

# *Bloomington School District*

## **PREKINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM GUIDE**

Frank Buglione  
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Kristine Dudlo, Supervisor  
Curriculum

Cheryl Mallen, Principal  
Martha B. Day

Sherri Glaab, Principal  
Samuel R. Donald

Frank Verducci, Principal  
Walter T. Bergen

Developed in consultation with Drinda Casper, Prekindergarten Teacher

Adopted: March 19, 2013

## INTRODUCTION

The prekindergarten program is a developmentally-based instructional program where the philosophy is one which supports the belief that children develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically in direct relationship to their experiences. The learnings that children will acquire will be enhanced when the learnings are integrated into a variety of experiences within the social, motor and cognitive domains. This developmentally-based instructional program will be implemented for children with special needs as well as with a general education prekindergarten population.

The main goal of the prekindergarten is to develop readiness and create a foundation for formal learning. It is the responsibility of this program to prepare children for spiraling instruction which addresses the Core Curriculum Content Standards. This instruction will continue through the grades and culminate in the 12th grade.

In order to provide a well-rounded readiness program and promote increasing levels of language competency, the experiences and activities will include: active learning, experiencing and representing, classification, number, spatial relations, time, technology, science, safety, and personal care/self-care/health.

The prekindergarten classroom is student-centered. The focus of classroom instruction must be on uncovering the individual student's needs and interests and creating an environment that provides for those needs and experiences. Regardless of the number of children in a class, whether it be ten or twenty, the class is still made up of children who require individual attention. Although individual needs exist, they can be accommodated through individual as well as group activities and group interaction.

A developmentally-based instructional program is one in which the opportunity for experiences must be planned as a part of the daily routine. It is important to establish a specific routine for the class in order for the children to experience the concept of order which is needed to help establish understanding of time. Children need to live through activities that have a beginning, middle, and an end. Established routines are vital also to child's need for security. Children experience a sense of security when they can rely on one kind of activity following another kind. Because young children may have difficulty accepting change in their lives, it is important that a routine of specific activities during the day and within the week is established. Along with security, it is important that students have a healthy dependency before they become independent.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Prekindergarten Program is based upon a belief in the philosophy of a developmentally valid education. It is our belief that human beings develop capacities in predictable sequences throughout their life span. It is our expectation that instruction will balance accommodations of individual differences in development with opportunities for learning about being a member of a group. Knowing that these stages are predictable, our philosophy of prekindergarten also believes in providing an environment that is rich in exploration and experiences through which the learner's potential will be developed as well as challenged. Finally, there is a respect for the uniqueness of every individual and an understanding of how each child reaches readiness at his/her own pace.

## **PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM GOALS**

The child will:

- develop a positive sense of him/herself.
- learn to be part of a group.
- demonstrate curiosity about the surrounding world.
- demonstration responsibility and independence at the appropriate developmental level.
- become independently creative.
- gain cognitive skills appropriate to their own developmental level.
- acquire increasing levels of language competency.
- be able to acquire proficiency in the coordination and performance of gross and fine motor skills.
- be able to make choices and solve problems.
- be able to gain understanding about other children.

## EVALUATION

Assessment is an on-going activity in the prekindergarten classroom. While there are no formal grades in prekindergarten, the teacher is expected to be a diligent observer of student behavior. Through this observation one can assess the nature and quality of the experiences in which children are engaged.

It is expected that the teacher use assessment as a diagnostic tool to identify what kinds of experiences children need. Administrators and supervisors need information on student achievement to plan for curriculum change, program change, and for the improvement of instruction. Teachers need to use evaluation or assessment as a way of communicating success, of identifying behavior, and of providing a factual basis for future individualized planning. Any formal evaluation devices should be appropriate to the developmental level of the prekindergarten child. The district developed, formal evaluation tool found in the appendix, is developmentally appropriate for the prekindergarten child.

## PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

### I. ACTIVE LEARNING

#### A. *Key Experience: Exploring Actively With All Senses*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- learn what an object is like by experimenting with it
- experience an object exploring it
- discover how materials (things) sound, smell, feel, taste, and what can be done with them
- get materials, do things for themselves (e.g., open bottles), put materials away, and clean up an area
- explore objects outside the classroom

#### B. *Key Experience: Discovering Relations Through Direct Experience*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- experiment with objects to discover their relations, e.g., measuring, putting things together, putting one thing into another, stacking objects, etc.
- discover relations like big/little, over/under, heavy/light, inside/outside, faster/slower, etc.

#### C. *Key Experience: Manipulating, Transforming, and Combining Materials*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- explore ways materials can be combined, altered, and used
- manipulative, transform, and combine materials through activities like sand play, art activities, etc.
- make choices when using materials

#### D. *Key Experience: Choosing Materials, Activities, Purposes*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- make choices and structure his/her time
- decide where and with what he/she will work as well as what will be done
- understand time through a consistent routine
- understand a daily schedule using objects, photographs, pictures, and/or names of the times of the day

- make choices and structure time working with well defined work areas

E. *Key Experience: Acquiring Skills With Tools and Equipment*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- work with simple tools and equipment such as wheel toys, egg beaters, staplers, in a construction area
- engage in problem solving
- experience cause/effect relationships
- develop coordination of small-motor and large-motor actions
- demonstrate the ability to paint, mix, glue, staple, tape, cut, string, pour, hammer, etc.

F. *Key Experience: Using The Large Muscles*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- engage in active learning with the whole body
- run, climb, throw, balance, push, pull, etc.
- participate in structured activities (e.g., dances) as well as to initiate activities using play equipment

G. *Key Experience: Taking Care of One's Own Need*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- get into and out of coats, hats, mittens, etc.
- demonstrate the ability to perform the tasks associated with meal or snack time
- perform the tasks associated with art activities, e.g., mix paints, cut, paste, tape, etc.

## II. LANGUAGE

A. *Key Experience: Talking with Other Children and Adults About Personally Meaningful Experiences*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- talk freely with other children during the planning time, work time, and recall or review time
- listen to other children during the planning time, work time, and recall or review time
- interact positively and cooperatively with others
- interact verbally with others during role playing

- interpret the talk of other children
- demonstrate an understanding that others want to express themselves

*B. Key Experience: Describing Objects, Events, and Relations*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- name and talk about things or experiences
- respond to questions
- use descriptive language
- hear descriptive language in oral reading

*C. Key Experience: Expressing Feelings in Words*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- speak freely about what he/she is doing, observing, or feeling
- know the limitations and rules for expressing oneself in a secure environment
- raise questions and receive responses to questions
- express verbally anticipated problems
- use language to solve problems of conflict
- talk about the feelings of others

*D. Key Experience: Having One's Own Spoken Language Written Down and Read Back*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- verbalize ideas, feelings, or stories about one's drawings
- verbalize in many activities and for a variety of purposes

*E. Key Experience: Having Fun With Language*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- look at and handle books daily
- listen to tales, other traditional stories, big books, and fictional and non-fictional trade books
- listen to verses
- make up chants and rhymes to a rhythm
- create stories and songs
- track horizontally from left to right
- retell a story using picture clues
- respond to a story using contextual clues such as repetitive language

### III. EXPERIENCING AND REPRESENTING

#### A. *Key Experience: Recognizing Objects by Sound, Touch, Taste and Smell*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- identify objects by touch
- identify objects by their odor
- identify objects by taste
- identify familiar sounds
- identify an object when only one part of the object is visible
- identify objects by their imprints
- make shadows

#### B. *Key Experience: Imitating Actions and Sounds*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- add imitating sounds to their play or work time (e.g., ringing of a bell, etc.)
- recall work time and imitate actions performed by themselves or others
- imitate actions of stories during small-group reading time
- imitate familiar sequence of actions in songs (e.g., “This is the way we wash our clothes,” etc.)
- imitate actions in games (e.g., “Everybody do this,” etc.)
- imitate actions and sounds of things experienced on a field trip

#### C. *Key Experience: Relating Models, Photographs, and Pictures to Real Places and Things*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- compare objects like dolls, toy cars, etc., to the real things they represent
- compare photographs of themselves and others to the real people and objects
- interpret picture books
- cut and paste pictures that match similar objects, people, and action within the classroom

D. *Key Experience: Role Playing*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- play at pretending to be someone else
- use props and accessories(costumes) when role playing
- engage in role playing with other children or adults
- participate in circle time activities in which the group will roll play the actions of others, (e.g., “This is the way we wash our clothes”, etc.)

E. *Key Experience: Making Models Out of Clay, Blocks, etc.*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- represent models of people and objects with three dimensional objects (e.g., blocks, clay, boxes, etc.)
- develop motor skills (e.g., cutting, pasting, hammering, etc.)
- talk at planning time about the model to be made
- talk to others about the model being made

F. *Key Experience: Drawing and Painting*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- represent what he/she has done or seen by drawing and painting
- follow the procedures for getting ready to paint, by mixing paints, getting paper, etc.
- trace objects
- talk about what he/she draws or paints

G. *Key Experience: Observing That Spoken Words Can be Written Down and Read Back*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- dictate stories about experiences, people, things that are made, etc.
- have dictation read back aloud and make changes if desired
- participate in a group dictation
- tell stories while reading picture books
- making original books with self-made illustrations and dictated stories
- recognize his/her own written name

#### IV. CLASSIFICATION

A. *Key Experience: Investigating and Describing the Attributes of Things*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- given the opportunity to explore and to investigate objects
- talk freely asking and answering questions about their ideas and discoveries
  
- collect, investigate and describe natural objects, e.g., leaves, grass, stones, pine cones, trees, animals, sidewalks, etc.
- have their descriptive “stories” written and read back by the teacher
- be encouraged to explore and use objects in a variety of ways

B. *Key Experience: Noticing and Describing How Things Are the Same and How They Are Different: Sorting and Matching*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- sort by making groups of things that are exactly alike
- be encouraged to describe how objects are the same and how they are different
- be provided with sets of identical and similar materials
- sort like objects and match objects to labels, e.g., pictures, photos, objects
- notice and describe how things are the same and how they are different

C. *Key Experience: Using and Describing Objects In Different Ways*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- be encouraged to change their approach to sorting and arranging materials
- be encouraged to say several things about the same object
- be encouraged to sort objects and then re-sort the same objects into different groups

D. *Key Experience: Talking About the Characteristics Something Does Not*

*Possess or The Class It Does Not Belong To*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- be exposed to “not” statements in appropriate contexts by teacher
- be encourage to use “not” questions as they work with materials

*E. Key Experience: Holding More Than One Attribute In Mind At A Time*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- be exposed to hearing adults describe objects, situations, and events that are both one thing and another
- think about two things simultaneously, e.g., labeling storage places in terms of two attributes. Making comments and observations about objects in terms of two attributes. Asking questions that refer to more than one attribute of an object

*F. Key Experience: Distinguishing Between “Some” and “All”*

The child will be given the opportunity accomplish the following:

- be encourage to make distinction between “some” and “all” by:
  - a. storing similar materials together
  - b. using “some” and “all” in conversation with children
  - c. asking questions using “some” and “all”

**V. SERIATION**

*A. Key Experience: Making Comparison*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- make comparisons through the exploration of a wide variety of objects and materials
- use the following terms through feeling and observing various objects:
  - a. heavier/lighter
  - b. sharper/blunter
  - c. rougher/smoother
  - d. wetter/drier
  - e. harder/softer
  - f. bigger/smaller
  - g. thicker/thinner
  - h. fatter/skinnier
  - i. louder/softer
- respond to questions of comparison while exploring different materials and engaging different experiences
- play games that use terms like shorter, taller, etc.

- dictate comparisons when composing group or individual experience story

*B. Key Experience: Arranging Several Things in Order and Describing Their Relations*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- arrange materials of three or four sizes such as smallest to tallest blocks in the block area
- nest cups in a graduated stacking order
- place dolls or pots in size order
- discuss the order or placement of objects
- put toys away at clean-up time in order of size
- describe size relationships in stories such as “Three Bears”, “Three Billy Goats Gruff”, etc.
- dramatize size-related stories

*C. Key Experience: Fitting One Ordered Set of Objects To Another Through Trial and Error*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- manipulate various ordered sets of materials that go together
- fit rather than match sets of objects which are found in everyday play experiences
- fit ordered sets of objects together at clean-up time
- describe one’s own actions while actively fitting together ordered set
- learn to incorporate ordered sets in small group activities, e.g., finding lids that fit bowls after popcorn is made, etc.

**VI. NUMBER**

*A. Key Experience: Comparing Amounts*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- compare continuous materials such as water, sand, flour, and salt
- compare discontinuous materials such as beads, blocks, buttons

- answer the teacher's questions about amount and number as best as one can
- rearrange materials to make comparisons
- compare numbers and amounts which cannot be manipulated such as found in pictures, magazines, and books

*B. Key Experience: Arranging Two Sets of Objects in One-to-One Correspondence*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- arrange things in one-to-one correspondence that fit together such as peg and peg board, etc.
- converse with teacher in terms of one-to-one correspondence
- use one-to-one correspondence to extend an activity in which one is engaged
- pass out snacks, materials, etc., by giving the same number of things (napkin, cup, cookie) to each student
- participate in card games and other activities such as musical chairs involving one-to-one correspondence

*C. Key Experience: Counting Objects*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- count sets of interesting usable objects
- count objects as they are used, e.g., blocks, etc.
- assign one number to each object they count but not necessarily the correct number
- imitate the teacher's modeling to correct numerical order
- tally in keeping track of one's own activities, e.g., how many pages each has made in their own "color book", etc.

## **VII. SPATIAL RELATIONS**

*A. Key Experience: Fitting Things Together and Taking Them Apart*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- fit together and take apart various materials by experimenting and exploring, (e.g., fit shapes into shape sorter, fill and empty containers, put puzzle together, etc.)
- create one's own "toy", take it apart and put it back together

- demonstrate and talk about how materials fit together and come apart
- make functional discoveries, (e.g., that some things screw together, that each puzzle piece fits exactly into its own shape, that some things snap or slide together, etc.)

*B. Key Experience: Rearranging and Reshaping Objects*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- experiment with rearranging and reshaping various materials (e.g., large and small blocks, cubes, rubber bands, rubber animals, puzzles, tinker toys, playdough, etc.)
- reshape and rearrange on flat surfaces (floor, table), round surfaces (paper tubes, balls), and enclosed containers
- demonstrate and talk about “things” being arranged or reshaped (e.g., “First my playdough was fat, now I made it skinny.”)
- rearrange and reshape object in small group sessions

*C. Key Experience: Observing and Describing Things From Different Spatial Viewpoints*

The child will given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- learn from use of indoor and outdoor materials and equipment to look at things from different spatial viewpoints, (e.g., explore looking from top of the slide, looking at block building from all sides and positions, etc.)
- view things from a variety of spatial viewpoints
- describe what is seen and how things look
- draw or make a representation of objects seen from different spatial viewpoints

*D. Key Experience: Experiencing and Describing the Relative Positions, Directions, and Distances of Things.*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- explore various materials and equipment and begin to develop ability to use words which describe various positions of objects, (e.g., on, off, on top of, over above, under, below, beneath,

underneath, bottom, top, in front of, behind, in the middle of, between, beside, next to, and on the side of)

- actively participate in a variety of activities and begin to understand a body can have direction of movement (e.g., to, from, into, out of, toward, and away from)
- describe the direction in which something or someone is moving
- describe relative distance of objects, (e.g., close, far, near, next to, together, and apart)

*E. Key Experience: Experiencing and Representing One's Own Body*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- explore and use one's body in various ways (e.g., lifting, carrying, balancing, hammering, zipping, pounding, etc.)
- know how one's body is put together by observation and exploration of various materials and equipment (e.g., full length mirror, camera, life size body tracing on paper, shadow or silhouette drawing)
- name body parts by using body prints, body representations or participating in various "game" activities (e.g., head, shoulders, knees, and toes)
- recognize similarities and differences in physical appearance through observation
- make models or pictures of bodies during small group time

*F. Key Experience: Learning to Locate Things in the Classroom, School and Neighborhood*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- name and locate various areas of classroom (e.g., block area, kitchen area, quiet area, coat closet, etc.)
- name various materials found in different areas of the classroom
- become familiar with the immediate area surrounding the school by walking and exploring
- become aware of the community outside of the school and classroom through neighborhood and community field trips

*G. Key Experience: Interpreting Representations of Spatial Relations in Drawings, Pictures, and Photographs*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- interpret presentations of spatial relations in pictures on the basis of active experiences with things, people, and places
- observe and talk about various pictorial materials displayed in the classroom
- observe and talk about various photographs of one's self and others
- describe spatial relations in one's own picture or other's pictures
- compare people objects, or scenes in pictures or photos
- imitate spatial relationships seen in pictures of photos by using one's own body or various classroom materials

*H. Key Experience: Distinguish and Describe Shapes*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- assume various shapes with one's own body
- make one's own shape through the use of different materials (e.g., clay, playdough, paint, and training)
- distinguish different shapes found in the classroom (e.g., blocks, boxes, plates, beads, etc.)
- name various shapes, circle, square, rectangle, oval

**VIII. TIME**

*A. Key Experience: Stopping and Starting An Action On Signal*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- use a variety of materials and objects to signal the beginning and end of time periods (e.g., egg timers, sand timers, mechanical kitchen timers, clocks with alarms, metronomes, musical instruments, voices, hands, records, tape recorders, rattles, and shakers)
- know the beginning and ending of time periods that occur within the daily routine by a signal (e.g., verbal signals, lights on and off, from an instrument such as a tambourine)
- play stop and start games such as "Red Light, Green Light", "Musical Chairs", starting and stopping a record while they are marching or skipping
- complete an assigned task within a timed period (e.g., before a timer rings or before sand runs out of an hour glass), e.g., during "clean-up" time

*B. Key Experience: Experiencing and Describing Rates of Speed*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- experience different rates of speed such as with toys with wheels, toys with legs, things that spin, things that roll, etc.
- observe that their bodies have different rates of speed through the use of playground equipment, outdoor games, finger plays, marching and moving to music
- describe the speed of things they observe in and out of the classroom such as clouds, birds, the record player, air planes, etc.
- set the rate of speed for classroom activities such as walking to circle, playing instruments, etc.

*C. Key Experience: Experiencing and Comparing Time Intervals*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- compare the time intervals in each part of the daily routine such as playtime is longer than snack time, etc.
- understand the length of time periods as related to specific experiences, e.g., “After clean-up time, we go home.”
- use sand timers to indicate time periods
- talk about how long something has taken

*D. Key Experience: Observing Seasonal Changes*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- talk about seasonal changes as part of the daily routine
- observe, examine, and talk about objects that relate to the current season, e.g., leaves, acorns, icicles, pussy willows, etc.
- observe seasonal changes by taking walks to the same place or area throughout the year.

*E. Key Experience: Observing That Clocks and Calendars Are Used to Mark the Passage of Time*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- know that clocks and calendars are tools people use to mark off time intervals
- use an imaginary calendar to mark time until a special event or occasion

*F. Key Experience: Anticipating Future Events*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- anticipate future events verbally
- be prepared for time periods that are part of the daily routine
- respond to teacher's questions about preparations needed for an activity
- think of problems that may arise in carrying out an idea or activity
- talk about what is going to happen at the beginning of the activity period
- accept changes in the schedule that may disrupt the daily routine
- plan and make the necessary preparations for caring for a classroom pet

*G. Key Experience: Planning and Completing What One Has Planned*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- make a plan for him or herself
- carry out the plan

*H. Key Experience: Describing and Representing Past Events*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- recall actions and events
- describe past actions or events
- evaluate past actions or events

*I. Key Experience: Using Conventional Time Units When Talking About Past and Future Events*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- use language that distinguishes one time unit from another
- connect the right word with the right unit of time, e.g., “yesterday” referring to a past action

*J. Key Experience: Describing, and Representing the Order of Events*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- describe the sequence of steps in an activity or event
- tell the order of events that represent a casual relationship
- draw a picture or act out the order of an activity
- describe how a plant or animal changes and/or grows

- participate in a small group activity that must be done in a sequence, e.g., cooking popcorn, making Jello, making sandwiches, or applesauce, etc.

## **IX. TECHNOLOGY**

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- gain an understanding of the computer
- manipulate the mouse
- use computer programs to reinforce math concepts
- use computer programs to reinforce reading concepts

## **X. SCIENCE**

### *A. Key Experience: Light and Color*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- recognize a light source
- know light behaves in different ways when it strikes different objects
- be aware of different colors

### *B. Key Experience: Magnets*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- know that magnets stick to some things
- know that magnets can push or pull on other magnets
- know that magnets can be used to make some things move without being touched

## **XI. SAFETY**

### *A. Key Experience: Traffic*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- know when it is safe to walk and play
- listen and look for cars when they are near streets
- know what action to take when crossing streets
- know how to read a traffic light

### *B. Key Experience: Fire and Accident Prevention*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- know not to play near fire or with matches or any other fire producing thing
- know the proper action to take in case of fire and smoke
- know how accidents can be prevented in the home and at school
- know how to seek help when needed
- know the plan for escape in case of fire or other emergency at home and at school

*C. Key Experience: Personal Safety*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- know that rules are needed to protect everyone's safety
- know the poisons around the home which are a potential danger
- know safety procedures at play
- know what a stranger is
- know what precautions to take when approached by a stranger, etc.
- know reasons for informing a parent or someone in authority of any unusual or suspicious behavior manifested toward oneself or a friend

**XII. PERSONAL CARE – SELF-CARE – HEALTH**

*A. Key Experience: Personal Care*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- know why personal care is important
- know why cleanliness and grooming are important
- know what constitutes personal care

*B. Key Experience: Self-Care*

The child will be given the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- know habits of keeping oneself clean
- follow rules for keeping oneself clean
- know how to take care of and protect one's eyes, ears, etc.

- brush one's teeth

## **INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### The Opening Activity

The opening activity occurs at the very beginning of the day. This is the time to see that everyone is made to feel welcome and to make the transition from the security of the home to the security of the classroom. It is also the time when the children will learn about the things they will be able to do that day in order for them to be prepared to make choices. Although they have the opportunity to make choices for what they want to do, the teacher has the responsibility to plan for and limit options from which they can choose. The teacher has to coordinate the choices that will expand their experiences and will respond to their needs as assessed by the teacher.

The opening activity is also the time in which the teacher will introduce the learning theme for the day in order to provide motivation and to focus the children's attention on the theme. Children will need to hear at this time what opportunities they have that day related to the announced theme.

### Whole Group Time

Each day should provide time for the whole group to come together under the direction of the teacher. Many valuable experiences can be a part of whole-group time. For example, the children can be engaged in finger-lay, singing, and movement activities. Also, this is the opportunity for the teacher to focus the children's attention on the particular learning theme for the day. Finally, it is also another opportunity for closure where children can share with the whole group, recalling their experience of the day. This is especially important if children were engaged in activities that related to the day's theme.

The whole-group time is also the transition time between school and home. Children need to be prepared to go home. This not only includes clothing, projects, etc., to take home, but also attention to their life and activities at home. Separation can be difficult for many children, and as much care must be taken at the end of the day as is taken at the start of the day so children will learn that separation is neither good nor bad, but something that is natural in our lives.

### Active Play Time

Active play time is the time when children are involved in play that is the basis for their experiences, the building blocks of learning. It is the time for children to explain, experiment, question, solve, imagine, wonder, discover, and all of the other wonderful things that children experience through play.

Children should have available in the classroom certain play areas stocked with things that will facilitate their day. These learning centers may include the following:

block area	housekeeping/dramatic play area
quiet area/book area	store/puppet area
art/painting area	plant and animal area
sand/water area	work/construction area
nature/science area	clay/play dough area
math/manipulative area	small, table-top toy area
computer/technology area	

In addition to these areas, the teacher may include a special area that relates specifically to a theme that may have been selected for a short term. This might include objects to handle or activities in which to be engaged.

It is the teacher's responsibility to see that the learning centers contain the things necessary for the activity. While it is important to acquire special items from manufacturers of prekindergarten supplies and equipment, it is also important to use one's imagination for furnishing the classroom. A factory build replica of a tree stump is no match for a real tree

stump into which children can hammer things. The teacher must use ingenuity in being able to envision how some easily acquired things can be useful in the prekindergarten classroom.

Active play time is also active time for the teacher. The teacher must be able to oversee and guide the engagement of all the children in all of the activities at the same time as well as to interact with the children as a participant in the activities. Verbal interaction among the children should be a natural outgrowth of the stimulation of the experiences.

Clean-up time by the children must follow active play time immediately. This, too, is part of the daily routine. Children will learn a sense of time, responsibility, and organization when they consistently are expected to participate in clean-up.

### Blocks

A special word about blocks and block play is needed. Block play is one of the most important of all activities for the prekindergarten child. Blocks allow the child to be physically active because they will be lifted, pushed, carried, and placed. As young children play with blocks, they will manipulate them in some simple ways, like building a tower, placing them in a line, etc.; and they will continue to repeat these patterns.

One of the values of block play is that it offers guaranteed success. For example, there is no prescribed way to line them up, only the way the child chooses to do so. On the other hand, blocks do not limit a child. When a child has experiences with block play, the manipulation of the blocks will gradually grow in degrees of difficulty. The child will initiate more complicated or complex structures. All the while, the learnings that are being incurred include perception, spatial judgment, language development, conceptual growth, problem-solving, vocabulary development, counting, sets, matching, and cooperation. It can also be anticipated that block play will be one of the most appealing play areas for children.

For all of these good reasons, it is important to see that there is active engagement of all children in the block area. In addition, children need to learn what their responsibility is in the clean-up time in the block area so that everything is stored appropriately.

### Snack Time

Snack time serves many purposes. It can be a useful transition activity from active play time to whole-group time. It affords students the opportunity to have active roles as helpers as

well as participants in the social atmosphere during snack time. This is another opportunity for language development in the natural atmosphere of socialization where conversation is encouraged and nurtured.

### Transition Activities

Young children may have short attention spans when they have to observe what someone else is doing or saying, but they can have long attention spans when they are engaged in something that interests them. In addition, children do not like change. Knowing this, it becomes necessary to make provision for moving the children from one activity to the next. Transition activities are just such activities to accomplish this purpose.

Transition means passing from one state to another. When the transition is an activity itself, it is more likely to make the transition successful. Also, effective transition activities are those which require the participation of all the children. Teachers are wise to collect a storehouse of such activities; for variety is a component of motivation, and children will be more motivated to disengage themselves for the transition activity when there is variety.

### Music and Movement

Movement is a basic ingredient of our being. For the young child it is the modality for creativity, gross motor development, control relationships, and emotional expression. Body movement increases with the child's awareness of his/her own body and actions, space, and relationships with other things or persons. Movement can take place through space, as in jumping, and within space, as in bending. The teacher can call on a wealth of ideas for both kinds of movement. Combining music with movement not only enhances what is learned through movement, but also what is learned through the music. Music learnings include feeling the beat, listening, phrasing, sharing, responding, etc. Because music is learned more effectively when combined with "doing" music, the teacher must set the environment for musical learning. This also includes making available choices of things which children can manipulate. Many sound sources can be brought into the classroom to encourage choices.

Concept development is furthered and is possible with instruments, singing, and movement. The ability to conceptualize high/low, loud/soft, long/short, faster/slower will occur when children have the opportunity to engage in activities where they have to "do" the concept.

Opportunities to explore sound are abundant. They do not need to rely on purchased equipment, although some bought instruments will be useful; but there are numerous sound sources that exist within the classroom or which can be improvised. What is important is that the child have the opportunity to explore and to experiment with sound.

### Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is valuable for many reasons. Socialization and other activities like dramatic play can take place inside the classroom but they can be also carried on outdoors. However, outdoor play offers one of the best opportunities for gross motor development. Those actions that children can engage in for this kind of development include: push/pull, aim/throw/catch, climb, jump/skip/hop/gallop/run, and ride on.

With or without special equipment, outdoor play makes it possible for children to engage in many kinds of physical activities. The kinds of things that can be brought to the outdoor play area are only limited by one's imagination.

## **SUGGESTED THEMES**

### Animals

- Care of animals
- Names of young and adult animals
- Names of male and female animals
- Where and how animals live
- How animals help people
- Coverings (shell, fur, feathers)
- Products obtained from animals
- Good pets
- Wild animals
- Circus animals
- Protection (claws, camouflage, hibernation)
- Characteristics of animals

### Birds

- Names of birds
- Sounds made by birds
- Where birds live
- How birds feel their young
- How birds help people (beauty, sound, eating insects)

- Kinds of nests
- Kinds of eggs birds lay (color, size)
- Characteristics of birds
- Habits of birds (nesting, migration)

### Categories

- Grouping (vehicles, food, animals, birds, clothing, furniture, persons, buildings, toys, plants, containers, appliances, things to write with, and building, garden, or household tools)
- Multiple classification (things that can be classed in more than one category)
- Ways to help discriminate between categories (senses, experiences)
- Why categories are useful and helpful

### The Children

- Learning one's own name and worth
- Learning names of other children, teachers, nurse, others
- Where to hang clothing
- Self-confidence
- Good self-image
- Parts of the body
  
- Complying with requests
- Self-mastery and control
- Getting along with others
- Sharing

### Clothing

- Names of garments
- Seasons for wearing different types of clothing
- Sequence for putting on clothing
- Types of fabrics (cotton, wool, leather, plastic)
- Clothing for different occasions (play, party, sleeping)
- Different types of fasteners on clothing (zippers, buttons, snaps)
- Uses of certain pieces of clothing (shoes, hats)
- Color or patterning in clothing (printed, woven)

## Color

- Names of the primary and secondary colors
- How various colors are made
- Shades of same color
- How various colors make you feel
- Use of colors (red for danger)
- Colors of specific objects (fruits, vehicles, animals)
- How colors are made and actually making some (berries, leaves)
- Tie-dying experience

## Communication

- Physical and verbal communication
- Learning about different languages
- Different forms of communication (radio, television, newspaper, books, telephone)
- Proper names of people, places and things so that we understand meanings
- How some animals help carry messages (dogs, pigeons)
- Learning to recognize objects from verbal descriptions only
- Telling something interesting about self or activity
- Learning to follow simple directions

## The Community

- Locations within the community
- Kinds of buildings, industries, parks, highways
- Recognizing community landmarks
- Different communities

## Community Helpers

- Firefighter, police officer, letter carrier, doctor, nurse, dentist, baker, merchant, miner, farmer (places of work, activities, services)
- How community helps work together
- Recognizing community helpers by uniforms or clothing

## Comparatives

- Learning names and relationships by comparing two things (biggest-smallest, hottest-coldest, heaviest-lightest; bigger-smaller; fatter-skinnier, taller-shorter; too loud-too soft too fat-too skinny)
- Learning names and relationships by comparing more than two things (big, bigger, biggest; short, shorter, shortest; long, longer, longest)
- Learning that one object can be big when compared to some things and small when compared to others
- The concept of “middle”
- Ordinal (first, second, third) and cardinal (1, 2, 3) numbers
- Learning opposites through comparisons (soft, rough)

### Days of the Week

- Names of the days of the week
- Why days have special names
- Sequence of the days
- Activities for certain days (e.g., Saturday or Sunday)
- Learning about the calendar (days, weeks, months)

### Environment

- Characteristics of the community (lake, mountains)
- What “pollution” is and how to help prevent it
- Natural resources (coal, gas, oil)
- Conservation of natural resources (forests, water)
- Recycling (water, paper, metal)
- How to respect public property

### Families

- Learning what a family is
- Learning the immediate family (mother, father, sister, brother, baby)
- Learning the extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents)
- What families do together
- Different jobs and responsibilities of family members
- Friends and their names
- Learning about people (physical characteristics, abilities, likes, etc.)
- How to entertain guests
- How to get along with family members
- Good social techniques

### Food

- Names of various foods
- Tasting various foods
- Learning about taste (sweet, sour, salty, bitter)
- Preparing food in a variety of ways
- Plant parts used as food (roots, stalk, flower)
- Things that look alike but taste different (salt, sugar, soda)
- Food consumed by animals
- Preparing for and participating in lunch or snack
- Good diet (basic four)
- Where food products come from (animals, farms and gardens, factories)
- Ways of preparing food (raw, boiled, baked)

- Learning when food is green, ripe, and overripe
- Things not to be eaten (poisons, medicines)

### Growing Things

- Names of common flowers and plants
- How to care for plants
- Different things that plants grow from (bulb, seed, start)
- Parts of the plant (root, stalk, vine, leaf, flower)
- Parts of plants that are edible (root-carrot, turnip; head-lettuce, cabbage, stalk-celery)
- Sizes and kinds of seeds
- Length of growing time (e.g., rapid for grass and beans; more slowly for corn and squash)
- Fruits grown on trees
- Things needed for growth (sunlight, water, warmth)
- Food that grows above and below the ground
- Growing things that are not edible
- Storing fruit and vegetables
- Why food is washed or cleaned before eating
- Growing things for beauty (shrubs, trees, flowers) and consumption (fruit, vegetables)

### Health and Cleanliness

- How to clean various body parts (hair, nails, skin, teeth)
- Reasons for keeping clean and healthy
- How to keep healthy (exercise, rest, clothing)
- Proper diet
- Poisonous plants
- Professional people who help us

### Holidays

- Names of holidays
- Activities unique to holidays
- Importance of holidays to children (birthdays, Christmas, Valentine's Day)
- Which holidays come during which seasons
- Family customs for different holidays
- National, religious, cultural, and personal holidays of self and others
- Preparing for and participating in child-centered holiday activities

### Homes

- Where each child lives
- What a house looks like (inside and out)
- Different types of homes in the community
- Care of homes (inside and out)
- Household equipment and appliances (brushes, mixers, and so on)
- Repair and building tools
- Homes in other countries or areas

- Furnishing rooms
- Building materials
- Visiting a home or apartment
- Performing tasks

### Identification

- Matching animals (mother and young)
- Categorizing what is sold in a specific type of store
- Selecting a type of store for a certain item
- Things that belong together (fork and spoon, hat and coat, shoe and sock)
- How to recognize something by one or more of the senses
- How to group objects with similar characteristics (color, material, shape)
- How to discriminate between objects

### Materials

- Names of different building materials (brick, wood, fiberglass, cement, steel, cinder blocks)
- Names and uses of materials (metal, glass, plaster, paper, cardboard, cloth fabrics, leather, rubber, foil)
- Fabrics (waterproof, resilient, inexpensive)

### Music

- Names and uses of musical instruments
- Ways of making sounds
- Classes of instruments (wind, percussion, string)
- Different ways music makes us feel
- Learning to participate with music
- Discovering rhythm in everyday life (clocks, water dripping, walking)
- Observing different instruments being played
- Imitating music or movement in nature (trees, animals, water)

### Objects

- Names of parts of an object (e.g., a pencil has a point, lead, shaft, eraser)
- Different materials used to make same or different objects
- Specific uses of different objects (spoon, screwdriver, belt)
- Identifying objects through one or more of the senses
- Naming several objects used for the same purpose (e.g., those that hold water, improve surrounding)

### Opposites

- Learning opposites (big-little, fat-skinny, loud-soft, hot-cold, long-short, fast-slow, wet-dry, smooth-rough, tall-short, dark-light)
- Combining opposites (big, rough, and dark)
- Discrimination (an object may be big compared to some things and small compared to others)

### Patterns

- Learning about different patterns (striped, flowered, polka dot, plaid, plain, checked)
- Learning if the pattern is woven into fabric or printed
- Creating own patterns using art materials
- How patterns (shapes) are combined in environment

### Piagetian Concepts

- Conservation of volume or substance
- Reversibility (water to ice to water)
- Weight of objects (hand or scale)
- How objects can be grouped in a variety of ways (colors, shape, size, material)
- Discovering that learning is enhanced through the senses and movement (sensorimotor)

### Prepositions

- Names and relationship of various prepositions (in, on, over, under, next to, in front of, in back of, inside, outside, between)
- How to carry out simple commands
- Using one's body in space to learn prepositions (obstacle course)

### The Prekindergarten

- Labels for materials and objects in the room
- Storage place for toys
- Place for certain activities
- Learning about adults and children
- Limits, responsibilities, and privileges
- Learning routine

### Safety

- Times and places to be careful (roads, around water)
- How to prevent accidents
- Care of injuries
- Professional people who help us
- Safety at school and home
- Reasons for limits under different circumstances

### Science

- Magnets

- Magnifying glasses
- How to measure
- Heat and how it changes various things
- Light and prisms
- Heavy and light objects
- Liquids, solids, and gases
- Physical science
- Social science
- Producing and preparing food
- Working with levers
- Biological science
- Discovering things about community, nation and universe
- How to get along with others

### Seasons

- Name the seasons
- Characteristics of each season
- What people do during different seasons
- What people wear during different seasons
- How seasons affect family, animals, and plants
- Identifying different seasons from pictures

### Shapes

- Names of shapes (square, circle, triangle, rectangle, oval, diamond, trapezoid)
- Uses of different shapes
- Looking for various shapes in the room
- Discussing shapes in our daily lives
- Why certain things are the shapes they are (e.g., wheel)
- How various shapes are formed (two semicircles make a circle, two triangles a trapezoid)
- How similar objects (leaves, flowers) are different shapes
- Making an original design using a variety of shapes (could be art project or manipulative experience, for example)
- Characteristics of various shapes (triangle has three corners, lines in a square are same length)

### Sound

- Listening for sounds in everyday life
- Distinguishing things by sound only
- Differences in sound (high or low, loud or soft)

- Different ways of making sounds
- Making sounds of animals
- Making sounds of transportation vehicles
- Making sound that express different emotions
- Saying rhyming words

### Temperature

- Terms used with heat (hot-warm, cold-cool, hot-cold)
- Temperature and the seasons
- Temperature and heat in cooking
- How a thermometer registers heat or cold

### Time

- Learning about the present, past, and future (may be difficult to grasp)
- Sequence (before and after)
- Ways to tell time (clock, sun, sundial)
- Things to do in daylight and dark

### Transportation

- Names of kinds of transportation (boat, airplane, bus, train, automobile)
- Ways transportation works
- What different transports carry and how it feels to ride in each
- Learning about vehicles
- Wheels and how they work
- Transportation in air (airplanes, balloons, helicopters); in water (boats, submarines, ferries); on land (cars, truck, buses, and underground (subways))
- Animals used for transportation (horse, camel, elephant)

### Weather and Moisture

- Precipitation (rain, snow, sleet, hail)
- Lightning and thunder
- Visibility (cloudy, foggy, sunny)
- Labels for different kinds of weather
- What happens to plants, animals, and people in different weather
- Water (solids, liquids, gases)
- Air (evaporation, movement)
- Wind (windy, breezy, calm)
- Occupations related to weather (hunting, fishing)
- How a thermometer indicates temperature
- How weather is predicted
- How weather affects the way we feel
- How to count using familiar things (children, blocks, crackers, clapping)
- Counting similar and dissimilar objects
- Recognizing written symbols

- Learn about parts of the whole (e.g., wheel is part of a wagon)
- Exploring with unit blocks (different shapes and numbers to make other shapes)
- Making things equal
- Learning to tell different things by their number (phone, sport participant, house)
- Mathematical terms (more-less, how many)

### Music

- Singing songs
- Playing and listening to records and tapes

## **GUIDE FOR CLASSROOM MATERIALS**

The following suggested materials can be used within the instruction of program activities.

- Building materials
- Materials to take apart and put together
- Materials for filling and emptying
- Materials for pretending
- Kitchen equipment for manipulating, sorting, filling and emptying
- Materials to have on hand for real cooking activities
- Materials for dramatic play
- Types of prop boxes
- Paper of different sizes, textures and colors
- Materials for mixing and painting
- Materials for holding things together and taking them apart
- Materials for making three-dimensional representations
- Materials for making two-dimensional representations
- Materials to sort and build with
- Materials to order and build with
- Materials to fit together and take apart
- Materials for decoding and pretending
- Construction are equipment
- Equipment for music and movement area
- Equipment for sand and water area

- Some pets to consider
- Things to climb and balance on
- Things to jump on and over
- Things to push, pull and ride on
- Things to kick, throw and aim for
- Things for sand and water play
- Things to build with

### SAMPLE SCIENCE LESSONS

**WATER:     RAIN, RAIN**

GOALS:             Student will be able to:

- know how clouds hold water and make rain

SKILLS:            Observation, Comparison, Communication, Exploration

- Observation, exploration, and language skills

MATERIALS:       Trays, sponges, spray bottles, crayons, paper

ACTIVITY:         Explain that sponges represent clouds spray sponge clouds with water, squeeze sponge cloud to make rain

ASSESSMENT:     Pictures (drawings, photographs). Teacher Observations, Oral Recall  
Draw a cloud and repeat sequence of events aloud.

**WATER:     IT'S MELTING**

GOALS:             Student will be able to:

- know the fastest and slowest way to melt ice.

**SKILLS:** Observation, Comparison, Communication, Exploration

- Observing, quantifying, predicting, communicating

**MATERIALS:** Ice cubes, two bowls, plate, water

**ACTIVITY:** Predict what will happen if you put one in cube in cold water, one in hot water, and one on a plate.

**ASSESSMENT:** Pictures (drawings, photographs), Teacher Observations, Oral Recall

Child will recall orally that ice melts when it gets warm.

**WATER: SINK AND FLOAT**

**GOALS:** Student will be able to:

- know meaning of words “sink” and “float”.

**SKILLS:** Observation, Comparison, Communication, Exploration

- Predict whether an object will sink or float.

**MATERIALS:** Water table or dishpans of water, objects to experiment with such as shells, rocks, paper clips, empty cans, sponges, etc.

**ACTIVITY:** Have students place the objects, one at a time, in the water to see if their predictions are correct.

**ASSESSMENT:** Pictures (drawings, photographs), Teacher Observations, Oral Recall

Divide objects into groups – those that sink and those that float.

