework.

The Primary Program Framework articulates the particular importance of human and social development during the early years of school as the basis for intellectual development. It also appreciates the importance of play in young children's learning and welcomes children's diverse learning styles and their individuality in mastering skills through learning experiences. This emphasis on diverse play opportunities to support all areas of development is echoed in the British Columbia Early Learning Framework. Children who have had rich early learning experiences in the areas of learning outlined in the British Columbia Early Learning Framework are likely to enter Kindergarten ready to succeed as their learning will continue in similar and comparable domains.

This document can be used to create a space for dialogue and it supports partnerships between early years practitioners and Primary educators. Collaboration between the sectors benefits children and increases their chances to reach their potential and life-long success. Given the specialized knowledge, skills, training, and experience of early childhood educators and Kindergarten teachers, such partnerships have the potential to ensure that children develop optimally and make smooth transitions to the primary years.