



Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning

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Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning

There is no magic formula for actively supporting children's learning and development. However, good teachers know that development and learning are impacted by children's motivation and approaches to learning. They must use a multitude of tools to get the job done and be able to select what will be the most effective tool at any time based on the children's needs, the learning goals, and the specific situation. Consider the following as you begin to plan ways you can enhance the learning in your classroom.



Plan the Environment

- Invite exploration and investigation that will sustain a child's interest and engagement by providing a rich variety of materials and meaningful experiences that challenge and stimulate.
- Provide children with opportunities to make choices, and engage in child-choice activities. Give support to those children who are not yet able to make choices during activity periods.
- Organize the daily schedule to include extended blocks of time in which children can engage in sustained play. See the sample schedules attached to this section of the packet.
- Provide clearly defined learning areas for large group and movement activities, small group work, and places where children can work independently.
- Provide areas for both active and quiet learning experiences.
- Ensure the children and teachers have easy access to each other and an obstructed view.

For additional ideas, visit the Environments website and look under the Environments Resources tab for interactive room plans, printable pictures for organizing and creating your personalized classroom schedule and other hints and tips for teaching to enhance learning.

<http://www.environments.com>



Use both child-initiated and teacher-directed instruction.

As the stakes get higher and more teachers are feeling pressures to achieve more in the classroom, it is important to remember that both teacher-directed instruction as well as child-initiated learning has a place in the early childhood classroom.

While children learn, explore and construct meaning through play, some things require explicit teaching. If you want the children to learn how to use the equipment on the playground safely, some of those rules must be taught directly by the teacher. The teaching of the alphabet is another skill that needs to be taught directly. Children can't discover the names of the letters themselves, someone must teach them. Early learning standards can be introduced by a teacher during whole group or small group instruction and then through intentional planning they can be practiced in child-initiated play. That is play that allows children to choose the activity, if they will engage with others or work alone, and how they will use the materials provided for them.

Child-initiated play is not a matter of chance. When teachers are intentional about setting up specific play situations which incorporate the standards, or ask questions which extend the children's thinking, and infuse the learning standards into the child's play instead of interrupting the play to have a directed lesson, teachers will see children taking those academic standards to a higher level of thinking than if those skills were only taught directly.



Scaffolding learning

What a child can do today with assistance, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow. - Lev Vygotsky

When teachers scaffold learning they provide students with the least amount of support necessary to do something they cannot quite achieve on their own. Developmentally appropriate goals are both challenging and achievable. The most effective learning experiences build on what children already know and can do, but also stretch them toward a new skill. Unfortunately that stretching can often frustrate a child and lead to feelings of being rushed or pressured instead of feeling capable and successful.

Giving children plenty of opportunities to practice new skills to achieve mastery while providing appropriate support through scaffolding can accomplish the balance between feeling success and being frustrated. As a child practices the new

skill and becomes more competent, the level of support should be reduced and eventually stopped enabling the child to be independent.

Scaffolding can take on a variety of forms including, but not limited to:

- Asking questions
- Providing hints and clues
- Providing verbal or visual prompts
- Modeling
- Adapting the activity or materials
- Providing physical assistance

Peers can provide scaffolding, but it is the teacher who sees the need and directs it, ensuring each child in her classroom will experience success.



Use a variety of formats:

Every learning format, large group, small group, play/learning centers, and routines-based has its own function and value. Teachers should choose the format that is best suited to help a child achieve the desired goal given their age and developmental level. A combination of the formats gives children the opportunity to learn new skills in a large or small group format and then children practice those skills in play based centers and routines.

- **Large groups** involve the whole class and are used for teaching specific information and helping students learn to function as a part of a community. Appropriate attention must be given to the length of the large group to ensure the students remain actively engaged, have the opportunity to practice skills, and do not lose interest.
- **Small groups** involve either a group of 3-5 students gathered by the teacher to work on specific skills or a group that was self selected by the children in a given area that the teacher chooses to join in order to enhance the learning in that area. Small group time is for focused experiences that may teach a child a new skill or application of a concept already introduced.
- **Play/Learning Centers** are intentionally developed centers with materials that support educational outcomes and allow children to further their learning at their own pace and in a variety of ways. The role of the teacher is to be the guide on the side: interacting frequently with the students to provide feedback, ask questions, or pose problems. Doing this facilitates the high level, complex play that is vital to children's development.

Common play/learning centers include:

- Blocks
 - Dramatic Play
 - Art
 - Library
 - Science
 - Computers
 - Writing
 - Math
- **Routines** Arrival, departure, cleanup, hand washing, snacks and transitions provide many opportunities for learning throughout the day. Many of the skills taught during these times are functional, practical and meaningful.

Examples of Daily Schedules with Formats and Learning Outcomes

Sample Schedule: Preprimary (A)			
Time	Activity/Description	Type	Purpose
8:30	Arrival – Greeting and personal sharing with the teacher as children enter the room	Routine	Relationship building
8:40	Group Time for literacy, math, and/or social skills	Large group, teacher directed	Cognitive development and increased memory and attention
9:00	Child Choice/Center Learning	Child- Initiated Choice *May include small group activities and/or individualized instruction	Provide opportunities for individual children to explore concepts in depth and develop skills in an integrated manner
10:00	Clean-up/bathroom	Routine	Prepare for snack time
10:05	Snack	Large Group	Social/Communication Skills
10:20	Outdoor or gym	Child -Initiated choice	Large motor development, play skills
10:50	Review of the day/ Class meeting	Large group	Personal sharing, recall of the day, closure
11:00	Depart		

Sample Schedule: Preprimary (B)			
Time	Activity/Description	Type	Purpose
8:30	Arrival – Greeting and personal sharing with the teacher as children enter the room	Routine	Relationship Building
8:40	Group Time for literacy, math, and/or social skills	Large group, teacher directed	Cognitive development and increased memory and attention
9:00	Child Choice/Center Learning *Include snack as a learning center activity. Children are free to eat snack at any time	Child Initiated Choice	Provide opportunities for individual children to explore concepts in depth and develop skills in an integrated manner
10:00	Clean-up	Routine	Prepare for next activity
10:05	Small Groups	Small Groups	Individualized instruction
10:20	Outdoor or gym	Child -initiated	Large motor development, play skills
10:50	Review of the day/Class Meeting	Large group	Personal sharing, recall of the day, closure
11:00	Depart		

Adapted from Kostelnik, M. J., Soderman, A. K., & Whiren, A. P. (2004). *Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum Best Practiced in Early Childhood Education* (Third ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Sample Schedule: Kindergarten (Full Day)			
Time	Activity/Description	Type	Purpose
8:30	Arrival – Children enter the room, greeting and personal sharing with the teacher, lunch count, attendance, children choose from a variety of manipulative activities.	Routine	Build relationships and ease transition from school to home.
8:50	Story and group time for literacy	Large group, teacher directed	Literacy development and increased memory and attention
9:15	Child Choice/Center Learning	Child- Initiated Choice *May include small group activities and/or individualized instruction	Provide opportunities for individual children to explore concepts in depth and develop skills in an integrated manner
10:25	Clean-up/bathroom	Routine	Prepare for the next activity
10:30	Music and Movement	Large group- balance of teacher directed and child-initiated	Motor, social and cognitive development, appreciation of the arts
11:00	Class Meeting	Large group- balance of teacher directed and child-initiated	Building social skills, problem solving and creating atmosphere of caring and respect
11:30	Lunch/Recess	Routine	Socialization, motor skill development
12:30	Independent Quiet Time- children may choose to look at books, journal or participate in other quiet and restful activities	Individual	Writing, literacy, and self -awareness.
1:00	Math	Large group – teacher directed	Direct instruction of math skills
1:20	Manipulative-based math experiences	Small Group- child initiated	Exploration and extension of math skills
1:50	Clean-Up/Rest Room	Routine	Prepare for next activity
2:00	Gym or Music	Large group	Motor skills and arts appreciation
2:30	Recess	Child initiated	Large motor and social skills
2:45	Review of the day/ Class meeting	Large group- balance of teacher and child directed	Personal sharing, recall of the day, closure
3:00	Depart		

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Sample Schedule: Kindergarten (Half Day)			
Time	Activity/Description	Type	Purpose
8:30	Arrival – Greeting and personal sharing with the teacher as children enter the room	Routine	Relationship Building
8:40	Group Time for literacy, math, and/or social skills	Large group, teacher directed	Cognitive development and increased memory and attention
9:05	Child Choice/Center Learning	Child- Initiated Choice *May include small group activities and/or individualized instruction	Provide opportunities for individual children to explore concepts in depth and develop skills in an integrated manner
10:05	Clean-up/bathroom	Routine	Prepare for the next activity
10:10	Outdoor or gym	Child -Initiated choice	Large motor development, play skills
10:30	Review of the day/ Class meeting	Large group	Personal sharing, recall of the day, closure
11:00	Depart		

Adapted from Kostelnik, M. J., Soderman, A. K., & Whiren, A. P. (2004). *Developmentally appropriate curriculum best practices in early childhood education* (Third ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.



Learning Center Checklist

Mark those items that currently apply to your learning centers:

- Children are able to plan and choose which center they want to go to and know the expectations for moving to a new center
- Activities can be done independently or scaffolding is provided
- Activities offered are open ended
- All materials are readily available, organized and labeled
- Activities address a wide range skill levels and multiple learning styles
- Theme activities are incorporated
- Activities were planned to support the program outcomes
- For stability, I have a few routine centers that vary in content but are basically the same procedures and materials in addition to new and innovative centers
- I have a recording system in place
- I review expectations for each center are reviewed on a regular basis
- I interact with my students during learning center time

Reflect on the items above that are not checked and choose one to incorporate into your learning centers this month.

Suggestions for Center Materials and Supplies



Blocks

- Hardwood Unit Blocks
- Hollow Blocks
- Legos
- People Props (small multi-ethnic figures)
- Animal Props (farm, zoo, pets)
- Road Signs
- Small Cars, and other vehicles
- Wooden train set
- Books related to construction
- Paper, markers and scissors writing utensils to label or document structures
- Old blueprints
- Boxes
- Maps

Dramatic Play

- Dress up clothes for men and women
- Accessories – purses, briefcases jewelry, shoes
- Pots, pans, dishes and other kitchen equipment relevant to a variety of cultures
- Dolls representing different ethnicities
- Doll clothes and blankets
- Child-size broom and mop
- Telephones
- Plastic food and empty food boxes relevant to a variety of cultures
- Calendars, memo pads, phone books, address books, cookbooks
- Message board
- Pencils and paper
- Home-like touches such as tablecloths, rugs, etc.
- Specific props to turn “housekeeping” into another play area such as a super market, post office, office, bakery, or airport

Math

- Counters- purchased or items such as buttons or bottle caps
- Dominoes
- Pattern Blocks
- Unifix Cubes or colored links for patterning and informal measurement
- Geoboards
- Magnetic numbers
- Beads for stringing
- Number stamps

Art

- Assorted papers for drawing and painting
- Crayons, pencils, markers
- Child-sized scissors
- Assorted Paint and paint brushes
- Play dough with cookie cutters and rolling pins
- Collage materials- feathers, sequins, etc.
- Washable ink stamp pads and stamps
- Glue, glue sticks, tape

Library/Literacy

- Fiction and non-fiction books
- Big Books
- CD Player and headsets for audio books
- Puppets, props for story retell
- Writing
- Comfortable place to sit and read
- Magnetic letters
- Literacy games such as lotto, rhyme and initial consonant match

Writing

- Variety of paper
- Pencils, Markers, Pens, crayons
- Environmental Print
- Name cards
- Alphabet
- Letter stamps
- Small dry erase boards

Science/Discovery

- Animals and food
- Balance Scales
- Magnifying lens
- Eyedropper
- Tweezers
- Items and containers for sorting and classifying
- Seeds/plants for growing and observing
- Magnets and assorted objects
- A collection of shells, leaves, rocks, etc.
- Paper and writing tools
- Book related to displays
- Sand/Water Table and accessories (sifters, shovels, funnels, measuring cups, eye droppers, etc.)
- Simple Machines- pulleys, gears, inclined plane
- Color Prisms

Music and Movement

- CD player
- Children’s songs on CD
- Streamers/Scarves
- Rhythm Instruments
- Cooking
- Assorted plastic bowls, measuring cups and spoons
- Assorted utensils (whisk, potato masher, cookie cutters, can opener, grater, etc.)
- Cake pans and sauce pans
- Recipes
- Computers
- Computer
- Printer
- Software/Websites that are accessible to students
- Paper for printing
- Digital Camera

Board Games and Puzzles

Center Lesson Plans for Oc. 13-17 (Sample)

Reading	Writing	Math
Standard: CL 3.4 Pre 4.1 Points to words in a book or runs finger along text from top to bottom while pretending to read.	Standard: CL4.3 Pre 4.1 Writes some recognizable letters.	Standard: MK 3.2 Pre 3.1 Identifies basic shapes in the environment
Activity: Books about firefighters in the book corner.	Activity: Write a thank-you letter to the firemen for letting us visit the fire station, include a picture of the favorite thing you saw.	Activity: Roam the room with precut shapes and tape them to the items that are that shape in the room.
Science	Art	Sand/Water
Standard: SCI 1 Pre 4 1 Tests Predictions using experiments	Standard: FA 1 3 T1 Explores a variety of art media PHD2 Pre4 2 Grasps scissors with thumb on top	Standard: MK 2.1P re4 1 Uses materials to extend patterns SS1 Pre 3.1 Trades or exchanges objects with others
Activity: Predict which items may be damaged by water and which items will not (sugar cubes, paper, tissue, plastic, wood, metal) and check your predictions	Activity: Plan and create a fire truck as a group using boxes, paint, construction paper, tape, glue and other materials requested by the group.	Activity: Use cookie cutters to create an AB pattern in the sand.
Blocks	Dramatic Play	Other
Standard: SE 5.1 Pre 3 1Engages in Constructive Play, MK 1.1 Pre 4 1 demonstrates last number spoken represents set	Standard: SE 5.1 Pre4 1 Engages in Dramatic Play CL 4 1 Pre4 1, Recognizes that print represents spoken words	Standard: ATL 1.1 Pre 4 1 Persists when trying to complete a task after many attempts have failed.
Activity: Build a community for the firefighters to protect discuss how many houses you will build and how many blocks you will use for the various buildings.	Activity: Set up a fire station, complete with dispatchers to write down directions to the homes and the problem the firefighters are going to fix.	Activity: Floor Puzzle of fire truck.

Guide to locating standards: All standards contained in this document come from the Kansas Early Learning Document found at <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3321> .

The first letters represent the developmental/content area (PHD= Physical Health and Development, SE= Social-Emotional Development, CL= Communication and Literacy, ATL= Approaches to Learning, SCI= Science, MK=Mathematical Knowledge, SS= Social Studies, FA= Fine Arts), the first number represents the standard, the number following the decimal is the benchmark number, and the last letter and number combination is the indicator level.

For example SE 5.1 Pre 3.1 would be Social Emotional standard 5, benchmark 1 at the Pre4 1 indicator level.

Center Lesson Planning Sheet for _____

Reading	Writing	Math
Standard:	Standard:	Standard:
Activity	Activity	Activity
Science	Art	Sand/Water
Standard:	Standard:	Standard:
Activity	Activity	Activity
Blocks	Dramatic Play	Other
Standard:	Standard:	Standard:
Activity	Activity	Activity