

Michigan Child Care Matters

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Human Services

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ALL ABOUT PRESCHOOLERS

FROM THE DIVISION DIRECTOR James S. Sinnamon

As I was preparing to write this article, I visited the Child Care Licensing website. In the Resources section, I downloaded “Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten.” This document was developed in 2005 by an ad hoc advisory committee with the approval of the Michigan State Board of Education.

“Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten” is divided into two major sections – Quality Program Standards for Prekindergarten and Early Learning Expectations for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children.

The quality program standards are meant to define quality in all center-based classroom programs for three- and four-year old children, regardless of sponsorship or funding. Each program standard is followed by a list of statements that illustrate a variety of ways that a quality program may demonstrate that it meets the standard.

The Early Learning Expectations section is comprised of a number of statements about children’s learning, as well as examples of experiences, strategies and suggested questions for reflection. Each early learning expectation is illustrated by several items indicating how children typically exhibit their

progress toward meeting that expectation. This can be helpful as you plan appropriate activities for children.

“Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten” was recently reformatted. If you work with preschool children, please go to our website and take some time to look through the document. I am confident you will be impressed with the quality of the information presented. It will provide you with a great deal of food for thought and may assist you in improving your preschool program. ❖

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This publication provides relevant information regarding young children who are cared for in licensed child care settings. We encourage child care providers to make this publication available to parents of children in care, or to provide them with the Web address so they may receive their own copy. Most issues are available online at:

www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

LET'S READ

Dawnita Diaz, Licensing Consultant
Ottawa County

Literacy is one of the foundational skills preschoolers continue to build upon during this stage of development. There are some basic steps for child care providers to assist preschoolers in strengthening these skills. Have books, magazines and other texts available to children throughout the use space. Read aloud to children on a daily basis. Work with preschoolers to tell stories they created on their own. These activities build on all areas of literacy for beginning readers.

Providers who are working to build their library of books for preschoolers may start with a few of these well known authors:

- "Clifford the Big Red Dog" by Norman Bridwell.
- "Goodnight Moon" by Margaret Wise Brown.
- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and "10 Little Rubber Ducks" by Eric Carle.
- "Are You My Mother?" and "Go, Dog. Go!" by P.D. Eastman.
- "Snow" by Roy McKie and P.D. Eastman.
- "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?" by Bill Martin Jr.
- "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambeau.
- "If You Give a Moose a Muffin" by Laura Joffe Numeroff.
- "The Cat in the Hat" and "Green Eggs and Ham" by Dr. Seuss.

Providers open the world of reading to preschoolers by offering a variety of activities and daily reading. Continue to encourage and foster the preschooler's reading skills through the exciting world of books! ❖

New Licensing Notebook Requirement

On 5/27/2010, the Child Care Organizations Act (1973 PA 116) was amended to require all licensees and registrants to maintain, and make available to parents, a licensing notebook. Licensees and registrants must also provide written notification to parents of the availability of the notebook. Go to the Alerts section of the licensing website (www.michigan.gov/michildcare) for more information.

LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Daniel Hodgins

Author of "Boys: Changing the Classroom, Not the Child"

Are boys and girls really that different? Do the differences come from our cultural expectations or is there something biological going on?

Research about differences between boys and girls is emerging every year. Some of the findings are contradictory. As early childhood professionals, we can't wait for researchers to finish debating these questions. We must make changes **now**. We have boys and girls right now in our lives that demand and deserve our caring attention.



The purpose of this article is not to offer a comprehensive scientific theory about the genetic and culturally based differences between boys and girls, but rather a review of a few of my observations and practices that early childhood professionals may use to transform their relationship with boys and girls and to create environments that nurture them.

Boys and girls see details differently.

In a preschool classroom, a teacher was reading a story to a group of three- to five-year-olds. During the story, the teacher was showing the pictures in the book and asking questions of the children. When the teacher came to a picture of a cougar one boy yelled, "Grrr," then another boy got on all fours and also started to "Grrr" until soon all the boys were crawling and roaring like cougars. The boys responded immediately to the detail they saw by physically and verbally acting out the cougar. The girls were busily talking about the many details that were displayed in the picture; describing the whiskers, color of fur, sharp teeth, etc.

Boys often see the whole but not necessarily all the details. Girls often see the many details that make up the whole. This difference is why it is so important not to layer instructions for boys.

An example of a layered instruction is: "Boys and girls, pick up your toys and then wash your hands for snack. Because it is so nice today, we are going outside right after snack." Boys often are lined up to go outside and the girls are screaming, "Teacher, he didn't pick up." The girls heard all of the details and the boys only heard what was relevant to them – outside.

Boys and girls often have different connections between cognitive thought and feelings.

The corpus callosum is the part of the brain that allows for "cross talk" between the cognitive side and the feeling side. Most learning has to go through the corpus callosum. Many researchers are claiming that the corpus callosum of boys is often smaller than the corpus callosum of girls. This difference might explain why boys often don't demonstrate empathy in the same way that girls do. Teachers often report that boys don't talk about their feelings and hit more frequently. My observations reflect that boys do have empathy; it is just demonstrated differently than girls - usually in a physical way. He might push, shove, give high fives, and even roughhouse as a form of empathy. Remember boys don't often talk about their feelings but enjoy demonstrating them physically.

Boys and girls often are different when it comes to completing tasks.

Girls' brains are usually always on, thinking

Continued on page 5

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES OF THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

Marcia Demski, Licensing Consultant
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During the preschool years, three- and four-year-olds go through considerable growth and change in all areas of development. Although every child grows and develops at his or her own pace, child development during the preschool years tends to follow a predictable course. Being knowledgeable about what milestones to expect and when to expect them will let you know if a preschooler is on track or alert you to potential concerns. Listed below are some general milestones for preschoolers in the areas of physical (gross and fine motor), social and emotional, cognitive, and language and literacy development.

Milestones for Three-Year-Olds

Physical development - gross motor skills:

- Steps with alternating feet when going up and down stairs.
- Kicks a ball, runs around an obstacle and climbs a ladder.
- Uses a small slide independently.
- Catches large balls.
- Pedals a tricycle.

Physical development - fine motor skills:

- Draws a circle, cross or up-and-down or side-to-side lines.
- Holds a pencil in writing position.
- Begins to use children's blunt-nose scissors.
- Turns rotating handles.
- Screws and unscrews jar lids, nuts and bolts.
- Assembles simple puzzles.
- Manipulates play dough and finger paints.
- Stacks blocks up to nine high.
- Turns book pages one at a time.

Social and emotional development:

- Imitates adults and playmates.

- Takes turns in games.
- Follows simple directions and enjoys helping with household tasks.
- Chooses between two things.
- Recognizes own limits and asks for help.
- Expresses affection to familiar playmates.
- Separates easily from parents.
- Notices other people's moods and feelings.
- Does not cooperate or share well.
- Objects to major changes in routine.

Cognitive development:

- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals and people.
- Sorts objects by shape and color.
- Matches an object in the room to a picture in a book.
- Understands the concept of "two" and spatial concepts (over, under).
- Begins to recognize cause-and-effect relationships.
- Learns by doing and through the senses.
- Makes mechanical toys work.
- Experiences trouble focusing on details.
- Spends only a short time on most tasks.

Language and literacy development:

- Speaks in complete sentences of three to five words.
- Identifies common objects.
- Answers simple questions, such as name, age and gender.
- Uses pronouns (I, you, we, they) and some plurals (books, cars).
- Follows a two- or three-part command.

Milestones for Four-Year-Olds

Physical development - gross motor skills:

- Balances on one foot for five seconds.
- Hops on one foot.

- Gallops.
- Does somersaults.
- Throws a ball overhand and catches a bounced ball.
- Steers a tricycle well.
- Brushes teeth, combs hair and dresses self with supervision.
- Jumps over a low rope.

Physical development - fine motor skills:

- Draws a square.
- Strings small beads.
- Connects dots with a pencil or crayon.
- Uses scissors to cut a straight line.
- Sews on sewing card with large holes.
- Manipulates spoon and fork neatly while eating.

Social and emotional development:

- Takes turns, shares and cooperates with playmates.
- Enjoys pretending and has a vivid imagination.
- Tries to solve problems.
- Becomes interested in new experiences and is more independent.
- Expresses anger verbally rather than physically.
- Feels jealousy.
- Understands the concept of lying.
- Develops a clearer sense of right and wrong.

Cognitive development:

- Involves self in complex make-believe with coordinating roles and story lines.
- Prints some capital letters and names some colors.
- Understands complex spatial concepts (behind, next to).
- Understands the concepts of same and different.
- Draws a person with several body parts.
- Moves away from self-centered play to involve others.
- Pays attention to tasks for a longer period of time.

- Recalls what happened weeks ago and anticipates what has not yet happened.

Language and literacy development:

- Begins to understand size relationships.
- Enjoys rhymes and word play.
- Speaks more clearly.
- Uses verbs such as those ending in “ing” and past tense verbs such as ran and fell.
- Tells simple stories. ❖

Looking Through the Eyes of Boys and Girls, from page 3

and analyzing. Boys' brains frequently go into a pause state after completing a task. What results from the differences in how boys and girls complete tasks? Girls often can do multiple tasks. It sometimes takes boys much longer to complete a task. Boys often do not have a beginning, middle and end to a task. Girls often can talk while they are doing a task. I have noticed that the more physical the activity the less likely a child's brain will go into a pause state. During a pause state, no learning is taking place. So when children are placed in a time out chair for misbehaving and told to think about why they shouldn't hit anymore, many times the boy is not thinking about what he did, but hoping someone comes close enough to him so he can attempt to trip him/her.

To prevent these pause states:

- Limit the number of transitions.
- Provide for lots of physical movement.
- Offer standing up options at meal time.
- Provide lots of hands-on activities – squeezing, pounding, rolling.

It is important that we revisit what we know about the differences between boys and girls by recognizing and respecting the reality that boys and girls are different and that each gender has distinct needs and distinct strengths. I have given you a few examples so we can work together to give boys and girls the strength and creativity they need to face the future. ❖

PLAN YOUR ACTIVITIES AROUND A THEME

Toni Stagray, Licensing Consultant
Saginaw County

Theme-based planning is an easy way to come up with ideas when working with preschool-age children. Once you have decided upon a theme, you must decide upon and organize what you plan to use. Research the topic and begin to brainstorm ideas. Once brainstorming is done, narrow down your ideas to fit your schedule.

The first step is to choose a theme that interests both you and the children in care. The local library and the Internet are both great resources for finding activities and researching themes. Some possible themes may include: the four seasons, holidays, senses, water, insects, plants, nature, colors, and pets. Most preschool websites will have a list of theme topics. There are a number of preschool websites, including but limited to:

- www.preschoolexpress.com/theme (Jean Warren ideas).
- www.everythingpreschool.com/themes (170 early childhood themes).
- www.preschooleducation.com/topics (huge list of topics).
- www.angelfire.com/dc/childsplay/Themes (seasonal and holiday themes).

Next, use a planning web, as shown on the next page, to help you brainstorm, plan and develop the theme. A planning web depicts a variety of possible concepts and experiences you might use and gives you a visual representation at a glance. With a planning web, all of your ideas will begin to come together. Enter your ideas next to the learning area. At first, write

down ideas in pencil as they come to you. Later, narrow down your ideas to fit your daily schedule.

Use a chart to plan the activities further after you used the planning web to narrow down your ideas. For the purpose of demonstration, the chart (pages 7 and 8) shows a few ideas for a theme of fall.

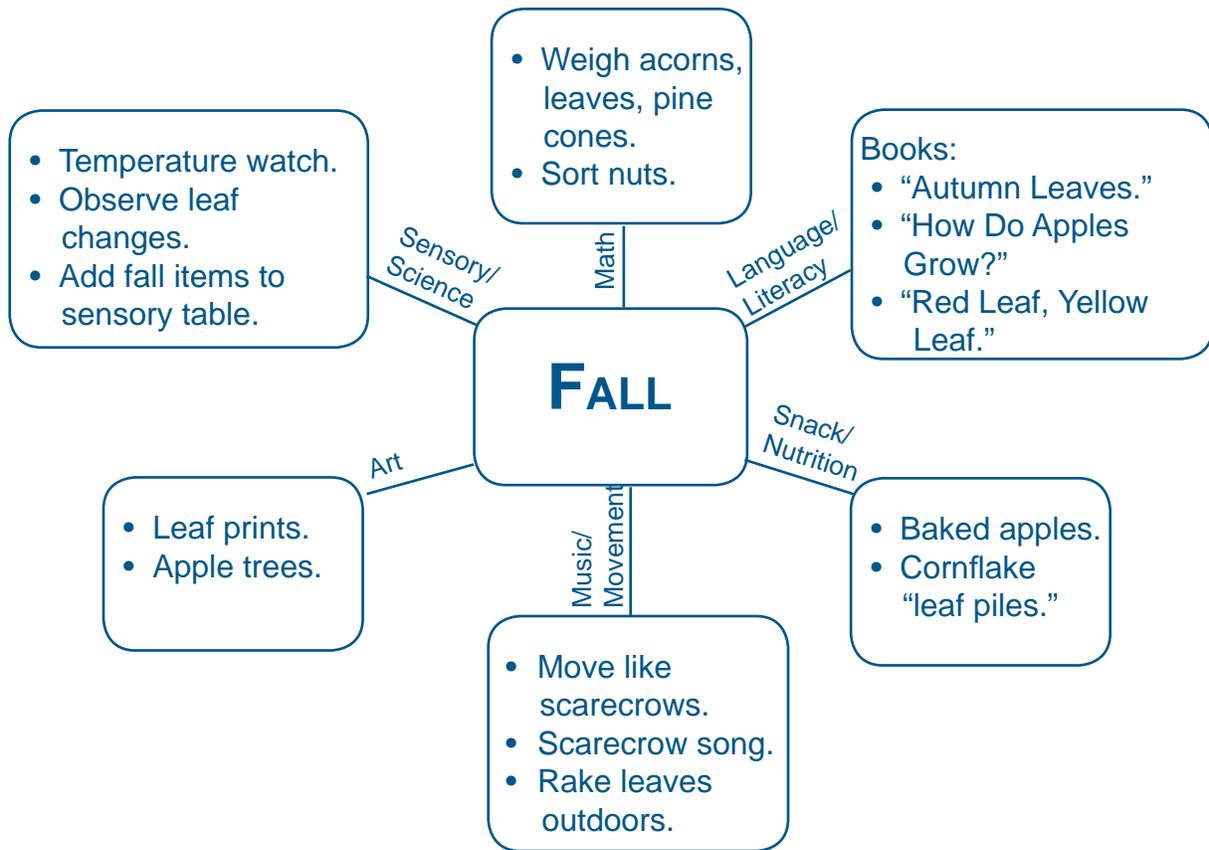


Licensing rules require that a daily program offer developmentally

appropriate activities that include all areas of a child's development:

- Physical – developing and using small and large muscles.
- Social – participating in imaginative play and interacting with others.
- Emotional – having opportunities to feel successful and to feel good about him or herself while developing independence.
- Intellectual – developing and using language, using materials, taking part in activities that encourage creativity, and learning new ideas and skills.

A planned, but flexible program is most beneficial for preschool-age children. Whether planning for use in a home child care or center setting, theme-based planning is an easy and quick way to remember to include all areas of learning for children. Have fun with the theme approach; your enthusiasm will be contagious!



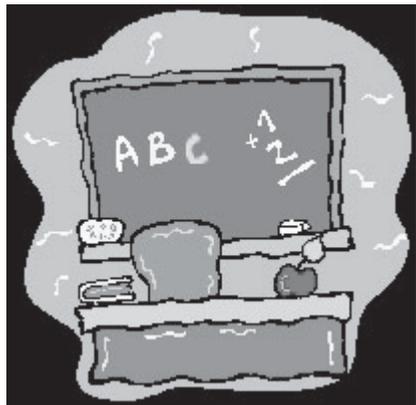
| Learning Area | Activity | Materials Needed | Directions |
|---------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Art | Leaf prints. | Paint (child safe), dish soap, leaves, paper. | Combine paint with a little dish soap. Paint leaves. Press onto paper. Kids will love to see the veins of the leaves. |
| Math | Weighing fall items. | Find or ask children to bring in leaves, acorns and pine cones. | Add a scale to your science area – use to weigh the various items. Record findings. |
| | Nut sorting. | Variety of nuts in shells. | Have children sort nuts into baskets. Count how many of each nut they have. Make a graph showing how many there is of each nut. |

| Learning Area | Activity | Materials Needed | Directions |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| Music/ Movement | Scarecrows. | <p>Variety of music.</p> <p>Teach words - sung to the tune of teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around.</p> <p>Rakes, leaves.</p> | <p>Have children move to music like they think a scarecrow would move.</p> <p>Scarecrow, scarecrow turn around/ jump up and down/arms up high/ wink one eye/bend your knee/flap in the breeze/climb into bed/rest your head.</p> <p>Rake, jump in the piles, toss leaves into the air, make a leaf maze.</p> |
| Science/ Sensory | <p>Temperature watch.</p> <p>Sensory table.</p> | <p>Outdoor thermometer. Classroom thermometer made out of cardboard, with a moveable elastic or ribbon for mercury.</p> <p>Leaves, acorns, pinecones, twigs.</p> | <p>Children check daily temperature and move the marker on classroom thermometer to match. Talk about changes in weather.</p> <p>Add items to sensory table, along with magnifying glasses, etc.</p> |
| Language/ Literacy | Reading, literacy. | <p>Books, such as: "Autumn Leaves" - Ken Robbins; "How Do Apples Grow?" and "Why Do Leaves Change Color?" - Betsy Maestro; "Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf" and "Nuts to You!" – Lois Ehler; and "The Little Scarecrow Boy" – Margaret Wise Brown.</p> | <p>Read a book everyday at large circle time. Keep the books in your reading area.</p> |
| Snack/ Nutrition | <p>Baked apples.</p> <p>Leaf piles.</p> | <p>Apples, honey, chopped raisins, butter, cinnamon.</p> <p>6 cups cornflakes, 1 cup Karo syrup, 1 cup peanut butter, wax paper.</p> | <p>Core apples and remove a 1-inch strip of skin around the middle of the apple or pare the upper half. Place in baking dish and pour ½ cup water around them. Fill center of each apple with 1 tablespoon honey, chopped raisins, 1 teaspoon butter, and 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon. Bake 30-40 minutes at 375 degrees.</p> <p>In microwave, melt Karo syrup and peanut butter together. Pour over the cornflakes. When cool enough, let children form them into "leaf piles" on wax paper. ❖</p> |

KINDERGARTEN READINESS: IT'S MORE THAN JUST A, B, C...

Catherine Edgar, Licensing Consultant
Genesee County

A child entering kindergarten today needs to have already mastered many academic,



social and motor skills in order to be successful. Early academic and literacy skills at kindergarten entry are good predictors of children's academic abilities

throughout their educational careers. Both center and home child care providers need to ask themselves: "Does my program provide children with opportunities to develop academic, social and motor skills, as well as opportunities to follow rules and function as a part of a group?" Many of the skills children need to enter kindergarten prepared can be learned through play and day-to-day activities within your child care. This article will discuss specific skills children should be learning in child care and provide activities to help children achieve these necessary skills.

The following is a list of specific skills needed to prepare a child for kindergarten. These include fine and gross motor, academic and social skills. In addition, a child should be able to recognize authority, speak understandably and talk in complete sentences before entering kindergarten.

Fine Motor Skills

A child entering kindergarten should be able to properly use scissors and crayons, put together a 10-12 piece puzzle and button/zip clothing. Some activities to increase fine motor skills include:

- Playing dress up – buttons, zippers and fasteners all encourage fine motor dexterity.
- Cutting and tracing objects – always make sure to use safety scissors and supervise any cutting activity closely.
- Stringing beads or Cheerios; creating artwork with dried macaroni.
- Picking up small objects with large tweezers.
- Molding, shaping and rolling play dough.

Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills are important for kindergarten readiness as they work a child's large muscles, provide an outlet for excess energy and help develop strong bones. Some activities that aid in the development of gross motor skills are as follows:

- Design an obstacle course for children to complete.
- Play a game of "follow the leader."
- Practice bouncing a ball.
- Have children imitate various animals.

Academic Skills

A child entering kindergarten should be able to count to 10 and recognize colors, shapes, some letters, and common sight words such as stop. Some good activities to do with children in your care are:

- Sorting – have children try to sort objects by color, shape and size.
- Math recipes – simple recipes will help a child practice counting.
- Color walks – walk around and try to find objects of a certain color.
- Practice writing both upper and lower case letters.

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POSITIVE GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Jessica Coates, Licensing Consultant
Eaton County

As children approach preschool-age, they become more independent and capable of using problem solving skills. They are learning to share, take turns and get along with others. Caregivers can be instrumental in helping preschool-aged children make appropriate decisions and solve problems. Caregivers are also able to reduce the need for discipline by setting up an appropriate environment and program.

Preschool-aged children love to imitate adults; it is important for caregivers to always model appropriate behavior and language when around children. Offer positive praise to a child who is modeling appropriate behavior. Make sure to praise the child's behavior, such as, "You're doing such a great job sharing" instead of just saying, "You're doing great." Specific praise tells the child exactly what he is doing correctly.

It is also important to tell children what you want them to do, instead of telling them what they are doing wrong. Instead of saying "stop running" tell the child to "slow down and walk." Children don't always know what is expected of them and a gentle reminder tells them exactly what they need to do.

To promote independence, offer them opportunities to feel grown-up by allowing them to do self-help tasks such as putting on their own coat, pouring their own drink or cleaning up messes they make. It is also helpful to offer acceptable choices throughout the day to allow children to make decisions for themselves.

Preschool-aged children are very active and

require an appropriate indoor and outdoor environment to explore and utilize. An outdoor environment that has opportunities for climbing and lots of movement allows preschoolers to release energy. An indoor environment should offer well-defined areas with a variety of toys and activities that allow for quiet and active play in an inviting space. It is also helpful to ensure that there are duplicates of popular toys to reduce conflicts.



An age appropriate program provides challenging activities that are inviting and interesting. Establish routines that provide structure and consistency and allow the children in care to know what to expect throughout the day. Children that are provided a consistent schedule are far less likely to exhibit undesired behavior than children who are bored and have no routine.

Discipline and punishment are very different. Punishment involves shame, ridicule or threats and may scare children into stopping their behavior. Discipline involves guiding children to make good choices and helping them learn self-control. Discipline is a learning experience for the child and is more time consuming but over time, it is the most effective method. The above measures should decrease problem behaviors, but discipline will still be necessary.

Children are faced with problems throughout the day. Sometimes negative behavior is exhibited because the child has not learned the skills needed to solve the problem. Helping them identify what the problem is and possible solutions is the first step in reducing the negative behavior.

Preschoolers are better able to describe how they feel but still may have a hard time understanding how their actions affect others. When a child misbehaves, a caregiver can explain how the child's actions make the caregiver feel. An example of this would be: "When you stand on a chair, I feel worried because I am afraid that you will fall." Explaining how their actions make you feel teaches them how their behavior has an impact on others. Children can also use this technique with each other to describe how another child's behavior makes them feel.

Natural or logical consequences teach children the connection between their actions and the results of their actions. A natural consequence is a result that occurs without any adult interference. The child who leaves his ball outside will experience a natural consequence when the ball is blown away in the wind. Some natural consequences could be dangerous to a child and should not be used.

A logical consequence is the result of an action by someone else. For example, a child isn't allowed to move onto the next activity until he puts away the puzzle he was using. The loss of a privilege can also be a logical consequence to an undesirable behavior. Whether natural or logical, explain the consequence to the child so that the child can learn from his behavior.

As a caregiver, you may find you need a variety of guidance and discipline methods to use with preschool-aged children. Not every method will work for every child, and it may take more than one method to solve a problem. Being prepared makes caring for a preschooler easier on the caregiver and the child. ❖

Kindergarten Readiness, from page 9

- Wooden or magnetic letters – have children spell out short words that you write down on a piece of paper.

Social Skills

When thinking about kindergarten readiness, people tend to put more focus on academic skills and less on a child's social skills. Social skills are critical for a successful transition into kindergarten. A child should be able to follow simple directions, wait his or her turn and use words instead of being physical when angry. Here are a few activities that will strengthen social skills:

- Cooperative games that involve children taking turns.
- Play the game Simon Says to help children learn to follow directions.
- Assign different jobs to children to encourage cooperation.
- Label emotions throughout the day and model appropriate behavior.

The activities you can do with the children in your care to prepare them for kindergarten are practically endless. By becoming aware of what skills are necessary for children upon entering kindergarten, you will be able to tailor your program to meet each of these needs. A good child care program will include a wide variety of motor, academic and social skills in its daily activities. For some free additional kindergarten readiness activities, visit the following websites:

- www.kidzone.ws/kindergarten.htm.
- www.ziggityzoom.com.
- www.tlsbooks.com/kindergartenworksheets.htm.
- www.first-school.ws. ❖

Free brochures on reading aloud to children from Jim Trelease, author of "The Read-Aloud Handbook" at www.trelease-on-reading.com/brochures.html.

SETTING UP THE PRESCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Jackie Sharkey, Area Manager
Macomb County

Setting up the preschool learning environment involves more than just the placement of equipment and play materials; it also includes the activities, time schedule and staff. It is important to be aware of the total environment that is created and the messages that it conveys.

Often problems occur because contradictory messages are being sent by the different components making up the environment. The teacher may be trying to prevent running and sliding with rules and words while the open floor space in the center of the room is inviting the children to run and slide. In another room, the physical environment may be well-defined but the children may need more challenging activities, or they may need longer periods of unbroken time to become involved in the activities offered. Each area of the environment needs careful attention to maximize each child's learning potential.

The physical environment is a powerful means of communication. The room arrangement should give the behavioral message you want to convey. Things to include:

- Traffic patterns that allow for maximum movement without large open spaces.
- Boundaries and play areas that are clearly defined by color, tape, texture, shelves, or tables.
- Activity area sizes that encourage a maximum of four to six children at a time.
- Rest/quiet areas for children to go on an individual basis.
- Complimentary areas that are adjacent (e.g., art, easel, woodworking, etc.).
- Shelving and storage spaces that are clearly marked for easy return of toys and materials.

The materials and activities provided within a classroom give children the opportunity to learn and explore. These should include:

- Literacy postings - words posted on the walls, signs labeling objects, weather charts, and posters describing the children's activities.
- Stable vs. rotated materials - the easel is always available and the media changes.
- Many developmental areas - creative, large muscle, small muscle, cognitive, sensory, etc.
- Different involvement levels - self-selected/open-ended, self-selected/self-correcting and teacher directed/exploratory.
- Activities for wide skill ranges - more able children will be challenged but less able or younger children will not be frustrated.
- Well-stocked art centers - easels, paper, chunky paintbrushes, crayons, and clay available at all times during the day.

The daily schedule is important for both children and adults. Try the following:

- Exploration for a minimum of 1 ½ hours set early in the schedule or 45 minutes at a time in between more structured activities.
- Active, quiet, large group, small group, and individual activities throughout the day.
- Group times that include passive activities that last no more than 15 – 20 minutes to allow children to practice important social skills, such as taking turns, listening to each other, sitting still, listening to stories, and singing songs.
- No more than six transitions for half day programs and eight for full day programs.

The adults that work with children should be

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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH IN PRESCHOOLS - THE FOUNDATION FOR SCHOOL AND LIFE SUCCESS

Mary Mackrain, Child Care Enhancement Program Director

If asked the question, “What are your hopes and dreams for young children’s futures?” many may answer with statements such as:

- “I hope they are independent and have caring relationships.”
- “I hope they have high self-esteems.”
- “I hope they enjoy life.”
- “I hope they continue to explore and laugh.”

Most people would agree with these wonderful aspirations. The real question is, “How do caregivers support children in getting there?”



Life is filled with daily hassles and events that challenge both adults and young children. It’s how these challenges are dealt with that can affect one’s path in life. For very young children, protective factors supporting resilience - the ability to bounce back easily from misfortune or change - center around the critical aspects of social and emotional health. Social and emotional health is a child’s developing capacity to:

- Express and manage feelings.
- Form close, trusting relationships.
- Explore and learn.

Research shows that social skills and emotional development, such as the ability to pay attention, make transitions from one activity to another and get along with others, are a very important part of school readiness and life success. A “USA Today” study surveyed 800 kindergarten teachers who reported that what children need the most to be ready for school were social and emotional skills; knowing their ABCs and 123s were at the bottom of the list.

Social and emotional skills are often harder to pinpoint than physical development, but you may see preschoolers do some things every day that illustrate that they are building social and emotional skills.

Expressing and managing feelings by:

- Showing affection to familiar adults and friends.
- Separating more easily from parents in familiar situations.
- Expressing a wide range of emotions.
- Adjusting to minor changes in routines.

Forming close and trusting relationships by:

- Imitating the actions of adults and friends.
- Taking turns with friends.
- Engaging in and enjoying back and forth play with other children.
- Demonstrating a sense of humor.

Exploring and learning through:

- Showing more independence.
- Showing interest in rules and fairness.
- Evaluating their own accomplishments: “I built a big tower!”

Some simple things that you can do daily to support children’s social and emotional health are:

1. Use social stories to teach social and emotional skills.

Social stories are simple scripted stories that help children understand the rules,

Continued on page 14

Social and Emotional Health, from page 13

cues and reasons behind social interactions. For many children, coming into a care situation with a lot of other children is new, and often times they need support in understanding how to make friends and get along in a group setting. Go to the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) website to download free copies of fun, easy to use social stories:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/resources/strategies.html#scriptedstories>.

2. Give positive feedback and encouragement.

Let children know what they are doing well by describing what you see:

- “You have really learned to use your words to tell me what you want.”
- By sharing the paint brushes, you were both able to paint together.”

Telling children what happened as a result of their actions helps them to feel proud of what they accomplished. If adults overuse simple phrases such as, “good job” without a follow up explanation, children can become dependent on adult approval versus internal motivation.

3. Create fun games to help children learn how to talk about feelings and label emotions.

Playing games like emotion bingo or name that emotion can be fun ways to teach children the words that go with their feelings. Children learn how to say “I am really mad!” instead of throwing a toy to express that emotion. For some ideas and examples of free emotion games, visit this page on the CSEFEL website:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/resources/strategies.html#teachingskills>.

Children all develop at differing rates. Here are some signs that a preschooler’s social and emotional health may be at risk:

- Rarely looks at you.
- Often seems sad or withdrawn.
- Is frequently aggressive and easily frustrated.
- Has difficulty getting along with others.
- Has extreme difficulty following directions or focusing.
- Lacks interest in other people or playthings.
- Shows limited emotion.

If you are concerned about a child’s social and emotional health, download this article at: http://www.cmich.edu/ehs/Documents/ehs/Great_Start/SE%20Flyer%20for%20DHS%20Orientation%20Packet_2010.01.11.doc which contains resources on page two or contact Mary Mackrain at mackrain@aol.com. ❖

Setting Up the Preschool Environment, from page 12

warm, supportive and responsive to children. Look for caregivers that do the following:

- Facilitate, observe, plan, and support when intervening in play.
- Prepare for the children before they arrive so full attention is on them.
- Individualize when the need arises according to the child’s abilities.
- Give every opportunity to children to learn self-help skills such as washing their own hands, cleaning up their own spills, picking up toys, getting themselves dressed to go outside, etc.

A well-planned classroom environment will provide safer surroundings, reduce behavior problems and offer children a better opportunity to learn. ❖

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS, CLASSES AND OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Child Abuse and Neglect Conference:
Prevention, Assessment & Treatment
October 18-19, 2010
Plymouth, MI
<http://cme.med.umich.edu/events>

Michigan's Premier Public Health Conference
October 27-28, 2010
Bay City, MI
www.malph.org/page.cfm/133/
(517) 485-0660

Annual Michigan Parenting Awareness
Conference
October 20, 2010 - Marquette, MI
November 19, 2010 - East Lansing, MI
Prevention Network
www.preventionnetwork.org
(800) 968-4968

Kent Regional 4C Annual Early Childhood
Conference
January 23, 2011
Grand Rapids, MI
www.4cchildcare.org/
(616) 451-8281

Michigan After-School Collaborative
Conference
October 21-22, 2010
Sterling Heights, MI
www.miafterschool.com
(517) 241-4290

Michigan Collaborative Early Childhood
Conference
January 26-28, 2011
Dearborn, MI
www.MiAEYC.org
(517) 336-9700, (800) 336-6424

2010 *Early On*® Annual Conference
October 21-22, 2010
East Lansing, MI
<http://eotta.ccreesa.org>
(866) 334-5437

A comprehensive list of conferences that are
scheduled for 2010 - 2011, including national
conferences, can be found at:
www.michigan.gov/documents/Early_Childhood_Conferences_2006_149277_7.pdf.

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CLASSES

(Call organization for classes, dates and times.)

Great Start CONNECT, www.greatstartconnect.org, (877) 61GreatStart [(877) 614-7328] or
(877) 81GSConnect [(877) 814-7266]

Michigan State University Extension, <http://bkc.fcs.msue.msu.edu/>, (517) 432-7654

Child Care Enhancement Program, Social and Emotional Training Series, (248) 739-1414 or email
mackrain@aol.com

T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps), (866) MITEACH [(866) 648-3224], a
scholarship program for child care professionals, will make the Michigan Association for the Education of
Young Children its new home starting October 1. Scholarships are still available for this school year so
providers should call the T.E.A.C.H. office today for more information.

HighScope Training Opportunities, www.highscope.org, (734) 485-2000, ext. 234

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CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION (CPSC) INFANT/CHILD PRODUCT RECALLS (not including toys)

The following recalls have been added since Issue 88 of MCCM (May 2010). Details on these product recalls may be obtained on the CPSC's website at www.cpsc.gov.

- Baby Matters recalls Nap Nanny® recliners due to entrapment, suffocation and fall hazards; one infant death reported.
- Pacifiers recalled by Antonio Flores due to choking hazard.
- Child's death prompts recall to repair portable playard tent by Tots In Mind due to strangulation hazard.
- Lajobi recalls to repair Bonavita, Babi Italia and Issi drop-side cribs due to entrapment, suffocation and fall hazards.
- Jardine, Evenflo, Millon Dollar Baby, Simmons, Pottery Barn Kids, and Delta recall to repair drop-side cribs due to entrapment, suffocation and fall hazards.
- Child Craft drop-side cribs recalled due to entrapment, suffocation and fall hazards.
- CPSC announces recall to repair Child Craft brand stationary-side cribs with dowel due to entrapment and strangulation hazards.
- Seven manufacturers announce recalls to repair cribs to address entrapment, suffocation and fall hazards.
- Baby walkers recalled by Suntech Enterprises due to fall hazard.
- Regal lager recalls infant carriers due to fall hazard.
- Bayside Furnishings recalls to repair youth beds sold at Costco due to entrapment hazard.
- Infant death prompts recall of ring slings made by Sprout Stuff due to suffocation risk.
- C & T International/Sorelle recalls cribs due to strangulation and suffocation hazards.
- Graco®-branded drop side cribs made by Lajobi recalled due to entrapment and suffocation hazards.
- Simplicity cribs recalled by retailers; mattress-support collapse can cause suffocation and strangulation.
- Le Hing Inc. announces recall of baby walkers due to a fall hazard.

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