WASHITA VALLEY CAC HEAD START
CURRICULUM PLAN
2011-2012

WOW GERMS!!!!!!!

WOW = Written Plan

GERMS =**Goals** and objectives for children's development and learning
Experiences or activities to meet the goals
Roles of staff and parents
Materials, space and equipment necessary for optimal development and learning
Sound child development principles and the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Revised
6/11
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GOALS FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Children will improve emergent literacy, numeracy, and language skills.
- Children will improve general cognitive skills, including problem-solving and logical thinking skills.
- Children will improve fine and gross motor skills.
- Children will develop positive social skills and emotional skills, including respect, caring and conflict resolution.
- Children will develop a positive self-image and express emotions, in age appropriate ways.
- Children will develop good physical health and practice good hygiene.
- Children with disabilities will participate in a full range of activities according to their IEP.
- Children will develop an awareness of cultural diversity.
- Children will develop a foundation for school readiness.
- Children will develop language skills including, listening and speaking skills, and reading and writing skills.
- Children will develop an awareness of living things, their environment, attributes of time and temperature through science activities.
- Children will develop a positive attitude toward children with a disability.
- Children will increase their approaches to learning to include curiosity, persistence, and reasoning.

Child Outcome Skills are Underlined

Children will achieve goals through experiences listed below:

- Hands-on experiences
- Use of daily routines
- Meaningful conversation
- Classification and sorting by size, shape, color and use of counting
- Patterning by using stringing beads in a variety of color, size and shape
- One-to-one correspondence
- Ordering and sequencing including bigger/smaller, big/bigger/biggest, small/smaller/smallest
- Providing books which support number concepts
- Provide a print rich environment, which includes labeling of objects, children's names on classroom items, variety of appropriate books, helper charts, pictorial, classroom rules, labeling shelves, learning centers, etc.
- Use of open-ended questions, to include who, what, when, where, why and how questions
- Use of puzzles, assorted shaped blocks, and other problem solving materials
- Creative Art expression
- Non-competitive relay games, outdoor activities
- Opportunity to feel successful
- Positive reinforcement from teachers
- Provide appropriate outlets for emotions and names for those emotions
- Provide health and hygiene lessons weekly
- Include children with disabilities in daily activities and routines, such as field trips, table setting, center time, etc.
- Provide and encourage opportunities for parents, family members, and community partners to share cultural activities with all children
- Provide if possible field trips to the child's next place of enrollment and encourage use of similar materials in the latter months of the school year
- Use of sensory materials such as sand, water, sound tubes, smelly bottles, tasting experiences, different textured collage materials, etc
- Provide concrete learning experiences through books, charting, journals, alphabet games, name cards, labels, etc
- Compare/measure by size, shape and weight
- Spatial concepts
- Numeracy activities such as counting and identifying numerals
- Following directions
- Answer simple to detailed questions
- Print concepts including songs, finger plays, letter recognition, sounds of the letters and words

ROLES OF PARENTS AND STAFF

Washita Valley Head Start recognizes and respects that the parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer as often as possible in their child's classroom. An Orientation to the Head Start program and volunteering is offered to all parents at the first parent meeting. Volunteers assist the classroom staff, work directly with the children as much as possible for example; read to individual children or as groups, write children's words as stories, assist with outdoor activities, computer assistance, playing games with small groups, share cultural experiences, etc. Parents will share information with staff from home observations of their children. Staff will communicate regularly with parents about their children's daily routines.

During home visits and parent conferences, the classroom staff and parents work together to set educational goals for the child, based on the child's interest, abilities and developmental level. These goals are incorporated into the curriculum.

Parent training and/ or written materials on child development and learning are made available for parents in their home language whenever possible.

Parents will collaborate with staff in the development of the curriculum. Parents have the opportunity to give input into the lesson plans. Parent signature is on lesson plans, indicating input into the lesson plan. Parents have an opportunity to share their ideas and thoughts about the curriculum at the Education Advisory Meetings. The Education Advisory Committee is made up current Head Start Parents, Head Start Staff and Policy Council Representative.

The teaching staff will establish a predictable, stable and nurturing environment in which each child feels valued, safe and secure. Through children's observations, the teaching staff will plan and implement a program based on each child's individual needs and interests on each child including children with disabilities.

The teaching staff will use a variety of strategies to encourage and support children as they work alone and together to make their own discoveries, take risks, and learn through trial and error. Teaching staff will believe that each child has potential, accept each child as he/she is and help all children grow in the realization of their unlimited possibilities.

The following are literacy and language recommendations of the National Head Start Association for teaching staff and parents:

1. **Expand children's oral language usage**
2. **Read several stories every day to children**
3. **Teach children rhymes and songs**
4. **Support reading and writing development through children's play**
5. **Point at the words occasionally when you read to children**
6. **Encourage children to experiment with writing everyday**
7. **Provide children a special area where they can experiment with print and books**
8. **Be a literacy advocate; model reading and writing everyday**
9. **Encourage children to notice print and how words are read and spelled**
10. **Encourage a special time each day for enjoying books and writing**

Teaching staff will track children's progress through monthly observation notes and document skills accomplished on the Teaching Strategies GOLD Child Assessment Portfolio. This is also used to plan future goals as the child progresses. Teaching staff in partnership with the child's parents will set goals according to the interest, learning style, and development of each child using the Child Conference Form

A comprehensive, developmentally appropriate method is used where active learning is facilitated by classroom arrangements utilizing interest centers and individualized activities. The teaching staff at WVCAC utilizes theories and practices recommended by The Creative Curriculum and Head Start Performance Standards. Each program has a set of goals and objectives based on the developmental stage of the children enrolled. WVCAC believe learning is an on-going, life-long process. Our curriculum is based on emergent, child-centered, and play based activities designed to help children gain a deeper understanding of the world around them.

MATERIALS USED WHICH SUPPORT THE HEAD START CURRICULUM

Listed below by learning center are materials that each Head Start classroom may use but not limited to specific items.

Creative Art Center

Easel	Tempera Paint	Finger Paint
Paint Brushes	Large Easel Paper	Newspaper
Construction Paper	Tissue Paper	Assorted Sized Paper
Crayons	Markers	Pencils
Chalk	Play dough	Stapler
Tape	Hole Puncher	Scissors
Sponges	String/Yarn	Chenille Stems
Fabric Scraps	Glue	Cotton Balls
Other collage materials as needed		Water Colors

Library/ Listening Center

Books	Magazines	Newspapers
Chart Stories	Catalogs	Chart Stories
Pillows	Soft Chairs	Carpet
Rugs	Book Rack	Books with Tapes
Tape Recorder	Head Phones	Puppets
Stuffed Animals	Flannel Board	Quiet Games
Record Player	CD Players	

Music and Movement Center

Drums	Kazoos	Rhythm Sticks
Bells/ Bell Bands	Triangles/Cymbals	Xylophones
Melody Bells	Maracas/Shakers	Rattles

ABC / Writing Center

Chalkboards, Chalk and Eraser
Pencils
Erasers
Markers
Crayons
Stamp Pad
Rubber Stamps
Envelopes
"Stamps"
Variety of paper
Flannel Board
ABC Games
Laminated Name Cards
Folder Games
Letter Books
Flannel Letters
Letter Magnets
Labels, etc
Letter Puzzles

Manipulative Center

Puzzles
Bead/ Laces
Sorting Trays
Games (Memory, Lotto, Bingo, etc)
Pegs
Items to sort/ classify
Peg board
Dominoes
Dressing Frames
Construction Sets
Parquetry Blocks
Lacing Cards
Lego Table
Pattern Cards
Pencil and Paper
Folder Games
Sequencing Cards
Rhyming Cards

Dramatic Play Center

Stove, Sink, Refrigerator, Cabinet
Doll Clothes
Doll Bed
Table and Chairs
Telephone
Cooking and Eating Utensils
Housekeeping Tools
Mirror
Jewelry
Dolls(male, female, ethnic, disabled)
Cash Registrar
Play Money
Dress up Clothes
Play Foods
Paper
Cookbooks
Phone Directory
Menus and Maps
Decorations to make it feel "homey"

This learning center may be change out according to the weekly them/study such as: Doctor's office, Dentist's office, Veterinarian's Office, Grocery Store, Hair Salon, etc.

Block/ Construction Center

Large Cardboard Blocks
Traffic Signs
Wood Unit Blocks
Other Blocks
Play Animals
Vehicles
Play People
Trains
Materials for making and Posting signs

Woodworking Center

Goggles
Nails
Hard-Hat
Measuring Tape
Golf Tees
Hammer
Work Gloves
Glue
Styrofoam
Bottle Caps
Carpenter Apron
Sand Paper
Work Boots
Wood Scraps
Juice Can Lids

Math / Science Center

Magnifiers of various sizes and power
Magnets and items to test for attraction
Nature items: Rocks, Shells, Pine Cones
Science Books, Card Collections, Posters
Sound, Textures, Smell, Matching Materials
Measuring Devices
Color Mixing Jars
Patterning Cards
Number Pegs and Pegboard
Beads and Laces
Balance Scale
Color Paddles
Kaleidoscope
Acorns
Insects
Insect Cages
Tornado Tubes
Plants
Aquarium
Sequencing Cards

Sensory / Sand & Water Table

Buckets and Plastic container of various sizes
Shovels and Scoops
Sieves, Strainers
Measuring Cups
Sand / Water Wheel
Sink and Float Objects
Funnels
Small Boats
Rotary Beater
Water Pump
Plastic Tubing
Bastes

Alone / Quiet Area

Pillows(Big and Little)
Blankets
Calming / Quiet Materials
Stuffed Animals
Writing Materials
Books
Tape Player

Computer Center

Computer
Literacy Software
Science Software
Visual Discrimination Software
Math Software

Outdoor Learning

Tricycles	Activity Mats	Parachute
Variety of Balls	Traffic Signs	Bean Bags
Jump Ropes	Paint	Table Game
Bowling Game	Books	Sand/Water Table

Variety of indoor materials can be brought outside

DAILY SCHEDULE MUST INCLUDE;

*Teacher Directed activities:

Large group; no more than 10 minutes, children must be actively involved.

Opening Circle	Songs/ Finger Plays	Games
Simply Phonics Simply Reading	Transitions	Theme related information
I Love You Rituals	Be Choosy	Peabody Language Development
Books		

Small group activities are implemented into daily learning center time. Specific activities are listed on the lesson plans such as theme related, individual goals, health and safety, mental health, dental, and nutrition activities, etc. The following resources are provided to each classroom:

- Core Curriculum: Creative Curriculum
- Mental Health: Second Step
- Nutrition: Food Groupies/ I am Moving I am Learning
- Dental: Bright Smiles, Bright Futures
- Language/ Literacy: Peabody Language Development/ Simply Phonics/STEP Manual

Weekly Lesson Plans must include the following; Dental Health, Nutrition, Health & Safety. Lessons are required on a daily basis. Nutrition experiences are required monthly. Multi-cultural materials and awareness are integrated into the overall lesson plan. Refer to listing below;

- Daily : Each day these curricula's will be implemented; Peabody Language Development / I Love You Rituals / Simply Phonics Simply Reading / IMIL /
- Weekly: Once a week these curricula's will be implemented; Bright Smiles, Bright Future / Food Groupies-Be Choosy Be Healthy / Second Step
- Monthly: Once a month these curricula's will be implemented; Nutrition Food Experience / Health and Safety Discussion/ Transportation-Pedestrian Safety

*Child-Initiated Activities

Starting with the morning learning center time 60 minutes the child may initiate own activities. Children are given the opportunity to work at their own pace and in own style, move freely from one center/activity to another. In addition 30 minutes of outdoor play is provided daily (weather permitting). Adults occasionally initiate/lead outdoor activities (circle games, jump rope, parachute activities, etc)

The job of the teaching staff is to be the facilitator for learning. The environment, the materials, and the labeling are the key elements for the success of the program. Careful thought should be put into each learning center area, explore different arrangements, change materials often, and label as much as you can. Be aware of what does not work for children and change when necessary. Learning centers may be expanded outdoors when possible.

Infant / Toddler

The Early Head Start program is designed to provide 'family-like' environment to nurture the development of each child.

Each child enrolled in the Infant and Toddler program will be assigned a primary caregiver upon enrollment. Constant caregivers are essential to forming positive relationships between the children and teachers. The primary caregiver assigned to each child is responsible to plan activities for each of the children in the care group based on individual needs. There are six primary goals that guide our interactions with infants and toddlers:

•To learn about themselves (independence and self- concept)
•To learn about their feelings (emotions and expressing feelings)
•To learn about others (sharing, empathy)
•To learn about communicating (verbal and non-verbal)
•To learn about moving and doing (gross motor, fine motor, eye hand coordination, and self help)
•To acquire thinking skills (cognitive development)

General Daily Schedule for Infants and Toddlers:

The daily schedule for infants and toddlers is based on the individual needs of each child. For planning a general daily schedule has been established. The daily schedule will be posted in each classroom. Teachers may introduce planned activities indoors and outdoors. The schedule is flexible and is used as a guideline for the day's activities. Our primary goal is to meet the individual needs of the children. The infants' schedule will be determined by the child's individual needs.

Parent input and communication is encouraged and valued in planning for the specific needs of each child. The Early Head Start classroom is set up with interest areas which are listed below.

There are many opportunities for children to learn and explore the world around them. Infants and young toddlers dictate their own schedules, while older toddlers begin to follow a group schedule to prepare them for Preschool.

Daily activity sheets are given to parents each day which include food intake, bathroom and sleeping patterns, as well as daily activities and notes.

Every classroom must have the following learning centers available at all times:

Dramatic Play
Math / Science
Creative Art

Manipulative
Blocks / Construction
Sand & Water
Computer
Library/ Listening
ABC Writing Center
Music / Movement – must be available to children either as a choice or at teacher's discretion
Woodworking – is an option in each classroom
Quiet Area

*Daily Routines

Arrival:
Each child is greeted warmly by name as she/he arrives in the morning. Adults bringing children are also greeted. Morning activities are provided until all children arrive.

Meals:
Head Start children and older toddlers will assist with the setting of the table. Children are encouraged to have family style meals. Teaching staff will eat with the older toddlers and Preschool children, modeling good table manners. Teaching staff encourages pleasant, relaxed atmosphere and follows children's lead in conversation. Children clear their own space and assist in cleaning tables, chairs, and floor. Children clean up their own spills, with minimal adult assistance. All bottles will be labeled with the child's name. Formula bottles will be made at the time needed. Breast milk will be stored in the refrigerator.

Snacks will be on demand for young toddlers

Rest:
Small infants dictate their own schedule. Older infants and toddlers begin to structure their schedule in a group environment beginning with meal times and rest. Rest will be documented on a daily activity note documenting sleeping patterns, eating pattern and toileting patter of the day. At least 10-15 minutes should be scheduled for rest/ quiet time each day. An atmosphere conducive to rest includes; soothing music (preferably instrumental) or environmental sounds recording played at low volume. Story books can be read while children rest and relax. Rest time for full day center may be adjusted to fit the extended hours, however, no more than 60 minutes is to be scheduled for rest time.

Toileting:
Diaper changing and toileting is an on-going process and is done as needed throughout the day. Checks will be done every hour. Diapering Checks and changes are recorded daily on a Daily Activity Note documenting sleeping patterns, eating pattern and toileting pattern of the day. Independence is encouraged. An adult must monitor children in the restroom. Children should be taught/ reminded of proper wiping, aiming, flushing, seat lifting and hand washing techniques. Children are allowed to use the restroom whenever they need, with no negative words or attitudes on the part of the teaching staff.

*OTHER

When a young toddler or older infant receives his first tooth, staff will wipe it with gauze. Toddlers will brush teeth after eating. Children will brush teeth daily. During this time, children should have little waiting time. Adults supervising tooth brushing must model for the children each day with proper techniques. Children as well as adults need to be reminded to drink plenty of water. Water should be available to the children at all times, indoors and outdoors. Assorted pictures/ posters should be displayed throughout the classroom depicting theme-related items, children being served, familiar objects, health and nutrition, dental health, and safety issues.

*Theme/ Studies

Each classroom builds its curriculum around various themes/studies. The weekly activities surrounding the theme/studies should be planned with the children's interests and developmental levels in mind. Children should have some input into the planning of activities though group discussions.

*GUIDELINES FOR LEARNING CENTERS

During learning center time, the teachers move from center to center, interacting with the children. Center time allows children to be involved in "hands-on" activities. Objects are to be rotated often to stimulate and challenge infants, toddlers and preschool children. Infants and toddlers learning environment will provide an open area which will allow for their physical skills to be enhanced by; pulling, pushing, crawling, walking and climbing.

ART

The key idea to remember is that it is the process that is most important. The product, if there is one, is of importance only if it offers insight into the child's style and level of development. NO PATTERNS OR MODELS DONE BY ADULTS ARE TO BE POSTED. Children should be encouraged to use their own creativity and imagination in working with the art materials. Children's artwork, especially drawing and paintings should be neatly displayed throughout the room. A portfolio is kept on each child. The entries should show progress and is not limited to drawings. Photo's of daily routines, chart stories, etc. are an excellent way to show progression.

Easels are to be available daily; with large pieces of paper and paint. Begin by putting out only two colors of paint, making it easier for the children as they master, using a different brush for each color, wiping the brush on the container to remove excess paint before applying brush to paper, etc. However, the number of colors should be increased as needed so that the children have an opportunity to use a wide array of colors. Children may want to tell you about their painting when they are finished.

Remember to ask, "Would you like to tell me about your painting?" rather than, "What is it?" Make positive, specific comments; ('You sure used a lot of colors!'; 'I think the blue and purple look beautiful together.', 'How did you get that beautiful shade of green? 'I see a red circle, a blue triangle, and lots of yellow curving lines in your painting.' Etc) Avoid more general and /or judgmental comments; ('That's great!' 'Good job', 'Look what a mess you made!' , 'You used so much paint you tore your paper and now your painting is ruined.' Etc)

The art center should have a variety of materials for children's independent use during center time. Planned activities including, but not limited to; finger painting, shaving cream painting, string, sponge,

marble and object painting, etc; constructing collages, junk sculptures, mobiles, creating a group mural may be planned into weekly lesson to have the same special activity available for at least two days. Children may wish to repeat an activity more than once. Children should also be encouraged to draw in other centers, for example; drawing a picture of a fish in the aquarium or of themselves in the mirror. Art can be taken outdoors, also. Paint the sidewalk/ building with water, have the children predict what will happen; will it dry before they have to go indoors? Will the parts of the sun dry at the same rate as those in the shade? Why? Draw with sidewalk chalk on wet and dry sidewalk. Hang a long piece butcher piece of paper. Try different types of bugs. How about worms? Compare the different tracks. Draw around each other's shadow. Try some sand paintings in a fairly low traffic area of the playground. (Just add powdered tempera to sand one color to a container) let the sand trickle on the ground in a design of your choice. Using your imagination freely you can think up/discover many other creative art ideas.

Library/ Listening

The library, as well as throughout the classroom, should provide a print-rich environment. This means that children see the written word throughout the center and are able to interact, and observe adults interacting with these words. To encourage a love of books and reading, the library area should be cozy and inviting. If possible, it should be near other quiet centers. Books should be placed on the book rack with the covers facing out. Children should be taught from the first day they enter on how to care for books, and adults need to model proper care and use of books. Any torn or defaced books should be immediately removed from the center until they are repaired. Children should be taught to bring torn books to an adult's attention. It is necessary to provide a variety of child-appealing books in this center at all times, including books written in Spanish, those reflective of a variety of cultures and families, books depicting person with disabilities, predictable and/or rhyming books and classic children's favorites. Teachers should be in this center daily to read and/ or listen to children, individually or in small groups. Children can listen to stories on tape/CD, following along in the book. Adults will need to closely monitor and assist with this process initially. However, with some visual clues (e.g. green dot on the 'play' button, red dot on the 'stop' button) and coaching, children can be taught the proper use of the tape player/CD on Page 73 of the STEP Manual, there is a list of library/listening activities. The children's section of the public library is a good source of quality books.

Small Group Read Aloud Story Time

Small group story time should actively involve the children. All Read Aloud books should be read and reviewed before presented to children. Before you start, make sure all the children are comfortable and can visually see the book. You may wish to start with a 'settling down' finger play. Hold the book with the page facing children. (Teachers became experts at reading sideways and even upside down!) Start by stating the title of the book and the names of the author and illustrator. Talk about the illustrator and the illustration on the cover of the book. From the clues, have the children guess what the story is about. While reading the story, pause often for input from the children. Remember to define unfamiliar terms. Ask questions; "What do you think will happen next?" "How do you think Sam felt?" "Why" etc. Vary your story time to include oral stories (no book), flannel board stories, puppetry, and dramatizations of stories by children, finger plays and nursery rhymes, poetry, props. Story time should last no more than 15 minutes. Read Aloud time must be a routine and actively involve children. When choosing your weekly read aloud book, teaching staff must take the following into consideration:

- Quality literature, no cartoon related books
- Educational Value
- Books must be large enough to allow children to interact

The weekly routine of Read Aloud time should include the following;

1. Discuss the title of the book and have children make predictions.
2. Discuss the author and illustrator of the book, what he / she does.
3. Introduce at least three vocabulary words per week.
4. Vocabulary words will be changed on the word wall at the start of the week and reviewed daily.
5. Read the story completely the first time for fun. (read before introducing to children)
6. Discuss the main characters of the story, as opened ended questions to include what, where, when, how and why.

Classroom Labeling

Meaningful print should be displayed in a variety of ways. The purpose is to provide children with information. Displays should be clear, uncluttered, and at child's eye level. The focus should be on the print, decorations should be kept to a minimum.

In addition to the library area, children will see the written words on sign, labels, charts, graphs, etc. throughout the classroom and center. As much as possible, these should be in both English and Spanish, using proper upper and lower case letters. Picture cues aid the children in decoding the written words. As they begin to develop phonemic awareness, and make more connections between the printed and spoken word, children should be encouraged to learn the names of some letters. (Beginning with the letters in the name) **Letters should not be taught by rote, but rather by context**.

Every time you print a child's name on his/her work you also say each letter out loud as you print it. Soon the child will begin to spell his/her name along with you. Other obvious places to emphasize letters are on the signs, such as "stop" and "exit" and songs, such as the one about the dog named BINGO.

Labeling shelves and containers encourages children to be independent when choosing and putting away materials, as well as helping children build skills such as sorting, matching, grouping, and classifying. Labels must include the printed word(s) followed by an icon. Place the label clearly on the material on the shelf and/or on a see through box holding the material. Be certain that all labels are at the child's eye level. Create durable labels by laminating and securing firmly to shelf or wall, make extra labels and laminate so you are able to alternate pictures to match materials. Be creative when labeling. For example: in the block area, color coded labels for different shapes. In dramatic play, trace the outline of utensils on contact paper and secure to the wall, a hook placed over the cut shape allows the real utensil to be placed on top of the cut shape.

ABC/Writing Center

Much praise and encouragement should be given to children as they explore the skills involved writing. It is important that adults working with children in this area understand the stages of writing development and respects each child's efforts. Samples of the children's work in this area should be on display, with scribbles valued as well as more recognizable letters. Adults may spend time in this area taking dictation for children to create books, which children can then illustrate. Alphabet and number charts may be hung in this area, at child's seated eye level.

Writing also takes place throughout the room. For example: write shopping lists and phone messages in dramatic play, print their names on their artwork, make signs and labels for their block structures, etc. **Writing instruments and paper must be supplied in all learning centers** except Sand/Water. **Children's name cards must** be provided at all times in the ABC/Writing Center. On page 175 of the STEP Manual are listed guidelines for writing names.

The ABC/Writing Center is specifically designed to house letter recognition materials. The STEP Manual will be used as a reference book for alphabet activities. The Letter Identification Checklist will be used to document each child's progress.

There are many ideas on pages 82,84,186,198 of the STEP Manual to include how to use the writing center, materials, how to connect writing to all learning centers, and alphabet activities.

Computer

The Computer Center should be located near the writing center, if possible in the preschool classroom. Children will need close supervision initially, but will quickly master the mechanics needed for utilizing children's software. One or two children may be in this center at the same time. One operates the computer while the other observes, offers suggestions, and advice, etc. Teaching staff may offer children suggestions and advice. In order for everyone who wishes to take a turn, a timing device is almost essential for this area.

Manipulative

This is a favorite center with many children. In addition to a table and chairs; you may provide carpet squares available for children who prefer to work on the floor. This helps keep the manipulative pieces in a smaller area, facilitating clean up. A Lego table may be placed in this center if space permits. Easy puzzles should be placed in the center at the beginning of the year for children who have had little experience with them. As the year progresses and you get to know the developmental levels of each child, ad puzzles ranging in degrees of difficulty that will challenge, but not frustrate each of the children. Children may have to be reminded many times not to put a puzzle away unless all the pieces have been put in place. Encourage them to ask for help from another child dif they experience difficulty completing the puzzle they selected. Puzzles with missing pieces should be removed from the shelf until pieces are located.

Manipulative sets need to be stored in clear plastic containers or buckets that are labeled with word and icon. This facilitates clean up, and at the same time the children are practicing visual discriminations and sorting. It is important to rotate these sets frequently to maintaining children's interest.

Provide lots of sets for sorting. Children should use their own idea as you observe, comment on what they are doing. "I see you put all the green bears in on group" or "You have all the largest bears at the front of the line and smallest at the back." Alternatively, ask them why they sorted them as they did.

Check your sets often to make sure they have been properly sorted, broken pieces have been removed, and sets are complete. This is especially important with games. How frustrating to play a Memory game

when one of the card is missing its match! (You may want to start the year with half the set of matching cards until the children increase their skill level)

Games need adult guidance until the children learn the rules. Then children can use them independently. Preschoolers often make up their own rules. This is fine as long as there is not an objection for other players. Memory games can also be used as a matching game or for classifying.

Dramatic Play

What wonderful opportunities for socialization and role-play this center can offer. That is why you need to allow at least four children in this center at one time. Be flexible with this rule however, as some scenarios may require more participants. Rotating props and labeling will facilitate keeping this area organized. There is such a thing as too much of a good thing. Change or add to the area to fit your theme and children's interest; the possibilities are endless! This area may be turned into a beauty parlor, restaurant, store, ranch, airport terminal, and doctor's office. Dramatic play often spills over into other areas of the classroom as children set up chairs for a train or bus, take food and a blanket to another area for a picnic, take play tools to "fix" broken chairs, etc. This should be allowed, with the understanding that everything goes back in its proper place at clean-up time. Real food preparation and tasting can be done in this center. This is also an ideal place to practice emergency situations; how to dial 911 and what to say; what to do if you are lost in a store; how to safely exit a house on fire, etc. Children love for adults to role-play with them.

Blocks/Construction

There is a wealth of learning that takes place in this center, because it often is not obvious, it is overlooked. Adults really need to spend time in the center daily, observing then interacting with the children. Don't assume you know what the children have built. Let the children lead you into a conversation about what they are doing. If you ask, "Would you tell me about what you are building?" and the answer is, "A castle" your next questions might be, "Does anyone live there?" Followed by "Where are they now?" and "What are they doing?" etc.

In addition to creativity and cooperation, the block center is a wonderful place for exploring all kinds of concepts, form shapes, size and fractions to symmetry and balance. Many problem-solving skills are utilized as children try to determine which block to use, how to achieve balance, etc. Although it is often tempting to take over or directly assist in the block building, children learn much more when they are allowed to solve problems on their own, with maybe an occasional helpful hint when they appear to be getting frustrated. (e.g. "What might happen if you used this sized block instead?"

Children often spend a great deal of time creating elaborate structures and scenarios. If at all possible, and the children wish to leave these up at least 'til the end of the day, so children can return to them later. Do not forget to offer to help make a sign for their buildings and / or a "Please Do Not Disturb? Sign if the building is to be left up.

Remember to rotate props, including theme-based ones if possible. This applies to pictures too; photos of various types of buildings, real farms, zoos, etc. Also, provide at least two different types of blocks, allowing the children to combine various types of blocks, allowing the children to combine various types of blocks in one structure, if they wish.

The block center needs to be large enough to allow up to four children to work at one time with plenty of room for their zoos, farms, villages or roadways. A walkway should be marked with tape in front of the block shelf where block building is not permitted. This facilitates access to blocks with less likelihood of disturbing any work in progress. For safety's sake, children should be instructed not to build any higher than their waste.

Math/Science

Children should be encouraged to bring in interesting objects to contribute to this center. It is important to rotate materials, and provide guided learning opportunities for the use of some. For example, a magnet isn't of much interest without a tray of items to try it out on. The challenge for the children is to discover which items the magnet will attract. Once a child figures out that it only attracts to metal objects, you can challenge them further by asking if it will attract to all metal objects, or only some. As they work with this exploration, they can sort the objects on laminated cardboard divided into columns labeled "attracts" and "doesn't attract. Adults need to visit this area often to explain the materials and facilitate children's problem-solving and cognitive thinking skills. New activities/ items should be rotated and added to this area on a regular basis. Refer to Creative Curriculum Mathematics Resource Book.

Children should be taught to respect all living things. Therefore, while live insects and other animals provide wonderful opportunities for "up-close and personal" learning, they should be returned at the end of the day by the class to the place they were found; unless you have the knowledge and materials to provide the food and environment necessary for their survival. If at all possible, include real plants, aquarium, and hermit crabs in this center. Be sure to allow the children to water the plants and feed the animals with adult supervision.

Numerals, like letters should be taught in context. Birthdays are a great time to emphasize numerals. Counting can begin with counting body parts. (One nose, two eyes, etc) Graphs are a wonderful way to show comparison of quantity. (e.g. "Are there more birthdays in March or December?" Which color is the most favorite, the least favorite?) Mealtimes provide many natural opportunities; Please put a napkin by each place; you may have one or two crackers; can you pour half a glass of milk; etc. The use of measuring devices teaches children about numerals as well as comparisons. Sorting, sequencing, and patterning activities will be used to enhance children's problem solving skills as well as introducing math concepts.

Sand & Water Table

Sand and Water Table is open daily for children's use and materials are rotated frequently as in any other center. Since it is usually a popular center, it needs to be located to allow tow children to play at one time. In addition to sand and water, other materials that can be used in the sand table include; fall leaves, and twigs, stones, snow, dried beans, uncooked rice, Easter grass (with all sizes of plastic eggs hidden, some with chicks or other surprises) potting soil, etc.

Use extreme caution if you decide to use cornmeal or rice, they make for an extremely slippery floor.

To provide opportunities for comparing and contrasting, two or three dishpans may be placed in the table. Included a variety of sensory experiences such as wet/dry sand, top soil and real clay. Use your

creativity to provide theme based props. Do not provide too many props at once, but enough so each child is busily engaged. Remember to take water play outdoors occasionally; children have great fun washing the dolls, doll clothes and play dishes.

Health precautions: Always have children wash their hands before and after playing in the water table, and do not allow them to blow into the water (through straws or tubes). Rather, provide individual containers of soapy water and individual straws for bubble blowing. (Preferably outdoors)

Woodworking

(Optional)

IT IS MANDATORY THAT THIS CENTER BE DIRECTLY SUPERVISED BY AN ADULT AT ALL TIMES WHEN TOOLS ARE BEING USED! Such tools should be placed in the center only when a person is available to offer this close monitoring. However, there are many activities that children can do in this center that do not entail the use of potentially dangerous tools. For example; they can sand wood, or glue together twig or craft stick frames. (Clothes pins make wonderful clamps for holding sticks together until they're dry.) They can even make a new sandpaper block for your music center or restore old ones. You can provide a box of real nuts and bolts of different sizes for them to sort and fit together. Golf tees and plastic hammers can be added at the beginning of the year to familiarize the children with tools.

When real tools are introduced, the staff will work with the children individually until tools are used correctly. Children using these tools must wear safety glasses. Make sure the tools you are using are the proper size and type for your children.

Outdoor Learning

Staff is to supervise the children at all times, both teachers will be outside with the children. Weather permitting, outside activities are implemented daily for at least thirty minutes. Learning center activities can be done outside, such as art, large group time. Outside play entails a large planned group activity with regular play, consisting of running, jumping, riding trikes, tossing and catching the ball, interactive play with staff and children, painting activities with easels, sand and water play as well as use of other equipment. I Am Moving I Am Learning activities are to be utilized and implemented by teaching staff. Use of cell phone prohibited unless there is an emergency.

Large Group Circle Time

Large group circle time may occur 2-3 times a day and should last no more than 10 – 20 minutes. Young toddlers are not able to sit in group for certain periods of time. Older toddlers begin to structure their schedule in a group environment. Activity times are designed to give children and primary caregivers the opportunity to complete daily plans in an individual manner. During circle time both teachers will be involved with the children. One teacher directs the lesson and the other monitors behavior, bathroom visits, hand washing, etc. Teachers should always review the classroom rules during circle time. New learning center activities can be introduced during this time. Suggested circle time activities:

- Welcome Children
- Introduce events of the day
- I Love You Rituals
- Calendar/ Weather (3-5minutes)
- Language/Literacy Activities/Simply Phonics
- Songs
- Theme related hands on activities
- Helpers for the day
- I Am Moving I Am Learning