

Preschool Programs

Play-based Curriculum



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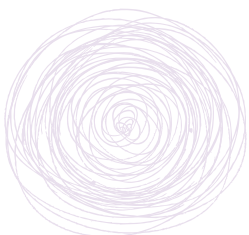
The purpose of this document is to provide preschool instructors, parents and other invested groups with a play-based curriculum for children ages 6 months to 6 years. The curriculum is a guideline to allow preschool instructors to design learning environments that will support children's play experience and enhance overall learning.

Mission

Our mission is to encourage play, healthy lifestyles, and nurture a generation of creative and global youth. With an abundance of experiences that promote children's intellectual, emotional, physical and social development they will attain the necessary skills to thrive.

Children's Play and Recreation

Research shows the nature of children's play has intrinsic value for the development of the whole child, suggesting that the absence of play is an obstacle to the development of healthy and creative individuals.



*"And so we discovered that the education
is not something which the teacher does,
but that is a natural process which develops
spontaneously in the human being"*

Maria Montessori

Five Areas of Measurable Developmental Domains

Play is necessary for mastering all five areas of development

- **Emotional maturity:** Children learn to cope with feelings of separation from parents/guardians. They are not fearful, yet not too impulsive. They are able to focus.
- **Social development:** Children get along with other children, follow rules, instructions, routines and accept responsibility for actions and show respect for others.
- **Language and thinking skills:** Children show an interest in reading, writing and language related activities. They recognize shapes, sizes and colors and can easily remember things.
- **Communication skills and general knowledge:** The ability to communicate needs and wants in a socially appropriate way, tell stories, sing songs and say words clearly. Age appropriate knowledge about life and the world. Children are able to take part in imaginary play.
- **Physical health and wellbeing:** Fine and gross motor skills develop such as holding a brush or crayon and climbing stairs. They demonstrate independence. For example they are able to go the bathroom independently and sustain energy levels for the duration of the program.

Strategies and Reflection

Strategies for supporting children's learning and development in preschool programs rely on the lead instructor of the program. All children who participate in the program contribute their own unique range of abilities, cultural background and individual personality. The goals and objectives outlined in the play-based curriculum are intended to unify and provide consistency, but the actual activities in each program will – and should – appear to differ. It is only through careful reflection and program planning for the children that these strategies are intended.

Emotional Maturity

- Comfortable expressing emotions and /or frustrations to instructor
- Able to respond positively to educators' attempts to explore reasons for discomfort or frustration
- Demonstrates increased capacity in developing friendships with other children
- comfort other children
- Freely explores and moves about in the environment
- Engages in negotiation and conflict resolution with other children
- Calculates and considers risks in their play and movement, e.g., determine if they are ready to go down the slide, climb a tree, or able to pour some juice

Instructors support this learning when they :

Relate to all children with a sense of respect, fairness and warmth

- Acknowledge children's feeling by giving language to the children's expression. This allows the instructors to demonstrate that language can describe feelings, and allows the children to know their feelings are understood
- Observe children to understand behavioral cues, in order to respond appropriately to their needs
- Ensure that the learning environment is carefully planned encouraging children's exploration
- Facilitate discussions with children to explore alternative expressions of emotions
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Social Development

- Can describe what the role of a fire fighter, police office , or doctor is
- Demonstrates understanding of when it is appropriate to seek help , e.g., another child is hurt
- Recognizes their own space and belongings, and show respect for the space/belongings of others
- Describes themselves within the context of their families, e.g., I have a baby sister
- Shares a song or story they have heard
- Is beginning to learn and appreciate the individual personality of others
- Predict and explain behavioral responses in stories; e.g., “why was he afraid?”
- Is beginning to demonstrate development of “theory of mind”, indicating the child can predict how others might think in a particular situation

Instructors support this learning when they :

Create an atmosphere of trust and security

- Give positive feedback to children who alert adults to a problem situation
- Speak directly to children by bending or crouching down
- Provide adequate play spaces for children where they can roll play and have opportunities to express who they are
- Provide a learning environment that allows children to make choices about their activities
- Model a sense of personality by frequently stating likes and dislikes, e.g., “my favorite color is blue”; “I like to play in the snow”, thereby encouraging children to think about their own likes and dislikes
- Provide a learning environment to support opportunities for children to develop “theory of mind” where prediction of how others might think or feel can happen
- Use music for fun learning, or transitioning





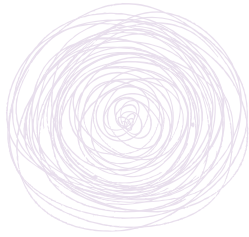
Language and Thinking Skills

- Pretends to write to convey messages – writing an order on a note pad while playing waitress in a restaurant
- Pretends to read a story
- Able to re-tell a sequence of events
- Shares a familiar song or joins in when listening to familiar music
- Listens tentatively to stories either narrated or print
- Able to name familiar letters – of one's own name or "Mom"
- Produces three dimensional art
- Appreciates that symbols are used throughout the community. Identifies stop signs, red light, green light etc.
- Is becoming competent at identifying the names and phonetic sounds of the letters of the alphabet
- Able to identify and think of words that rhyme

Instructors support this learning when they :

- Incorporate the use of signs and symbols throughout the learning environment
- Help children differentiate between the names of letters and the sounds of letters
- Provide children with opportunities for both pretend writing and for reproducing the symbols of letters and numbers
- Integrate art, singing and rhyming
- Introduce patterning
- Honor children's efforts by displaying their art work
- Plan for activities that will group children - so they will learn from each other

*"Children learn through
repeated experience in
ordinary moments"*
Anonymous



Communication Skills and General Knowledge

- Is able to transfer knowledge gained in one experience to an investigation in another activity
- Is sensitive to the changes in the outdoor environment, particularly with changes in the seasons
- Begins working collaboratively with peers as they explore their environment
- Expresses delight and satisfaction in their accomplishments and ideas
- Participates with other children in complex pretend/dramatic play situations, using negotiation and compromise

Instructors support this learning when they :

- Create an atmosphere that values new ideas and innovative ways to approach routines
- Use scaffolding and questioning techniques to prompt children to carry out new lines of investigation
- Facilitate group efforts to carry out extended projects
- Regularly introduce open ended materials that have a multitude of functions and encourages investigation
- Allow sufficient time for the activity, especially outdoors, to allow investigation and exploration

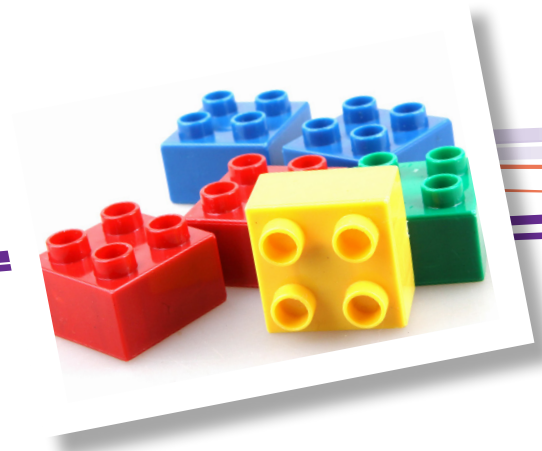


Physical Health and Well-being

- Independent toileting practices, and understands principals of hygiene
- Increasing ability to demonstrate strong kinesthetic skills (running, jumping, skipping, hopping)
- Gain increased control using a crayon
- Demonstrates interpretive movement such as moving their bodies like the wind, or a fish
- Demonstrates a refined pincer grasp

Instructors support this learning when they :

- Organize space in simple ways to allow children to keep track of their personal belonging
- Provide opportunities to promote the children's fine and gross motor abilities
- Arrange the environment allowing for choices and ample time to move from one activity to another
- Encourage children who may be timid and help adventurous children to assess risks
- Plan opportunities for physical literacy, based on the theory and learning from NCCP and High Five training



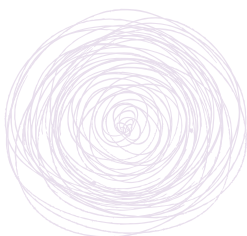


Evidence of Learning – Documentation and Assessment

Instructors will develop their own techniques for recording observations. These may include but, are not limited to, writing notes of anecdotal stories of events, collecting samples of children's art in a portfolio or display, and using digital cameras for photos.

Portfolios are one of the more effective tools for presenting children's learning and development and can be created at the start of the session. They may then be presented to the parents at the end of the session.

Instructors may be able to invite parents to join the classroom for the last 15 minutes of the program on a designated day to participate in a child lead interview. This would allow parents the opportunity to see what each of the play centers looks like while the child shares their own experience. Signage may be displayed to indicate what the potential areas of learning and growth are for each of the play centers.



*"Children learn the tools of their culture, including literacy and numeracy, through interactions with the environment and each other."
Early Years Study 2, Putting Science Into Action (2007)*



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