

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

The Goals of Our Curriculum

Our early childhood curriculum strives to help children become enthusiastic learners. We encourage children to be active, creative explorers who think their own thoughts and are willing to act upon their individual ideas. Partnering with parents, we are teaching them to be life-long learners.

Aligning with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (see Page 2) as well as state early learning standards and local public schools, our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of early childhood development:

Social/Emotional Development:

- Children will feel comfortable and secure in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are members of the group.
- Children will experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and maintain positive attitudes toward life.

Approaches to Learning:

- Children will engage their minds, bodies, and senses as they learn to listen, observe, imagine, discuss, move, and solve problems.
- Children will use thought and self-expression as they learn new skills and achieve goals.

Cognition/General Knowledge:

- Children will acquire school-readiness skills, becoming confident learners ready to transition into public school.
- Through math and science related activities, children will develop logical and abstract thinking skills that allow them to connect ideas, reason, ask questions, explore, seek additional information, analyze, develop theories, and make appropriate decisions.
- By engaging in social studies activities, children will develop an understanding of relating to other people and the world around them.

Language/Literacy:

- Through the use of books, storytelling, writing activities, and conversation, children will develop an understanding of language as a method of communication.
- Children will expand vocabulary and increase word comprehension.
- Children will acquire skills that promote the use of written communication.

Physical Development/Health:

- Children will learn to promote their physical well-being through understanding of their own bodies, appropriate muscle control, frequent exercise, proper hygiene, adequate nutrition, and healthy, safe habits.



and



Earlier Is Not Better

Many parents are concerned when their children aren't learning letters and numbers. They feel that ditto sheets and homework in preschool programs will prepare their children for elementary school.

We could give your children workbooks. We could make them memorize the alphabet. We could drill them. We could test them. But we know that if we do, your children are going to lose something very important.

Children who are rushed into reading and writing too soon miss important steps in learning and may suffer later on because they lack the foundation they need for using language. Children who are taught to read in preschool may be able to sound out and recognize words, but they may also have little understanding of what they are reading. If they haven't been given time to play, they won't have explored objects enough to know what words mean (like "hard, harder, hardest".) If they aren't allowed to string beads, button, dress up, cut, paste, pour, and draw, they won't develop the small muscle skills they need for writing.

Because math involves more than memorizing facts like $2+2=4$, because it involves logical thinking, children shouldn't be pushed into paper and pencil arithmetic too soon. To acquire the foundation for logical thinking children need many opportunities to count objects, sort them into piles, and add some to a pile and take some away. It is by playing games like these that they will learn to truly understand addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication. Without these concrete experiences, children may give correct answers but probably won't understand what they are doing and why.

Worst of all, if children are rushed into academic subjects too soon, they may lose their enthusiasm for learning and lose their sense of themselves as learners. If children are told what to learn and memorize by the teacher, they may become more passive and dependent learners, and be less excited about learning something new. Children who are given plenty of time to play, however, learn to ask their own questions and figure out their own answers. They are responsible for their own learning. They see themselves as explorers, discoverers, problem solvers, and inventors.

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF) presents five broad areas of early learning, referred to as central domains. These domains reflect research-based expectations for learning and development. The HSELOF emphasizes the key skills, behaviors, and knowledge that programs must foster in children ages birth to 5 to help them be successful in school and life.

		CENTRAL DOMAINS				
		APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development	
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development	
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning		