

The Creative Curriculum® *for* Preschool,
Guided Edition

Getting Started



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Getting Started

Foreword

If there is one place in the world where a single human being can make a difference that will last a lifetime, it is in an early childhood classroom. The value of the role you play as a caring, trusted adult in the lives of young children cannot be overstated because decades of rigorous academic research confirms what you and countless other teachers already know: that the positive relationships you build with children are at the core of all great teaching and meaningful learning. Furthermore, the benefits of those positive relationships have a significant, lasting impact that goes far beyond the preschool years.

Like all human beings, young children want and need to feel safe, cared about, and respected. The classroom community that you create and the experiences you offer will be the most influential factors in determining whether children experience those feelings of belonging and security during this important time in their lives. How children feel in the early childhood classroom is just as important as how they think. It is what gives them the confidence to explore, wonder, and discover freely—which is the beginning of a lifelong journey toward becoming active, engaged, and curious learners.

We designed *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition* with the understanding that being an early childhood teacher, working to support the development and learning of young children is an enormous responsibility. This resource is a powerful tool to help you get off to the right start.

This guide, along with the other resources and materials that together comprise *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition*, was created for the express purpose of supporting you in your important work with children. It was informed by both current research and time-honored insight into the developing brains, bodies, and abilities of young children. With practical advice and embedded coaching to help you see not only the big picture of your work with children *throughout the year*, but also the simple actions that can make a difference *today*, this guide will help you navigate the exciting journey that you and the children in your class are about to embark upon.

We look forward to being your partners during this important time in the lives of the young children in your care. Let's get started!

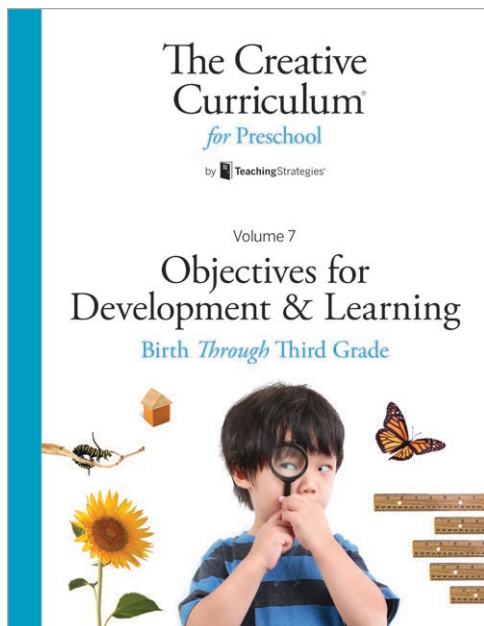
Where to Begin

As you read this guide, you may be standing in front of some large boxes and wondering where to begin.

Explaining how to start is the purpose of this guide. We will introduce you to the individual pieces that make up the curriculum and then we will show you how everything fits together.

Before you begin any journey, you need to know where you are heading. When it comes to implementing a curriculum, the objectives for children's development and learning help you identify a destination. The objectives define where you want to take children—the skills and knowledge children can acquire when you fully implement *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition*.

A central resource of *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition* is *Volume 7: Objectives for Development & Learning*. In this volume, we explain the 38 research-based objectives that are most predictive of a child's future success in school. These objectives define the path you will take with the children in your classroom. They inform every aspect of your teaching, so you will see them addressed everywhere—from the foundation volumes to all of the resources that you will use daily in your classroom. We recommend spending some time with *Volume 7: Objectives for Development & Learning* to learn more about the objectives and to see how they will enable you to identify a child's progress in each area of development and learning.



Objective 15 Demonstrates phonological awareness, phonics skills, and word recognition										
a. Notices and discriminates rhyme										
Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Joins in rhyming songs and games • Hums along and joins in random words in rhyme • Sings with a group: "One, two, buckle my shoe..."		Fills in the missing rhyming word; generates rhyming words spontaneously • Completes the rhyme in the phrases: "The fat cat sat on the _____ (mat)" • Chants spontaneously: "Ma, fee, kee, lee, lee, bee"	Decides whether two words rhyme • "Do bear and chair rhyme? What about bear and goat?" • Matches rhyming picture cards		Generates a group of rhyming words when given a word • Says, "bat, cat, hat" when asked, "What words rhyme with cat?"		Generates rhyming words without a prompt word; identifies rhyming words in written text; uses rhyme to decode text • Matches the word bat with the plastic alphabet letters and then changes the first letter to create the words cat, hat, mat; reads each one and says, "I made a lot of rhyming words" • Identifies all the rhyming words after reading a simple story told in rhyme		

How Does the Curriculum Work?

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition includes an entire year's resources for implementing an effective and content-rich program that is appropriate for children whose skills are at a wide range of developmental levels. It includes seven foundation volumes; nine *Teaching Guides*; and *Daily Resources*, which include *Intentional Teaching Experiences*, *Mighty Minutes®*, *Mighty Minutes® Posters*, *Book Discussion Cards®*, and a collection of children's books to support you through every part of your day, all year long. By providing detailed daily plans that help you get started and manage each day, the *Teaching Guides* help you introduce content in a cohesive, sequential manner.



Getting Started With Your Implementation

Getting Started walks you through what you need to review and plan for before children arrive and your instruction begins. In *Getting Started*, you will find the following:

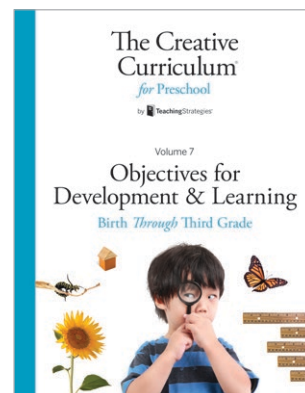
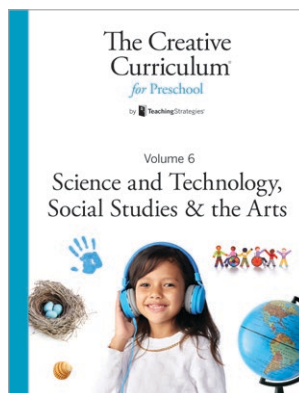
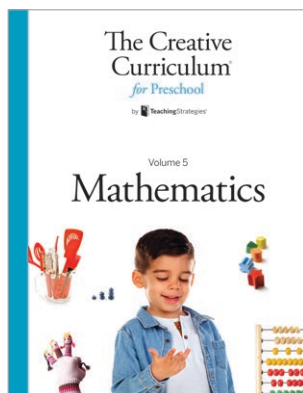
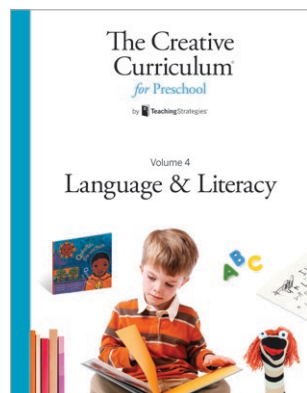
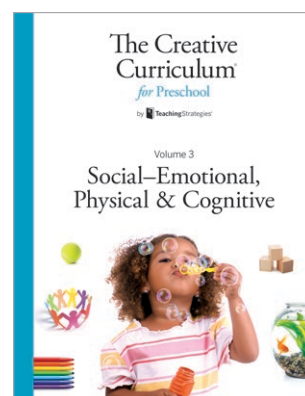
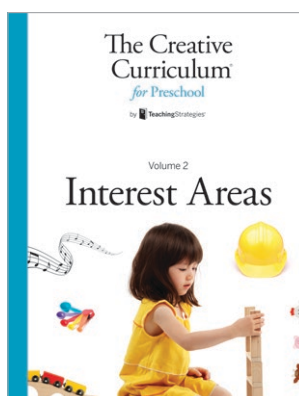
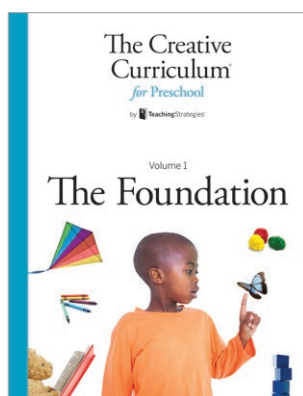
- A brief description of the foundation volumes, *Teaching Guides*, and *Daily Resources* that you'll use each day
- An overview of the daily plans within *The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community Teaching Guide*
- A comprehensive checklist to help you prepare for the first days of school

Use *Getting Started* for reference as you familiarize yourself with the included curricular components. This guide is designed to support you through a meaningful implementation of *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition*.

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition, Volumes 1–7

The Foundation focuses on helping you build a strong knowledge base. These books explain the “what” and “why” behind high-quality early childhood education and support your ongoing, comprehensive understanding of best practices.

The seven volumes in this set discuss in detail the theory and research that underlie the curriculum, how to support active learning and promote children’s progress, how to plan for a variety of engaging experiences, and how to set up a successful program. Even expert teachers refer to these resources from time to time because they are a handy reference for understanding how children develop and learn.



Volume 1: The Foundation

Volume 1 presents the research foundation of the curriculum, five key aspects of the curriculum, and all the information you need to set up your program.

What's Inside

Theory and Research outlines the theory and research behind the curriculum, covering topics that include partnering with families, teacher–child relationships, social–emotional competence, constructive and purposeful play, and the environment. It also offers specific recommendations for promoting children's development and learning.

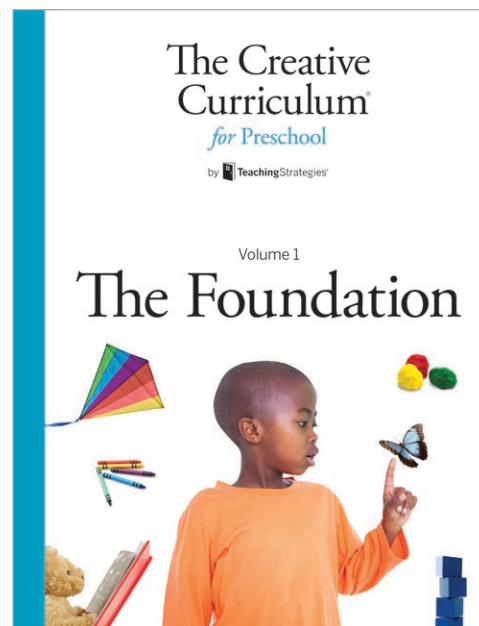
How Children Develop and Learn describes how children develop across the core domains, what makes each child unique, the stages of second-language acquisition, and the objectives you can use to observe and assess children's development.

The Learning Environment shows you how to set up and maintain classroom interest areas, establish schedules and routines, and organize your days.

What Children Learn identifies the knowledge, skills, and abilities that preschool children need to acquire and the process skills they use to learn content in the core areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and technology.

Caring and Teaching explains how careful observations of children lead to a variety of intentional instructional strategies for motivating and guiding children's learning. This section also offers an approach to assessment that facilitates planning and helps you create a classroom community where children learn how to get along with others and solve problems peacefully.

Partnering With Families explores the benefits of involving families in their children's learning and shares strategies for effective communication.



34 Volume 1: The Foundation

How Children Develop and Learn

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool is based on the latest theory and research about how children develop and learn. When you know what to expect from children at each stage of development, you can create a responsive learning environment and plan developmentally appropriate experiences that recognize children as individual learners. Being responsive to children's strengths and needs and meeting them where they are is the best way to support their development and learning.

In addition to knowing how children typically develop and learn, it is also important to recognize that children develop at their own rates and in their own ways. This chapter provides you with the information you need to meet children's developmental and individual needs. It also highlights how to create a responsive learning environment.

This chapter explains the first component of *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool* framework: how children develop and learn. It provides an overview of what preschool children are generally like and the objectives that are critical to their success, which include a focus on their social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development. Understanding each of these areas of development is critical to a commitment to addressing the whole child, as well as for supporting the development of the skills that are necessary for building a foundation for content learning.

This chapter explains the first component of *The Creative Curriculum®* framework: how children develop and learn. That knowledge is one of the bases for planning your program, selecting materials, and guiding children's learning. Understanding how children develop and learn means understanding the widely held expectations for children at various levels of development as well as the differences you will certainly find among individual children.

This chapter is divided into three main sections:

"Objectives for Development and Learning" outlines the 38 objectives that are at the heart of *The Creative Curriculum®*. They represent research-based goals for young children and are critical to every decision that is made in the classroom. They help to ensure that children are fully supported in building the knowledge, skills, and abilities that they need to succeed in school and in life.

"What Preschool Children Are Like" explores children's social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development; their use of process skills; and the typical characteristics of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds.

"Individual Differences" discusses variations in gender, temperament, interests, learning styles, life experiences, culture, language learning, and special needs.

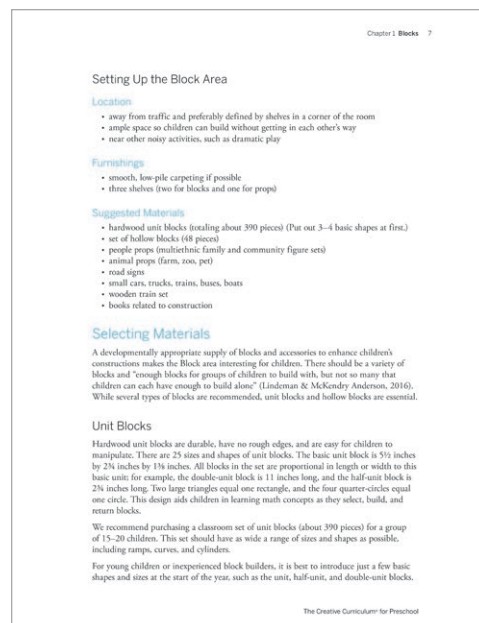
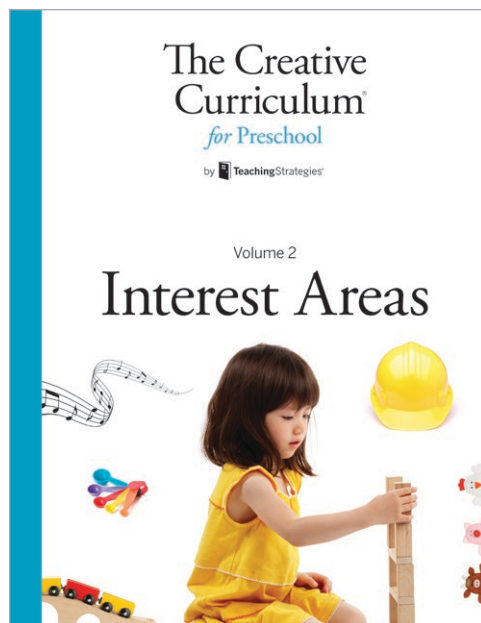
Volume 2: Interest Areas

Volume 2 applies the five key aspects of *The Creative Curriculum*® to the interest areas. Each chapter describes materials you can use to enhance children's learning in the ten interest areas and the outdoors, as well as strategies for guiding children's development and learning.

What's Inside

- Blocks
- Dramatic Play
- Toys and Games
- Art
- Library
- Discovery
- Sand and Water
- Music and Movement
- Cooking
- Technology
- Outdoors

As you introduce the interest areas to the children during the first several days of school, be sure to send home the corresponding letters to families about what children learn in those areas. You can download, customize, and print these and other family communications at <https://teachingstrategies.com/protected/classroom-family-resources/> Password: THn#9xzU4rdc!%3

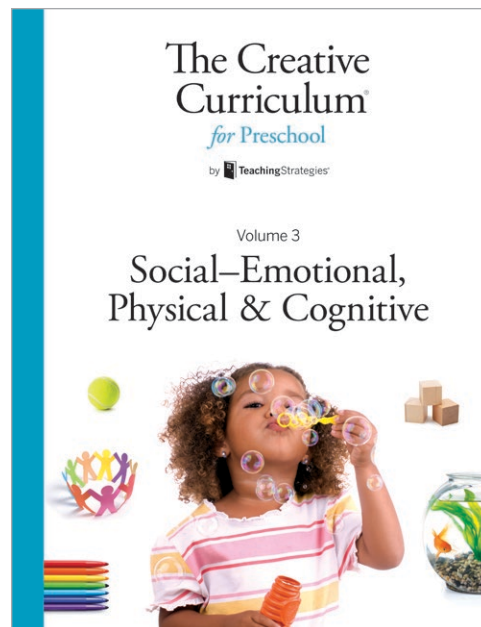


Volume 3: Social–Emotional, Physical & Cognitive Development

Volume 3 provides teachers with guidance and strategies to help them support three essential areas of development and learning outside of the content areas: social–emotional, physical, and cognitive development. The information it provides will help teachers to support the whole child, guiding them to plan for and nurture growth in these three important areas throughout the day and in each interest area.

What's Inside

- Detailed summaries of the research that underlies each one of these areas of development
- Tools for planning specific learning opportunities that support and encourage these areas of development
- Guidance to help teachers learn how and when to recognize that physical, cognitive, and social–emotional growth is taking place



18 Volume 3: Social–Emotional, Physical & Cognitive Development

Social–Emotional Learning in Interest Areas and Outdoors

Social–emotional learning takes place everywhere in a preschool classroom. Each interest area provides a place for children to practice managing feelings, cooperating with others, and trying out new friendships. It is important that teachers provide a classroom environment that teaches young children “to interact in socially skilled and respectful ways with their families, peers, and school staff and community members; to practice safe and healthy behaviors; and to develop work habits and dispositions for college, career, and life success” (Weissburg et al., 2016). This chapter will help you look more closely at the ways that children are learning and building their social–emotional skills as they work and play individually and with others in different areas of the classroom.

Social–Emotional Learning in the Toys and Games Area

While the objectives for development and learning are observable in all interest areas, some areas, such as Toys and Games, are particularly important to children’s social–emotional learning. Children begin to pay attention to the feelings of others while playing a game together, and they practice managing their emotions when they win or lose that game. Turn taking is a big part of early childhood social–emotional learning, and many games provide children with opportunities to practice taking turns. They also learn how to work through their social problems so that their cooperative play can continue even after a disagreement. Here are additional examples of how children’s play in the Toys and Games area relates to the social–emotional objectives found in *The Creative Curriculum*®.

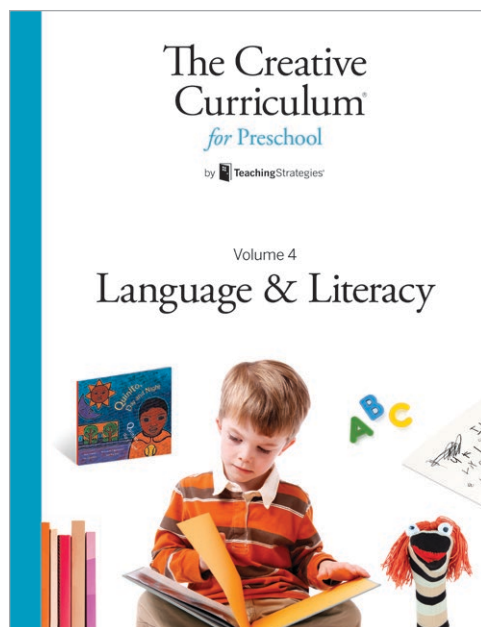
What a Child Might Do	Objective/Dimension	Related Objective/Dimension
Squeeze fists tightly when a plastic building block creation falls apart	1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors a. Manages feelings	11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning b. Persists
Close the egg carton of buttons when placing it on the shelf so that the buttons do not fall out	1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors b. Follows limits and expectations	11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning c. Solves problems

Volume 4: Language & Literacy

Volume 4 provides you with knowledge and tools to help you inspire a lifelong love of reading and set children up for success as future readers and writers. This volume offers practical strategies for intentionally teaching critical language and literacy skills and for integrating rich and enjoyable literacy experiences into all of the interest areas.

What's Inside

- A review of the research on early literacy learning
- Detailed descriptions of the seven components of literacy
- Guidance for planning fun and interactive daily literacy experiences
- Up-to-date information on meeting the needs of English- and dual-language learners
- Strategies for supporting advanced language learners and children with disabilities



28 Volume 4 Language & Literacy

Letters and Words

Knowledge of letters and words is an important component of literacy, and it involves more than reciting the ABC song or recognizing individual letters. Readers must understand that a letter represents one or more sounds. A more complex level of understanding requires knowing that these symbols can be grouped together to form words and that words have meanings. The idea that written spellings correspond to spoken words is called the **alphabetic principle**. Children's understanding of the alphabetic principle is a predictor of future reading success (Adams, 1990; National Early Literacy Panel, 2004, 2008; Stevenson & Newman, 1986).

Children demonstrate their understanding of the concept of a word when they match each spoken word to a printed word. You might notice children pretending to read and touching each word on the page as they recite a narrative. These children understand the concept of a word, and they realize that readers attend particularly to printed words rather than pictures.

Teachers help children learn specific skills related to letters and words. Children learn to

- recognize and name letters;
- recognize beginning letters in familiar words, especially in their own names;
- relate some letters to the sounds they represent; and
- match spoken words with written words, one-to-one.

Most children learn to recite the alphabet at a young age by singing the ABC song. Then, they learn the shapes of the letters made familiar by the song. Learning letter names helps children learn some of the sounds that letters represent. For example, if a child knows the name of the letter *c*, he also knows the long sound of *c*. Once children gain confidence in their ability to recognize letters, they begin to attend to their sounds. Then, they group the letters together to write words, ordering the letters in the way they think the sounds are ordered.

Children often recognize the letters in their own names first, because these are the letters of the words that are most important to them. Including activities with children's own names is an excellent way to make letters and words meaningful. After children learn the letters in their own names, they often learn the letters of other words that are significant to them, such as the names of family members and pets. Reinforce children's learning about letters in meaningful ways with activities such as *Mighty Minutes* 104, "Alphabet Stew," or *Mighty Minutes* 152, "Letter Quest."

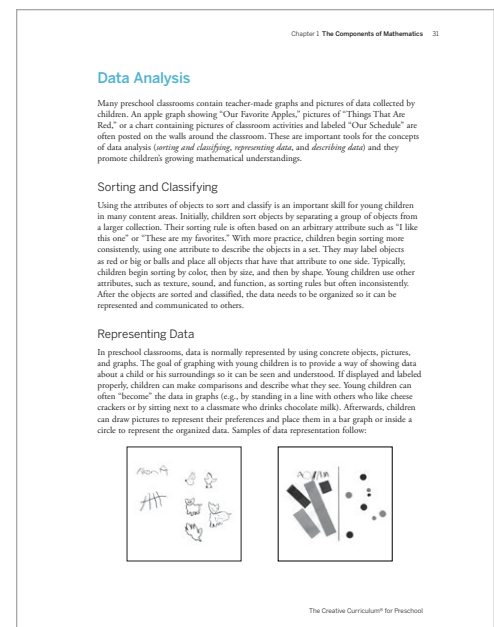
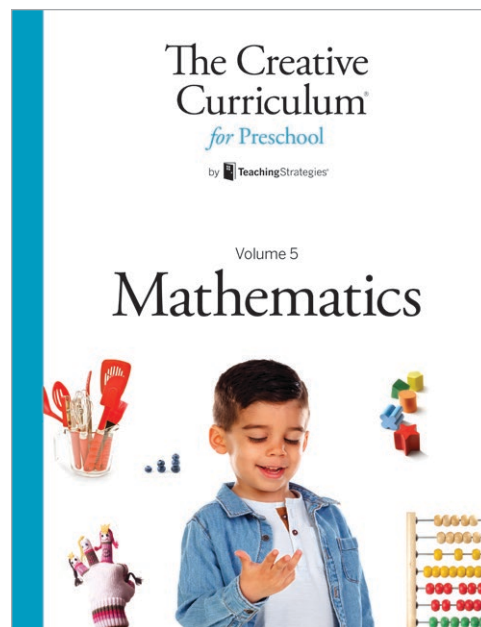
As children write, teachers can observe their understanding of letters and words. In their early writing attempts, children often use a single letter to represent a word, such as *S* for *snail*. This demonstrates their understanding of beginning sounds. Other children may write letters that represent beginning and ending sounds, such as *LV* for *love*. As their phonological awareness becomes more refined, they hear more sounds in words, and their invented spellings become more accurate and conventional. You will also notice their use of spaces between letters, groups of letters, and words, signifying an understanding of the concept of a word.

Volume 5: Mathematics

Volume 5 helps you fully understand the mathematical concepts and skills you will be teaching and shows you how to purposefully include mathematics learning throughout the day. It also shows how you can incorporate mathematics into interest areas and explains how to scaffold children's learning in each interest area.

What's Inside

- Research and guidance for teaching number and operation concepts, geometry, data analysis, measurement, patterns, reasoning, problem-solving, and representation
- Strategies for incorporating mathematics learning into interest areas, routines, and transitional times
- Resources for planning the mathematics program
- Information about adapting instruction for children with disabilities
- Strategies for supporting English- and dual-language learners

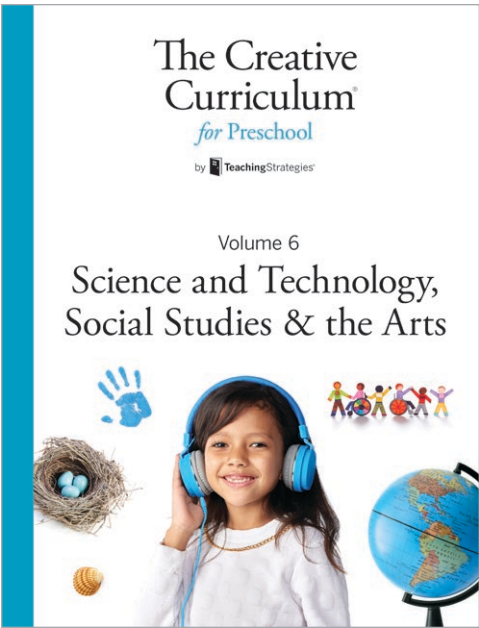


Volume 6:
Science and
Technology,
Social Studies
& the Arts

Volume 6 expands on the content areas of science and technology, social studies, and the arts, since these subjects are an integral part of the preschool day. This volume helps teachers plan for and support children's learning and explorations. Volume 6 also gives teachers a solid knowledge foundation for fully and effectively implementing studies in the classroom.

What's Inside

- Strategies for incorporating learning in these content areas throughout the day
- An in-depth look at studies and ways to fully engage children in project-based investigations of topics
- Guidance for interacting with children in the interest areas as they explore concepts related to science and technology, social studies, and the arts
- A review of the latest related research and how children develop knowledge and understanding of these areas



42 Volume 6: Science and Technology, Social Studies & the Arts

Science and Technology Learning in the Interest Areas and Outdoors

The interest areas in *The Creative Curriculum*® classroom are rich with possibilities for science and technology learning. Interest areas allow children to make choices about what they want to explore. Children can look closely at plant life in the Discovery area, or observe and wonder aloud as bread rises as it bakes. Interest areas are the places where most of that investigation takes place.

Learning about science and technology in a preschool classroom can be spontaneous, and it can be intentionally planned for. Here you will see how to help children make connections between their play, their experiments, and the science and technology concepts found in the world around them.

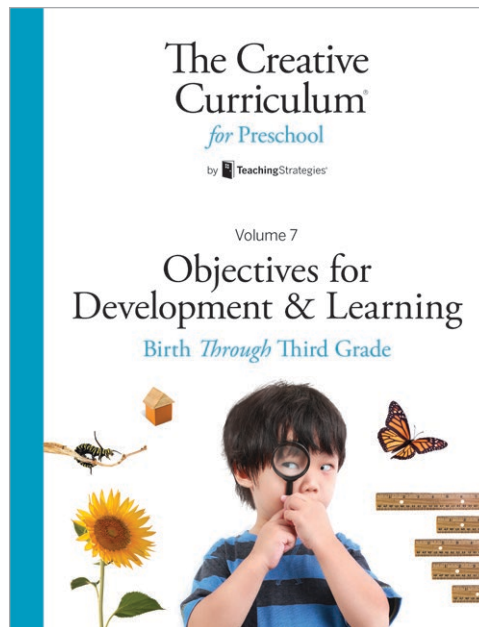
The Discovery Area: The Hub of Science and Technology Learning

The Discovery area is often the interest area dedicated to science and technology learning. You might already have several natural items, artifacts from various studies, books about plants and animals, magnifying glasses, and more in this area. However, it is important to be intentional when planning for and interacting with children in the Discovery area. Think of this interest area as the place where children can have firsthand experiences with some of the objects and materials they read about or see outdoors. Here are examples of how children's explorations in the Discovery area relate to *The Creative Curriculum*® for Preschool objectives for science and technology.

What a Child Might Do	Related Objective/Dimension
Ask, "Why does it only rain when it's cloudy outside?"	24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
Ask questions about the way a beehive is made	25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
Look closely at a bicycle chain to see how it connects to a cog	26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
Compare samples of different types of dirt from the playground	27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
Use tools to take apart an old telephone to find out what is inside	28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

Volume 7: Objectives for Development & Learning, Birth Through Third Grade

Volume 7 describes in detail the **38 research-based objectives** in *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition*. Based on an extensive review of the latest research and professional literature in early childhood education, these objectives are highly predictive of future school success and reflective of state early learning standards. Because the objectives span birth through third grade, teachers can see how development and learning progress over time, making it easier to see how skill and knowledge development begins in the early years and how learning is scaffolded as children grow. *Volume 7: Objectives for Development & Learning* includes the research behind each objective, the progressions of development and learning, and practical classroom strategies for promoting children's learning in relation to each objective. Once you have reviewed the seven curriculum volumes, consider keeping them where you can refer to them easily throughout the year.



Introduction xxii

Widely Held Expectations

Objectives and Dimensions Ranges (color-coded)

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL	
1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors	
a. Manages feelings	
b. Follows limits and expectations	
c. Takes care of own needs appropriately	
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships	
a. Forms relationships with adults	
b. Responds to emotional cues	
c. Interacts with peers	
d. Makes friends	
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations	
a. Balances needs and rights of self and others	
b. Solves social problems	
PHYSICAL	
4. Demonstrates traveling skills	
5. Demonstrates balancing skills	
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills	
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination	
a. Uses fingers and hands	
b. Uses writing and drawing tools	
LANGUAGE	
8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language	
a. Comprehends language	
b. Follows directions	

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool

Volume 7:
Objectives for
Development &
Learning, Birth
Through Third
Grade, continued

What's Inside

Progressions of Development and Learning

In order to guide children's development and learning, it is important to understand what each child currently knows and can do. For the first 23 objectives, we show **progressions of development and learning**, which are depicted in color-coded charts. The colors represent the widely held expectations for skills and knowledge in age-groups and classes/grades. For example, green indicates skills and knowledge expected in a preschool 3 class, and blue indicates skills and knowledge expected in a pre-K 4 class.

For instructional purposes, this enables you to quickly determine the developmental levels of each child in your classroom. Notice that the colors often overlap. The sample chart tells you that children in both preschool 3 classes (green) and pre-K 4 classes (blue) may be demonstrating skills at level 4 for Objective 15a, “Notices and discriminates rhyme.” It also tells you that this overlap is widely expected by developmental experts.

The inclusion of levels from birth through third grade makes it possible for you to assess and plan for children across a broad developmental spectrum, including children with disabilities, children who demonstrate competencies beyond widely held developmental expectations, and dual-language learners. The progressions show the usual sequence of development so you can assess each child accurately and use the information to plan instruction.

Using the Progressions to Plan

You make many decisions each day as you observe children and respond in appropriate ways. These observations require you to think about each child and consider how best to provide support. The progressions for each objective help you decide how and when to adapt an activity to best meet individual children's needs and give them the opportunity to be successful each day, across all levels of development and learning.

The color-coded progressions are also used in one of your key teaching resources: *Intentional Teaching Experiences*. This helps you see, at a glance, how to adapt the activity to each child's strengths and needs.

Objective 15 Demonstrates phonological awareness, phonics skills, and word recognition

a. Notices and discriminates rhyme

	Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
			Joins in rhyming songs and games - Hums along and joins in random words in rhyme - Sings with a group, "One, two, buckle my shoe..."		Fills in the missing rhyming word; generates rhyming words spontaneously - Completes the rhyme in the phrase, "The fat cat sat on the ____ (mat)." - Chants spontaneously, "Me, fee, kee, tee, lee, bee."		Decides whether two words rhyme "Do bear and chair rhyme? What about bear and goat?" - Matches rhyming picture cards		Generates a group of rhyming words when given a word Says, "Bat, sat, lat," when asked, "What words rhyme with cat?"		Generates rhyming words without a prompt word; identifies rhyming words in written text; uses rhyme to decode text - Makes the word bat with the plastic alphabet letters and then changes the first letter to create the words cat, hat, mat; reads each one and says, "I made a lot of rhyming words." - Identifies all the rhyming words after reading a simple story told in rhyme	

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition, Teaching Guides

Teaching Guides provide the day-by-day detailed plans you will use to meaningfully engage children throughout the school year in a cohesive, sequential manner.

The first *Teaching Guide* included in the collection focuses specifically on an important transition in a young child's life. *The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community Teaching Guide* helps children transition into the classroom without featuring a study. The first study included in the collection, the *Balls Teaching Guide*, introduces you to the important elements of a study and walks you through completing an investigation of balls with the children. The remaining seven *Teaching Guides* address a variety of developmentally appropriate topics that interest young children and are relevant to their daily lives.



The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community Teaching Guide

In creating *The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community Teaching Guide*, we focused on questions that we know to be typical of preschool children. Even if the children themselves cannot fully articulate them, these questions address some of the greatest concerns most children have as a new school year begins. We have used these questions as the starting points for structuring your classroom conversations and learning experiences during the first weeks of school. To round out the first six weeks, we have created daily plans that you can use to conduct a ministudy on the sounds that children will hear at school, including how and where those sounds are produced.

The questions the children will investigate to answer include:

Focus Question 1. What names do we need to know at school?

Focus Question 2. What should we do if we feel sad or scared at school?

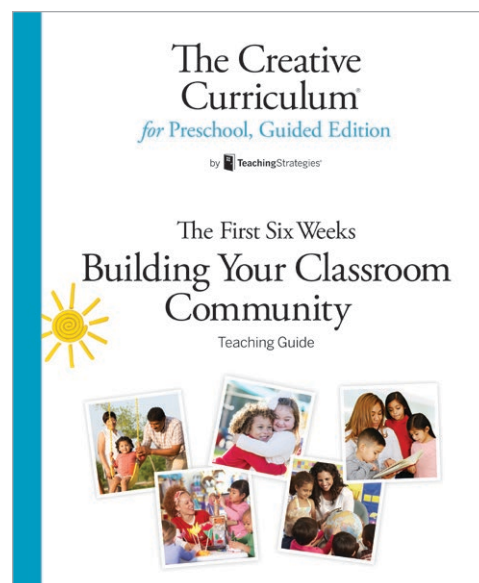
Focus Question 3. What are our rules?

Focus Question 4. When do things happen at school?

Focus Question 5. Who works at our school?

Focus Question 6. How can we make and keep friends? How can we be part of a group?

Ministudy: What sounds do we hear at school? Where do they come from?



Teaching Guides Featuring Studies

Eight of the nine *Teaching Guides* feature what we call studies. Studies are in-depth investigations designed to engage children in interesting topics that are relevant to their daily lives. Each study is organized as a series of investigations. Each investigation is based on a meaningful question, and each lasts for 3–5 days. We recommend starting the *Balls Teaching Guide* first, which includes “Getting to Know Studies” tips that help you become confident in starting study work with children. After implementing the *Balls Teaching Guide*, you can implement the remaining seven *Teaching Guides* in any order based on what the children’s current interests are.

Benefits of Studies

- Children actively explore to find answers to their own questions about the topic.
- Children investigate topics through direct experiences and manipulate real objects.
- Children have the opportunity to develop skills such as observing, exploring, problem-solving, communicating, and representing.
- Children learn critical literacy and mathematics skills in the context of each study.

Study Topics

- Balls (first study)
- Buildings
- Clothes
- Exercise
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Trees
- Water
- Wheels



The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition: Daily Resources

Intentional Teaching Experiences

Intentional Teaching Experiences describe playful, engaging activities that can be implemented throughout the day. Designed for ages 3–6, the experiences presented on these cards support social–emotional, physical, and language development and learning in literacy and mathematics. They are typically offered during small-group time, but many are also appropriate for large-group, outdoor, and one-on-one experiences.

Each *Intentional Teaching Experience* explains how to implement interactive, hands-on experiences in your classroom. It includes objectives addressed by the activity, a list of materials, suggestions to help you support multilingual learners, ways to modify the experience for children with special needs, and questions to guide your observations.

Intentional Teaching Experiences are written in English on one side and Spanish on the other. If you have multilingual learners whose first language is Spanish, these cards will help you support the development of their first language along with English. Whether you speak Spanish, English, or both, you will find strategies to help multilingual learners engage fully in the activity.

If some Spanish-speaking children are just starting to learn English and you or a colleague speak Spanish, consider first presenting the activity in Spanish to build children's vocabulary and understanding of concepts. Later in the week, you can use the *Intentional Teaching Experience* in English with the same children to reinforce the concepts introduced earlier while promoting their English language skills.

The heart of each *Intentional Teaching Experience* is the color-coded *Teaching Sequence*. It explains how to individualize the learning experience to meet the strengths and needs of every child and gives you a starting point for the activity. The way an experience is carried out with a 4-year-old at the end of the year may be very different from the way you use it with a 3-year-old at the beginning of the year. The colors are explained in more detail in *Volume 7: Objectives for Development & Learning*. If you are using the *GOLD*® assessment system, use your most current assessment information to decide where in the Teaching Sequence to begin with each child.

The colors correspond to widely held expectations for the following age or class/grade ranges:

- Yellow:** 2 to 3 years
- Green:** preschool 3 class
- Blue:** pre-K 4 class
- Purple:** kindergarten
- Pink:** first grade
- Silver:** second grade
- Brown:** third grade

Intentional Teaching Experiences

What You Do—Lists the materials to use and explains how to do the activity.

Title—Presents the title of the activity.

Reference Number—

Helps you quickly locate a particular activity. The numerals on the cards are not meant to recommend a sequence.

Objectives—Lists the objectives and dimensions from *Volume 7: Objectives for Development & Learning* that are addressed during the activity.

Multilingual learners—Suggests ideas for helping multilingual learners fully engage in the experience.

Including All Children—Offers strategies for ensuring that all children can participate.

Questions to Guide Your Observations—Use these questions to reflect on what children might be learning during the experience and focus your observations for assessment and planning.

Which Container Holds More?

What You Do

Materials: sand table or tubs of sand; various sizes of clean, clear plastic containers with smooth edges, e.g., ketchup bottle, peanut butter or mayonnaise jar, juice bottle, water bottle, and bowls; a paper cup, measuring cup, or can; funnel; paper and marker

1. Invite the children to join you at the sand table. Encourage the children to explore the containers as they practice filling them.
"Which container do you think will hold the most sand? Why do you think so?"
"How can we find out which container will hold more?"
2. Invite the children to test their predictions. If appropriate, demonstrate how to use the funnel when filling the containers. As the children fill the containers, use words, such as *more*, *less*, *too much*, *too little*, and *same*.
"Joko filled the peanut butter jar with sand. Now he's filling the juice bottle. Do you think each container will hold the same amount of sand?"
3. Show the children the measuring cup or can, and demonstrate how to use it to fill the containers. Invite the children to use the cup to fill a container.
"This cup is small, but the box is large. Let's count how many cups it takes to fill the box."
4. Invite the children to continue to experiment with the containers and sand during choice time. Encourage the children to bring other containers from home to use in their explorations.

M32
Sand and Water

Objective 22
Compares and measures
a. Measures objects
Related Objectives: 3a, 7a, 7b, 8b, 9a, 11a, 19b, 20a, 24

English Language Learners

- Watch for nonverbal cues that signal a desire to participate, such as gestures, body movements, and facial expressions.
- Explain what the word *prediction* means. Give children a sentence starter to use: "My prediction is that the mayonnaise jar will hold more. Chae, what is your prediction? You can say, 'My prediction is...'"
- If children are in the telegraphic/formulaic stage of English-language learning and reply with one or two words, repeat and expand what they say: "Joko, you said 'peanut butter.' Do you think the peanut butter jar will hold more?"

Including All Children

- Use heavy material, e.g., small pebbles, buttons, or material with various textures, such as linted, to encourage children to explore. Allow them to explore the material at their own pace.
- Invite a child to place her hands on top of yours to experience moving her hands through sand.
- Make sure each child is positioned comfortably at the table and is able to use both hands to reach the containers and tools.
- Use individual tubs to help define a child's work space.
- Demonstrate each step, as you provide clear directions.
- Have children work in pairs to fill the various containers.
- Include brightly colored containers and funnels of various sizes.

Questions to Guide Your Observations

- How did the child describe and compare the containers? (23a)
- Did the child work with others at the sand table? (3a)
- How did the child use his hands to fill the containers with sand? (7a)
- In what ways did the child use the paper to record information? (19b)

Teaching Sequence

YELLOW	Show the child two containers of very different sizes filled with sand. Ask the child to compare the containers and point out which container is bigger or holds more sand. "Maguel, which container is bigger? Yes, you are pointing to the large bottle. It is bigger than the small bottle, and it holds more sand."
GREEN	Invite the child to talk about the similarities and differences between the empty containers, e.g., height, width, or weight. Have the child fill the containers with sand and then compare them again. "What do you notice about these two green bottles? Yes, one is tall, and one is short." "Now that you've filled the bottles with sand, what do you notice about them? The small bottle is lighter, and the big bottle is heavier."
GREEN	Encourage the child to compare the containers' similarities and differences as she or he fills and measures them with sand. "What can you tell me about the containers you filled? You noticed that the small box is heavier than the small bottle. You thought the small bottle would hold more sand than the small box because it is taller. It looks like the small box holds more sand than the small bottle. Why is that?"
BLUE	Have the child predict how many cupfuls of sand each container will hold. Invite her to count the number of cupfuls needed as she fills a container. Ask her to compare the amounts of sand in the containers and record the predictions and results on paper.
PURPLE	You have two bottles that are both small. Do you think one bottle will hold more sand than the other bottle? Why do you think that? Let's count how many cupfuls of sand will fill each bottle and find out if you're right."
PURPLE	Invite the child to choose containers that he thinks will hold the same amount of sand. Have him test his predictions and record the results on the paper. "You chose bottles that are all close to the same size. Do you think any of these shorter, wider containers will hold the same amount of sand as the bottles you chose?"

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Teaching Sequence—Suggests ways to adapt the experience according to the needs and abilities of each child. It helps you individualize and scaffold children's learning.

Mighty Minutes®

Mighty Minutes® offer short activities with songs, chants, rhymes, and games. They help you turn every minute of the day into a learning opportunity. They can be used anywhere to teach skills in all areas of development and learning during “in-between” times, such as when you are preparing to go outside or gathering children for large-group time. Like all the other materials in the curriculum, *Mighty Minutes®* are rooted in the curricular objectives so that even your shortest activities support children’s learning and development in important areas.

Title—Presents the title of the activity.

Welcome, Everyone

201

Reference Number—Helps you quickly locate individual *Mighty Minutes®* cards. You do not need to use *Mighty Minutes®* in any particular order.

Objective 2
Establishes and sustains positive relationships
c. Interacts with peers
Related Objectives: 1a, 2a, 3a, 8a, 8b, 11a

Objectives—Lists the objectives from *Volume 7: Objectives for Development & Learning* that are addressed in the activity.

What You Do

1. Sing the following to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.”

We welcome everyone!
Our day has just begun.
We’re glad to see you here today,
prepared to work and play.

I wonder who is here.
Let’s play a little game.
When the ball is passed to you,
[Stand up] and say your name.

What You Do—Explains how to do the activity.

2. Pass a ball around the group and encourage the children to do an action, e.g., stand up, clap, jump, wave, as they say their names.



Mighty Minutes® Poster

Mighty Minutes® Posters—You will find an icon at the bottom of the card for activities that include an accompanying poster.

- Invite the children to participate however they feel comfortable doing so. Some children may prefer to remain sitting or to smile or wave instead of saying their name.
- Include teachers and other adults in the activity.

On the Back—The reverse side of each *Mighty Minutes®* card suggests ways to change the activity to either (1) focus on a different area of learning or (2) increase or decrease the complexity of the activity. The *Teaching Guides* also show you how to adapt some of these activities to make them relevant to the study topics.

Mighty Minutes® Posters

These posters display specific *Mighty Minutes®* featuring welcome songs, transitions, movements, conversation prompts, games, and phonological awareness activities in a large-print, laminated format that makes them easy to use in interactive large-group settings or during other activities in which children would benefit from seeing the text. Once you have introduced a *Mighty Minutes® Poster* to children, you can display the poster in the large-group meeting area or an interest area and encourage children to repeat the experience with you or independently. After a few days, you may find that children are able to lead the experience on their own!

The *Mighty Minutes®* Posters are associated with the following *Mighty Minutes®*:

201. Welcome, Everyone	208. Clothes Colors	215. Once Upon a Blank
202. Jumping Jelly Beans	209. Hello Around the World	216. Spin, Spin, Spin Around
203. Listen to Letter Sounds	210. Collecting Questions	217. Mind on Rhymes
204. How's the Weather?	211. Good-Bye to You	218. Little Bunnies
205. Choose the Moves	212. Words That Rhyme!	219. Rhyme Time
206. I Can Count!	213. Looking For a Letter	220. Daily Reflections
207. Welcome, Friends!	214. Bubble Pop	

Laminated Paper—The sturdy, laminated paper allows you and the children to use dry-erase markers to write directly on the poster and makes it easy to tape the poster to the wall without damaging the paper.

Writing Blanks—Blank spaces offer you the ability to add your own words or names to the experience.

Bilingual Support—*Mighty Minutes® Posters* are written in English on one side and Spanish on the other. This enables both English- and Spanish-speaking children to become familiar with the text in their first languages.



Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection

Reading aloud with children is the best way to inspire a love of reading and promote language and literacy skills—and there are many wonderful books to choose from! The *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection* contains 73 high-quality children's books that were carefully selected to include a variety of culturally and linguistically relevant stories for children and families from diverse backgrounds. The collection includes beloved classic tales, contemporary works by well-known authors, and 17 nonfiction books created especially to complement the explorations and investigations in each study.

You will also find four “Big Books” to add to your book collection for interactive and engaging discussions during large-group meetings or immersive small-group read-alouds!



Book Discussion Cards™

Some of the best children's books have fairly complex story lines. Experts recommend reading these stories to children at least three times for them to benefit fully from the experience. *Book Discussion Cards™* explain how to read and talk about selected books in the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection*. Intended for quick reference during group read-alouds, *Book Discussion Cards™* offer suggestions for introducing each book, emphasizing vocabulary as you read, commenting on characters, and asking probing questions.

The best way to prepare for a read-aloud is to read the entire book by yourself and then read the *Book Discussion Card™*. Feel free to keep the card in your lap for quick reference while you are reading to children, but try to avoid reading from the card. The best read-alouds are lively. They are fast-paced, and they involve much eye contact and interaction between the teacher and children.

The **Vocabulary** section offers child-friendly definitions of words that are central to understanding the story.

During the **First Read-Aloud**, you will present new ideas and ways of thinking. You can introduce characters' names, hint at the problems they face, and model wondering about what the characters might be thinking. These strategies encourage children to move from literal meanings to higher-level thinking. Following the first read-aloud, you can pose the after-reading questions and support children to answer them.

Objectives 18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts.
19. Analyzes reading material, book conventions, and text relations.

Related Objectives: 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28

17 The Water Princess

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Book Discussion Card™

The Water Princess

Original book by Susan Verde

Princess Gia Gie can make wild dogs with her song, make the grass grow when she dances, and play hide-and-seek with the wind. But the castle command the water to come down to run down, so every day she and her mother walk miles with their pots to collect water for their family. It takes a long time to get to the water, and when they return home, they still need to clean it before they can drink it. Gie Gie Gie wants to make the water come down to home, but how can she do that?

Vocabulary

princess
the daughter of a king or queen, an important person in a kingdom

kingdom
a country led by a king or queen

command
to tell someone to do something as an important person, such as a princess

water
to say something with the idea that it will be done immediately

journey
a trip to travel

struggle (pronounced "sue-struh")
the French word for "straw" or "straw"

every
the power every body has to do things, which comes from eating food and drinking water

water
(used to illustrate) to make water so hot a bubble, which helps it get to the water

"water it!"
doing something slowly so it is not over too soon

mountain (pronounced "moun-tay")
the French word for "mountain"

water
to have from doing hard work

water
to have from doing hard work

First Read-Aloud

Before Reading
Introduce the characters and the problem.

While Reading
Expand vocabulary by pointing to pictures, using gestures to describe, and describing.

After Reading
Review questions, wonder aloud, and ask follow-up questions.

Second Read-Aloud

Before Reading
Recall the characters and the problem.

While Reading
Expand vocabulary using more verbal explanations.

After Reading
Review questions, wonder aloud, and ask follow-up questions.

Third Read-Aloud

Before Reading
Encourage children to recall the problem and solution.

While Reading
Expand vocabulary: wonder aloud, recall, "what is it?"

After Reading
Review questions, wonder aloud, and ask follow-up questions.

The **Supporting Social-Emotional Development** callouts help you make story-related connections to social-emotional developmental skills.

The **Second Read-Aloud** should occur one or two days after the first one. This time, by asking different questions and adding clarifying comments as you read, you can help children recall the characters and the problem. Children will likely be better prepared to answer questions, and you can guide them to engage with the story more deeply.

The **Third Read-Aloud** should occur within a week of the second one. Invite the children to identify the main characters and describe their problem. During this read-aloud, you can show an illustration and ask, "What is happening here?" or "What do you think [character's name] is thinking?" By the third read-aloud, children should do much of the talking. You can encourage them to use the vocabulary from the book as they explain what is happening in the story.

Putting It All Together: A Snapshot of Your Day

Getting Organized

Now that you have an idea of all the components that are available to you, let's look at how it all fits together to make for a meaningful and engaging first six weeks!

In your box, you will find your Teaching Strategies® Resource Organizer. Use this specially designed binder to assemble everything you plan to use on a particular day and keep it close at hand. You can slide your *Teaching Guide* into the center pocket of the binder by slipping the back cover into the pocket so you can still turn the pages easily. The additional pockets hold the *Intentional Teaching Experiences*, *Book Discussion Cards™*, *Mighty Minutes®*, and children's books that you will be using that day.

If your program is year-round and does not have a traditional “beginning of the year,” we recommend starting with the *Balls Teaching Guide*.



Getting Acquainted With Your Daily Plans

Open *The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community Teaching Guide* and review the first At-a-Glance pages. These pages give you an opportunity to look ahead, review the activities, gather your materials in advance, and consider any adjustments that you might need to make for your class.

Next, you will find a set of daily plans for each Focus Question. The daily plans were designed to help you intentionally support children's development and learning across all areas while building relationships which will help prepare you and the children for a successful start when implementing project-based studies throughout the school year.

AT A GLANCE		Focus Question 2		
What should we do if we feel sad or scared at school?				
Vocabulary—English: happy, worried, excited, afraid, scared, gross, nervous, strange, proud		Spanish: feliz, preocupado, asustado, feliz, contento, asustado, asustado, orgulloso		
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Make Time for . . .	
Question of the Day How you ever feel sad?	How you ever feel scared?	What makes you feel happy?	Outdoor Experiences Introducing Outdoor Experiences - Introduce toys and other materials that are frequently used outdoors, e.g., balls, plastic toys, and tools for the senses. Family Partnerships - Send home LearningLetter 12, "Family Album," a Letter to Families about Toys and Games, found in chapter 3 of <i>Home 2: Home Again</i>, a Letter to Families about Home and Movement, found in chapter 4, and a Letter to Families about Food and Water. Play found in chapter 7. You can also download, customize, and print these and other family communication cards from http://www.creativecurriculum.com/family-communication-cards. - Ask families to continue bringing in family photos. - Talk with families whose children find it particularly challenging to transition from home to school in the morning. See <i>Intentional Teaching Experience 180</i>, "Good-Bye" for ideas on helping families create good-bye rituals. Planning and Preparations - Collect or create simple puzzles for the children to use on Day 1. - Find books about feelings for the children to explore in the Library area. - Review "Preparing for the new day" at the end of each daily plan.	
Mighty Minutes® Mighty Minutes 205, "Hello Around the World" (with accompanying poem) Mighty Minutes 272, "Silly Syllables"	Mighty Minutes 205, "Hello Around the World" (with accompanying poem) Mighty Minutes 284, "Blowing Tones"	Mighty Minutes 205, "Hello Around the World" (with accompanying poem) Mighty Minutes 290, "Blowing Tones"		
Large Group Feeling Sad Materials: cheer sticks and music player or drum, set of pieces of fabric for each child, The Living Hand, children's name cards	Feeling Scared Materials: Mighty Minutes 212, "What's the Matter?" (with accompanying poem) cheer paper and markers, children's name cards	Feelings at School Materials: Mighty Minutes 212, "What's the Matter?" (with accompanying poem) cheer paper and markers, children's name cards		
Choice Time Toys and Games Materials: simple puzzles with 4-5 pieces	Library Materials: journals, paper, writing materials	Art Materials: safety scissors, paper		
Read-Aloud Wonder World Book Discussion Card (1) (second read-aloud)	The Living Hand	Wonder World Book Discussion Card (1) (third read-aloud)		
Small Group Introducing the Toys and Games Area Materials: basic materials	Introducing the Music and Movement Area Materials: basic materials	Introducing the Food and Water Area Materials: basic materials		
Large-Group Roundup Materials: none	Materials: children's journals	Materials: none		

DAY 1

Focus Question 1

What should we do if we feel sad or scared at school?

Introduction

During the second week of school, you will continue building a classroom community by helping everyone become more comfortable with the learning environment and with each other. As children adjust to their new classroom, their new daily routines, and the personalities of their new peers, some may continue to feel strong emotions, such as sadness or fear. It's important to keep in mind that these emotions are to be expected. As you build a relationship with individual children, be sensitive to their feelings.

Support children to identify their feelings as you observe and interact with them. Acknowledging children's feelings builds the social-emotional foundation children need to learn how to manage their own emotions.

Materials

- Mighty Minutes 205, "Hello Around the World" (with accompanying poem)
- Mighty Minutes 272, "Silly Syllables"
- book: *The Kissing Hand*
- book: *Wonder World* (with Book Discussion Card (1))
- printout: A Letter to Families About Toys and Games (one per family)
- music or drum
- scarf or piece of fabric for each child
- puzzles

Questions of the day

Have you ever felt sad?

Large Group

Opening Routine

Use Mighty Minutes 205, "Hello Around the World," with its accompanying poem or sing a welcome song of your choice. Talk about who is here to start as any classmates who are absent.

Movement: Dance With Scarves

Tempo: the speed of a musical piece
 Say, "We are going to move our bodies to the tempo or speed of the music."
 Play slow music or beat a drum slowly. Ask, "How should we move to this music?"
 Say, "Let's move our bodies and our scarves to the tempo of the music."
 Play music and invite children to move to the tempo.

Questions to guide your observations

- In what ways do the children separate from their family members to join the class? (12)
- How do the children listen and respond to their peers during group discussions? (20)

Vocabulary

English: happy, worried, excited, afraid
 Spanish: feliz, preocupado, asustado, feliz, contento, asustado, orgulloso

Something to keep in mind

When children experience strong emotions such as fear, sadness, or nervousness, they may have difficulty listening or responding to the teacher. When children experience these feelings, they may have difficulty listening or responding to the teacher. When children experience these feelings, they may have difficulty listening or responding to the teacher. When children experience these feelings, they may have difficulty listening or responding to the teacher.

Large Group, continued

Discussion and Shared Writing: Feeling Sad

Read *The Kissing Hand*.
 Before reading, say, "We're going to read a story about a raccoon named Chester. It's starting school just like you! Let's read to find out how Chester feels about going to school."
 While reading, invite children to share their feelings about starting school.
 After reading, ask, "Why was Chester sad? What did his mother do to make him feel better?"

- "Talk about the question of the day. Ask, 'What makes you feel sad?'"
- Record children's responses.
- "Say, 'Everyone feels sad sometimes.' Ask, 'What are some things you can do if you're feeling sad?'"
- Listen to and acknowledge children's emotions. Respond to children and the other behaviors in the classroom as they truly feel them, either by naming or validating their feelings.

Before transitioning to the interest areas, print out some of the puzzles in the Toys and Games area and invite children to work on them during choice time. Use name cards to identify children to interest areas. Select a Mighty Minutes® activity to facilitate the transition.

Choice Time

Guiding Children's Learning in Interest Areas

As you interact with children in each interest area, make time to do the following in the Toys and Games area:

- Display a variety of simple puzzles.
- Explain to the children that they may choose a puzzle to put together.
- Observe children as they put together puzzles with 4-6 pieces.
- Describe the strategies children are using to complete the puzzle. "I noticed that you found that piece three times to find the matching side."
- Observe children as they put together puzzles with 6-10 pieces.
- Describe the strategies children are using to complete the puzzle. "I noticed that you found that piece three times to find the matching side."
- Observe the children's reactions while they are able to close the puzzle.
- Support the children to clean up at the end of choice time.

Putting puzzles together Many children in your class will be familiar with puzzles and enjoy playing with them. For others, putting puzzles together is a new skill. Make sure to observe and acknowledge children's strengths and encourage their persistence.

Observe, Reflect, Respond

Review the chart below to see examples of how to observe, reflect, and respond to children's learning during choice time.

TOYS AND GAMES	Observe	Reflect	Respond
Put four puzzle pieces three times to find a way to fit it into the puzzle. She picks up another piece and puts it down after seeing a different piece that more closely resembles the shape she is looking for.	Objectives 13, Demonstrates positive approaches to learning c. Solves problems Objective 23, Explains and describes spatial relationships and shapes b. Understands shapes	Note the difficulty of the puzzle. If it is working on, when she is finished, offer her a similar or slightly more challenging puzzle. Discuss her problem solving strategies as she works. "Puzzles are fun to solve. It's like a little game. What you find when it belongs in the puzzle. What might do you see on that piece you are holding?"	

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The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition

33

What's in an At-a-Glance Chart?

At-a-Glance—Preceding each Focus Question is a chart that shows you what each day will look like. These charts list the classroom materials and *Daily Resources* you will use. They also provide information about connecting with families, extending the children's learning outdoors, and preparing for upcoming experiences.

Vocabulary—This section lists the vocabulary words you will introduce throughout the *Teaching Guide*.

Day—A Focus Question lasts from 2 to 5 days. Once you have finished a question, simply move on to the next one. The questions are not intended to line up with calendar weeks. While beginning a new question midweek may feel unnatural to some teachers, children can easily make the transition.

AT A GLANCE

Focus Question 1

What names do we need to know at school?

Vocabulary—English:

children's names, interest areas, laundromat, reluctant, affectionate, lost, family, plenty, lonely, weird, skills, marvelous, mischief, orb, portrait, young, worried, "go with the flow," radiator, especially, make fun of, peeked, usual

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Question of the Day	Can you find your name and put it on the board? Materials: name cards for each child (with photos, if possible)	Have you ever lost something? Materials: none	Can you name someone in your family? Materials: none
Mighty Minutes®	<i>Mighty Minutes</i> 207, "Welcome, Friends!" (with accompanying poster) <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 254, "Playful Petals"	<i>Mighty Minutes</i> 207, "Welcome, Friends!" (with accompanying poster) <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 284, "Veggie Stew"	<i>Mighty Minutes</i> 207, "Welcome, Friends!" (with accompanying poster) <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 243, "I Have Two"
Large Group	Learning Names at School Materials: <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 201, "Welcome, Everyone" (with accompanying poster); ball; children's name cards	Finding Our Names in the Classroom Materials: <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 255, "Kittens and Mittens"; chart paper and marker; <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 205, "Choose the Moves" (with accompanying poster); children's name cards	Names in Families Materials: <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 264, "Change the Name Game"; <i>Anansi and His Children</i> ; chart paper and marker; children's name cards; <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 208, "Clothes Colors" (with accompanying poster)
Choice Time	All Materials: basic materials	Art Materials: drawing materials	Art Materials: paper, crayons
Read-Aloud	<i>A Pocket for Corduroy</i>	<i>Love Is a Family</i>	<i>Quinito, Day and Night</i>
Small Group	Introducing the Dramatic Play Area Materials: basic materials	Introducing the Art Area Materials: basic materials	Introducing the Block Area Materials: basic materials
Large-Group Roundup	Materials: <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 220, "Daily Reflections" (with accompanying poster)	Materials: none	Materials: none

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Spanish: nombres de niños, áreas de interés, lavandería automática, cariñoso, perdido, familia, de sobra, soledad, extraño, destrezas, maravilloso, pícaro, esfera, retrato, joven, se preocupaba, "dejate llevar," calefacción, especialmente, reirse, mirar de reojo

Day 4	Day 5	Make Time for . . .
Do you know how to use this? Materials: magnifying glass or other classroom item	Do you know the name of this place? Materials: photo of the front of the school	Outdoor Experiences — Introducing the Playground - Take the children on a short tour of the playground. - Talk about a different area each day and explain safety rules, e.g., tricycles must stay on the path.
<i>Mighty Minutes</i> 207, "Welcome, Friends!" (with accompanying poster) <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 251, "Favorite Treats"	<i>Mighty Minutes</i> 207, "Welcome, Friends!" (with accompanying poster) <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 282, "Rolling Compliments"	Family Partnerships — - Send home <i>A Letter to Families About Dramatic Play</i>, found in chapter 2 of <i>Volume 2: Interest Areas</i>; <i>A Letter to Families About Art</i>, found in chapter 4; <i>A Letter to Families About Block Play</i>, found in chapter 1; <i>A Letter to Families About the Discovery Area</i>, found in chapter 6; and <i>A Letter to Families About the Library Area</i>, found in chapter 5. You can download, customize, and print these and other family communications at https://teachingstrategies.com/protected/classroom-family-resources/ Password: THn#9xzU4rdc!%3 - Invite families to join the class on a walk around the school on Day 5. - Ask families to bring in family photos to display.
Names of Classroom Items Materials: <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 216, "Spin, Spin, Spin Around" (with accompanying poster); pictures of classroom items; chart paper and marker; children's name cards; <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 218, "Little Bunnies" (with accompanying poster)	Classroom Items Materials: <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 226, "Little Sea Star"; chart paper and marker; children's name cards; <i>Mighty Minutes</i> 205, "Choose the Moves" (with accompanying poster)	Wow! Experiences — Day 5: Take a walk around the school to learn the names of special places.
Art Materials: paper, crayons, children's family portraits from Day 3	Art Materials: mirrors, collage materials	Planning and Preparations — - Review "What's in an At-a-Glance?" (p. 24), "What's in a Daily Plan?" (p. 26), and "Preparing for the First Days of School" (p. 30) in <i>The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Guided Edition: Getting Started</i>. - Create name cards with photos to use on Day 1. - Plan a route around the school that will allow children to visit special places (e.g., cafeteria, library, gymnasium) during the class walk on Day 5. - Review "Preparing for the next day" at the end of each daily plan.
<i>Love Is a Family</i>	<i>Wemberly Worried</i> <i>Book Discussion Card</i> 03 (first read-aloud)	
Introducing the Discovery Area Materials: basic materials	Introducing the Library Area Materials: basic materials	
Materials: none	Materials: none	

Outdoor Experiences—This section suggests ways to extend the children's learning outdoors.

Family Partnerships—This section suggests ways to connect with families, such as inviting them to participate in classroom events and providing them with resources.

Wow! Experiences—This section lists classroom visitors, site visits, and other special events.

Planning and Preparations—Some investigations include experiences that require additional planning or preparations. Those activities are listed here to help you prepare for them in advance.

What's in a Daily Plan?

Materials List—Each day, you will find a list of *Daily Resources*—*Intentional Teaching Experiences*, *Mighty Minutes®*, *Mighty Minutes® Posters*, *Book Discussion Cards™*, and children's books—and additional materials that you will need to collect before starting your day.

Questions to Guide Your Observations—As you follow the daily guidance, you can observe a wide range of children's knowledge, skills, and abilities. These questions focus your observation on specific objectives that you are likely to observe throughout the day.

Vocabulary—You will introduce selected words and phrases in English and Spanish during daily discussions and revisit and reinforce them throughout the day.

Question of the Day—Each day begins with a question that the children will respond to with support from you and their families.

Large Group—Typically lasts 15–20 minutes and consists of three events: an opening routine; a song, game, movement, fingerplay, or rhyme; and discussion and shared writing.

Opening Routine—A welcome song and an attendance check to build the children's sense of community. You will find suggestions for welcome songs in *Mighty Minutes®*.

The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community Teaching Guide provides step-by-step guidance in the form of daily plans that help you intentionally guide children's development and learning in all areas through meaningful and engaging activities. Daily plans indicate what to do during each time of day and when to use *Intentional Teaching Experiences*, *Book Discussion Cards™*, and *Mighty Minutes®*. Each daily plan includes the following components.

For more information on daily plans in a study, review pp. 10–11 in the *Balls Teaching Guide*.

DAY 1

Focus Question 2

What should we do if we feel sad or scared at school?

Introduction

During the second week of school, you will continue building a classroom community by helping everyone become more comfortable with the learning environment and with each other. As children adjust to their new classroom, their new daily routines, and the personalities of their new peers, some may continue to feel strong emotions, such as sadness or fear. It's important to keep in mind that these emotions are to be expected. As you build a relationship with individual children, be sensitive to their feelings. Support children to identify their feelings as you observe and interact with them. Acknowledging children's feelings builds the social-emotional foundation children need to learn how to manage their own emotions.



Materials

- *Mighty Minutes* 209, "Hello Around the World" (with accompanying poster)
- *Mighty Minutes* 272, "Silly Syllables"
- book: *The Kissing Hand*
- book: *Wemberly Worried* (with *Book Discussion Card* 03)
- printout: *A Letter to Families About Toys and Games* (one per family)
- music or drum
- scarf or piece of fabric for each child
- puzzles

Questions to guide your observations

- In what ways do the children separate from their family members to join the class? (2a)
- How do the children listen and respond to their peers during group discussions? (10b)

Vocabulary

English: tempo, worried, especially, usual

Spanish: tempo, se preocupaba

Something to keep in mind When children experience strong emotions such as fear, sadness, or a sense of being overwhelmed, it is important to help them manage those feelings and use calm-down strategies when necessary. Having a classroom calm-down place gives children a special place to process their feelings, relax, and take a break. After children have had an opportunity to calm down, initiate a conversation so they can talk about their feelings and put words to their emotions. For more guidance, see *Intentional Teaching Experience* SE03, "Calm-Down Place."

Question of the day

Have you ever felt sad?

Large Group

Opening Routine

- Use *Mighty Minutes* 209, "Hello Around the World," with its accompanying poster or sing a welcome song of your choice. Talk about who is here as well as any classmates who are absent.

Movement: Dance With Scarves

tempo: the speed of a musical piece

- Say, "We're going to move our bodies to the **tempo**, or speed, of the music."
- Play slow music or beat a drum slowly. Ask, "How should we move to this music?"

- Play fast music or beat a drum quickly. Ask, "How should we move to this music?"
- Give each child a scarf or a piece of fabric.
- Say, "Let's move our bodies and our scarves to the tempo of the music."
- Play music and invite children to move to the tempo.

Discussion and Shared Writing—Here, you will find suggestions for leading a discussion with the children. During large-group discussions, children can practice communication skills; ask questions; and share their ideas, feelings, and work. The discussions include shared writing, an interactive process in which you and the children develop a text together on chart paper, a white board, or a smart board.

The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community Focus Questions

Large Group, *continued*

Discussion and Shared Writing: Feeling Sad

- Read *The Kissing Hand*.
- **Before reading**, say, "We're going to read a story about a raccoon named Chester. He's starting school just like you! Let's read to find out how Chester feels about going to school."
- **While reading**, invite children to share their feelings about starting school.
- **After reading**, ask, "Why was Chester sad? What did his mother do to make him feel better?"

- Talk about the question of the day. Ask, "What makes you feel sad?" Record children's responses.
- Say, "Everyone feels sad sometimes." Ask, "What are some things you can do if you ever feel sad at school?"
- Listen to and acknowledge children's responses. Reassure children that you and the other teachers in the classroom are there to help them feel better when they feel sad.

Before transitioning to the interest areas, point out some of the puzzles in the Toys and Games area and invite children to work on them during choice time. Use name cards to dismiss children to interest areas. Select a *Mighty Minutes*® activity to facilitate the transition.

Including all children For many English-language learners, answering questions can be overwhelming, especially in the beginning of the year. While open-ended questions invite further discussion, asking closed-ended questions can be more effective. Closed-questions allow children to answer in ways that are comfortable for them, such as by pointing to pictures or saying one word.

Choice Time

Guiding Children's Learning in Interest Areas

As you interact with children in each interest area, make time to do the following in the Toys and Games area:

- Display a variety of simple puzzles with 4–5 pieces.
- Explain to the children that they may choose a puzzle to put together.
- Observe children as they put together puzzles.
- Describe the strategies children are using to complete the puzzles: "I noticed that you turned that piece three times to find the matching side."
- Remind the children several minutes before it is time to clean up.
- Support the children to clean up at the end of choice time.

Putting puzzles together Many children in your class will be familiar with puzzles and enjoy playing with them. For others, putting puzzles together is a new skill. Make sure to observe and acknowledge children's strengths and encourage their persistence.

Observe, Reflect, Respond

Review the chart below to see examples of how to observe, reflect, and respond to children's learning during choice time.

TOYS AND GAMES		
Observe	Reflect	Respond
Peng turns the puzzle piece three times to find a way to fit it into the puzzle. She picks up another piece and puts it down after seeing a different piece that more closely resembles the shape she is looking for.	Objective 11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning c. Solves problems Objective 21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes b. Understands shapes	Note the difficulty of the puzzle Peng is working on. When she is finished, offer her a similar or slightly more challenging puzzle. Describe her problem-solving strategies as she works: "Peng, you are turning that piece to see if it will fit a different way and using the picture to help you find where it belongs in the puzzle. What images do you see on that piece you are holding?"

Choice Time—During choice time, children choose where they would like to work and what materials to use. The daily plans provide guidance for an activity in one of the interest areas. Children may choose to take part in that activity or they may choose to play in other interest areas. Choice time is an important time of day for observing children's knowledge, skills, and abilities as you circulate and engage with children throughout the interest areas.

Observe, Reflect, Respond—Each day includes a chart that offers examples of ways a teacher can interact and build upon children's learning during choice time. The first column offers an observation, the second shows objectives and dimensions that the child is demonstrating, and the third suggests ways the teacher in the scenario can respond to extend and plan how to individualize the child's learning.

Read Aloud—Each daily plan provides guidance for one read-aloud. It may suggest a book from the included collection, a book with a corresponding *Book Discussion Card™*, or a book from your classroom library. If your program's length allows it, consider planning for 2–3 read-alouds each day.

Small Group—Each daily plan directs you to a small-group experience, typically with an *Intentional Teaching Experience* that explains how to implement the activity with a small group of children and suggests ways to individualize the activity. If you prefer a different option for small group that day, you can choose another *Intentional Teaching Experience* with the same primary objective.

DAY 1
Focus Question 2

What should we do if we feel sad or scared at school?

Choice Time, continued

ART		
Observe	Reflect	Respond
Sean says, "I like doing puzzles. I'm going to make one." He starts cutting a piece of paper and stops when he sees the line he cut. He yells, "I can't do it!" and drops the paper on the table before walking away.	Objective 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors a. Manages feelings Objective 22. Compares and measures c. Represents and analyzes data	While sitting at eye level with Sean, guide him through a few calming breaths. Say, "It's frustrating when you want to make something but you are not sure how to get started. Let's see if we can make a plan for creating your own puzzle. You can tell me the steps and I will write them down. What will you do first?"

Read-Aloud

worried: (demonstrate a worried expression) felt afraid or nervous about what may happen **especially:** very much **usual:** the way something is most of the time

Read *Wemberly Worried*.

- Use *Book Discussion Card* 03, *Wemberly Worried*. Follow the guidance for the second read-aloud.

Using the "picture walk" strategy Although this is the second read-aloud, you may still feel that the story is too long for the children this early in the school year. If so, continue using the "picture walk" strategy and the associated *Book Discussion Card™* to guide your discussions with children before, during, and after sharing the story.

Small Group

- Invite small groups of four or five children at a time to join you in the Toys and Games area.
- Describe the materials in the area and invite the children to explore them. You might say, "This is the Toys and Games area. We have puzzles, small toys, magnetic letters and numerals, and board games."
- As children explore, talk with them about how they can use the materials. You might say, "Do you have puzzles or board games at home? What else in our Toys and Games area have you played with before? Rico, you said that you and your abuela use buttons to make patterns. That's wonderful! Can you show me?"
- Show children how to clean up the area when they are finished. You might say, "Each container has a picture and a word on it. This is a picture of some beads, and this word says *beads*. That's how we know to put the beads in this container. The shelf is labeled with the same picture and word. That's how I know where to put the container of beads on the shelf."

At what point are children ready to share toys? Before age 4, many children are not yet developmentally ready to share, so providing multiples of popular toys and materials is helpful for children this age. Find opportunities to emphasize taking turns by using language such as "Now it is your turn" and "Now it is my turn." As you work with children, remember that learning to share takes time, practice, and guidance from you. See page 69 in *Volume 2: Interest Areas* for more information about handling common scenarios related to the Toys and Games area.

The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community Focus Questions

Large-Group Roundup

- Recall and discuss the day's events. You might say, "Do you remember when we read *Wemberly Worried* together? At the end of the story, Wemberly didn't worry as much about being at school because she was playing in her classroom. What is

something you played with today that made you happy?" Listen to children's answers and respond, e.g., "Amy said that she liked playing with the blocks. Amy, I bet your grandmother would like to hear about what you did in the Block area today when she picks you up."

- Invite children who worked on puzzles to share their experiences.

Family partnerships

- Download, customize, and send home *A Letter to Families About Toys and Games*.

Reflecting on the day

- What did you learn about a child or children that you can use to enhance your learning environment? For example, if a child was easily able to put together several puzzles in the Toys and Games area, consider adding more challenging puzzles for her to play with tomorrow.
- Are any children still finding it challenging to transition from home to school in the morning? See *Intentional Teaching Experience* SE07, "Good-Byes," for ideas on helping families create good-bye rituals.
- Also note which children are ready to begin navigating morning routines more independently, such as putting belongings away, responding to the question of the day, and selecting an activity.

Preparing for the next day

- Collect journals for the children to use in the Library area during choice time along with a variety of writing tools. If you don't have journals, you can make them by stapling several sheets of newsprint together with a piece of construction paper as a cover.
- Enhance your outdoor play area by adding items such as balls, plastic hoops, and shovels that children can use in the dirt or sandbox.
- Read *The Kissing Hand*.

Large-Group Roundup—

Coming together as a class for large-group roundup presents an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the day's activities and to review any new concepts that you introduced.

Family partnerships—

Offers suggestions for connecting with families and sharing what their children are learning each day.

Reflecting on the day—

This section includes opportunities to reflect on your teaching practice and the events of the day.

Preparing for the next day—

This section lists materials to collect and suggestions for preparing for the following day.

Preparing for the First Days of School

The beginning of the year can feel overwhelming for children and also for you. A good deal of responsibility falls on you to ensure that you and your physical environment are ready to welcome children and families into your program. The time that you invest in planning and preparing for the first days of school will help make these early moments as successful as possible for both you and the children in your class.

To help you plan and prepare for the first days of school, review the following checklist of reminders and important items to consider. While this is a rather comprehensive checklist, every program is unique. Be sure to take advantage of the additional space provided below to add items that reflect your program's specific needs. A printable version of this checklist and other planning resources can be accessed at <https://teachingstrategies.com/protected/classroom-family-resources/> Password: THn#9xzU4rdc!%3

Welcoming Children and Families to the Program

From the very first moments of the new school year, you will begin building relationships with children and their families. Children need to know that their classroom is a safe place where they can have fun and try out new ideas. Families need to know that the person responsible for their children—the person teaching them new things, helping them when they get frustrated, comforting them when they get sad or angry, and celebrating with them when they accomplish a skill for the first time—genuinely cares about their children.

As you welcome children and families into the program at the beginning of the year, your first priority is to ensure that they recognize themselves as important and valued members of the classroom community.

- ☐ Review family and child records. Note any information that will help you make meaningful connections during initial meetings and interactions during the first week (Vol. 1, pp. 198–199).
- ☐ Send a welcome letter to each child and his or her family. Familiarize yourself with additional strategies for communicating with families (Vol. 1, pp. 204–205).
- ☐ Create laminated pictorial name tags. Try to get photos of the children before the first day of school or photograph children on the first day.
- ☐ Ask each family to share a family photo that you can display in the classroom (Vol. 1, p. 74).
- ☐ Post a picture of yourself, co-teachers, and any other individuals who will be responsible for caring for the children on a visible wall of the classroom. Include a short summary about yourself (Vol. 1, p. 74).
- ☐ Plan a system for ongoing communication with families, such as a daily message board, regular phone calls, or weekly emails (Vol. 1, p. 204–205).
- ☐ Confirm that there are positive and welcoming messages throughout the classroom (Vol. 1, pp. 69–70).

Conveying positive messages

Conveying positive messages through the arrangement of your classroom helps you communicate to children and families that they belong there. Take some time to ask yourself if these messages are clearly being communicated by the choices you have made in setting up your physical environment.

“This is a good place to be.”

- The classroom has warm and homey decorative touches throughout, such as framed artwork, plants, fabric-covered pillows in the Library area, baskets for storage, and tablecloths (Vol. 1, pp. 75–76).
- The furniture, books, art supplies, and other learning materials in the classroom are well-maintained (i.e., not broken or missing any pieces) (Vol. 1, p. 78–79).
- The entranceway is attractive, neat, and inviting, with places to display children’s future work (Vol. 1, p. 201).

“You belong here.”

- The learning materials and pictures on the walls reflect the diversity and cultures of the children in the program and the community and emphasize the diversity of the world (Vol. 1, p. 69).
- Every child in the program has a cubby marked with his or her name and picture in which to keep personal items (Vol. 1, p. 69).
- Family members have a designated place to hang their coats and store any other belongings during their visits (Vol. 1, p. 69).

“This is a place you can trust.”

- Bookshelves, storage shelves, and boxes or baskets of materials are labeled with words and pictures and are neat and uncluttered (Vol. 1, pp. 72–73).
- An illustrated daily schedule is prominently displayed so that children and their families can see and learn the order of the program day (Vol. 1, pp. 90–91).
- Photographs of the children and their families are displayed throughout the classroom at both child and adult eye level (Vol. 1, p. 74).

“There are places where you can be by yourself when you want to be alone.”

- Small, quiet areas of the room accommodate one or two children only (Vol. 1, p. 75).
- A large pillow or stuffed chair in a quiet corner with minimal displays invites children to enjoy being quiet and alone (Vol. 1, p. 75).
- Headphones are available for audio players and other devices so children can listen to recordings individually (Vol. 1, p. 75).

“You can do many things on your own here.”

- Materials for children’s use are stored on low, open shelves where children can reach them easily (Vol. 1, p. 75).
- Shelves are labeled with pictures and words that show children where toys and materials belong (Vol. 1, pp. 72–73).
- Labels and printed materials are in the children’s first languages as well as in English (Vol. 1, pp. 72–23).

“This is a safe place to explore and try your ideas.”

- Materials are displayed attractively, inviting and encouraging children to use them (Vol. 1, p. 75).
- There are various well-defined areas to encourage independent discovery, small-group investigations, and large-group activities (Vol. 1, pp. 79–80).
- Each interest area in the classroom is labeled with signs explaining what children will learn in that area and ways that families can support their children as they make discoveries (Vol. 1, p. 201).

Arranging the Physical Environment

The physical environment—the way your classroom is set up and the materials included in it—not only encourages children to explore and discover new things, it also strengthens the quality of the learning experiences and activities that children participate in during the day. A well-organized classroom helps facilitate children's learning and development as they make choices, use materials, and take ownership of caring for the classroom.

- ☐ Evaluate the classroom materials that are currently available.
 - Remove any unusable materials, such as broken toys or games that are missing pieces.
 - Organize materials by interest area (Vol. 1, pp. 78–79).
- ☐ At the beginning of the school year, it may be appropriate to limit the number of materials available at each interest area to avoid overwhelming children. Select a few materials for each interest area that children can use easily and independently (i.e., open-ended and familiar materials) (Vol. 1, pp. 71–72).
- ☐ Consider the children's family backgrounds as you select materials and plan learning experiences. Ensure that the materials do not depict stereotypes (Vol. 1, pp. 49, 54, 69).
- ☐ Strategically arrange the basic furnishings of the classroom (Vol. 1, p. 70).
- ☐ Label classroom materials (Vol. 1, pp. 72–73).
- ☐ Consider adding items that might make the environment more comfortable and attractive, such as flowers from your garden or a framed picture of yourself and your family (Vol. 1, p. 75–76).
- ☐ Store extra materials in a way that does not create unnecessary visual clutter (Vol. 1, pp. 70, 75).
- ☐ Keep a prioritized list of the materials you want to request or order.

Best practices for labeling classroom materials

- Include labels with pictures and words in lowercase letters.
- If possible, consider including a sample of the object on the label (e.g., a bead, a toy car, etc.) for children who may have visual impairments.
- Use one color for English and a different color for the second language that is predominant in your classroom. If other languages are spoken by children in your classroom, include words from those languages in the classroom so all children see their first languages.
- If there are labels in multiple languages in the classroom, make sure to limit the number of labels to avoid overwhelming children and creating visual distractions.

Considerations for setting up the defined areas in your classroom

- Where are electrical outlets in the room? Place your Technology, Music and Movement, and Library areas near outlets so you can easily plug in music players or computers.
- Where are the sinks? Place the Sand and Water and Art areas close to a sink for easy cleanup and water access.
- Where are your larger, more defined spaces? Reserve a defined space for your large-group time where children can spread out and be comfortable having group discussions.
- How much shelving space do you have? Place the Toys and Games and Block areas near accessible shelves that can store materials for these areas.
- Where should quiet spaces be set up? Place quieter areas (such as the Library area) away from noisier, more active areas (such as the Block area).

Tips for setting up interest areas

- Make sure messier activities like sand and water play take place on a washable floor, away from carpeting.
- Consider using shower curtains or drop cloths as additional protection from messes.
- Keep writing materials in every interest area.
- Be flexible when children want to bring materials from one interest area to another (e.g., bringing play food items from the Dramatic Play area into the Block area for the restaurant that children built).
- Carpets, tables, and shelves can help define your classroom interest areas. If you have limited furniture, use masking tape or small area rugs to define spaces.

If space limitations prevent you from giving each interest area a designated space, you can make the materials available in other areas of the classroom. For example, you might place tablets or a computer (which would ordinarily be in the Technology area) in the Library area and store musical instruments (generally included in the Music and Movement area) in the Dramatic Play area.

Planning Your Daily Schedule

Your classroom structure, daily routines, and schedule are just as important as the materials within the physical learning environment. The structure of each classroom day creates a predictable sequence of daily events. A consistent, developmentally appropriate daily schedule that is designed to meet all children's needs facilitates a variety of learning experiences, caters to different learning styles, and nurtures children's sense of comfort and security in the classroom.

When activities are planned in an orderly, consistent, and thoughtful way, children feel empowered as active, independent learners. A consistent classroom schedule also helps children learn about, understand, and subsequently predict the sequence of daily events.

- ☐ Begin drafting a daily schedule, starting with fixed times of day such as arrivals and departures, mealtimes, rest time, playground/outdoor time, and other events that are outside of your scheduling control (Vol. 1, pp. 90–91).
- ☐ Include time for morning large group, choice time, small group, read-aloud, and large-group roundup at the end of the day (Vol. 1, pp. 80–90).
- ☐ Plan for at least 60 minutes of uninterrupted, child-initiated choice time (Vol. 1, p. 91).
- ☐ Strive for 40–60 minutes of outdoor play (Vol. 1, p. 91).
- ☐ Create your daily schedule using pictures and words. If possible, use photos of the children in the classroom. Post the schedule near the large-group area for quick reference and use it with the children (Vol. 1, p. 90).

For a variety of daily schedules, see pages 91–96 in *Volume 1: The Foundation*. While the order of events in your schedule will ideally remain consistent, the time allotted for experiences on the schedule needs to be flexible and responsive to the needs, interests, and abilities of the children in your program. In the first weeks of school, some routines and learning experiences (such as cleanup time) may take longer, while experiences such as read-alouds and large-group activities will need to be shorter to reflect the children's developmental levels. As the weeks progress and children's independence and capacity to engage for longer periods of time increases, cleanup time will become shorter and large-group time will become longer.

Planning for Each Time of Your Day

Arrivals and Departures

At the beginning of the year, arrivals and departures are important moments of transition for the children and families in your classroom as they move from home to school and then from school to home. On the first day, remember to keep in mind that children, regardless of whether or not they have been in a classroom or group setting before, will be wondering what lies ahead and processing a lot of new information at once. By dedicating plenty of time for hellos and good-byes during arrivals and departures, you are anticipating the needs of children and their families and you are also easing children into these transitions and helping them feel secure in this new environment.

- ☐ Plan meaningful ways to interact with individual children as they enter and leave the classroom (Vol. 1, pp. 150–152).
- ☐ Create a daily sign-in sheet that children can write or scribble their names on when they arrive (Vol. 1, pp. 81–82).
- ☐ Create a sheet that families can use to sign their children in and place it next to the children's sign-in sheet (Vol. 1, p. 201).
- ☐ Use *Intentional Teaching Experience* SE02, "Look Who's Here!" and *Intentional Teaching Experience* SE07, "Good-Byes," as you develop your opening routine.
- ☐ Create an age-appropriate, interactive attendance chart that can be referenced at large-group time (Vol. 1, pp. 81–82).
- ☐ Consider inviting family members to actively participate in arrival routines by supporting their child as he or she answers the question of the day.
- ☐ Display "What We Did Today" items on an erasable board or chart outside of the classroom so family members can discuss the day's events with their child (Vol. 1, p. 201).

Having a sign-in sheet enables children to practice emergent writing skills as they learn to write and read their own names. Accept any attempt that a child makes to write her name on the sign-in sheet during arrival time. The transition from writing a simple mark on the page to clearly writing their name will demonstrate children's emerging skills and development over the year.

Planning for Each Time of Your Day, *continued*

Large Group

In large group, children become members of a learning community. For many children, this may be their first experience being a part of a group. The first meeting of the morning sets the tone for the day and establishes children's understanding of what will happen in the classroom that day. Gathering again as a group at the end of the day can encourage children to reflect on and share (often with much excitement and enthusiasm) what they learned and discovered that day.

Large group is most successful when the duration of the meeting is tailored to the needs and abilities of children. As you work up to a 15–20-minute large-group experience, be sure to remember that 5–10 minutes of large-group time may best meet the needs of the children at the beginning of the year. Large-group discussions and shared writing experiences help children develop language and literacy skills. By asking children questions during shared writing experiences and recording their reflections and ideas, you foster children's oral language, written language, and comprehension skills while demonstrating that their ideas matter. When children see that you are giving their interests and questions thoughtful consideration during shared writing experiences, they are encouraged to engage as active learners as they build on what they already know and consider what they want to learn more about. See *Intentional Teaching Experience* LL01, "Shared Writing," for guidance related to discussion and shared-writing experiences.

- ☐ Decide what to include in your morning routine. For example, you might sing a welcome song and then review the attendance chart with the children before having a group discussion about your focus for the day.
- ☐ Refer to the materials listed in your daily plans and collect them prior to your large group.
- ☐ Find a convenient place to store children's name cards so that you can use and refer to them during group activities.

Elements of an engaging and meaningful large-group experience include

- opening with the same routine each day (e.g., a good morning song, a welcome chant, a morning stretch, or a yoga pose);
- reviewing the question of the day; and
- creating a sense of a caring classroom community (e.g., using a job or attendance chart or posting a weekly or monthly calendar to document and call attention to meaningful events or special days that will take place in the classroom).

Transitions

There are many transitions in a preschool day. If children do not know what is expected of them and have to wait with nothing to do, these transitions can become overwhelming and even chaotic. Transitions can be fun and enjoyable, however, when you turn them into engaging opportunities for learning and use them to reinforce children's developing skills.

Transition times provide a fun way to reinforce your program's best practices and strengthen the children's connections within the classroom community. When you give children clear and consistent directions, ensure that your expectations are developmentally appropriate, and strive to meet children's individual needs, you strengthen their understanding of transitions and help them to grow as caring partners in the program.

- ☐ Talk with other teachers, your coach, or a mentor about strategies they use to make the most of transition times, e.g., cleanup, walking in the hallway from place to place, or preparing for rest.
- ☐ Use children's name cards as a way to transition to interest areas.
- ☐ Locate the *Mighty Minutes*® cards in *The Creative Curriculum*® materials. Review several songs, chants, or simple games to use during transition times.
- ☐ Introduce songs, rhymes, chants, or fingerplays to children to signal the beginning of a transition (Vol. 1, pp. 87–88).

Planning for transitions (Vol. 1, pp. 87–88)

As you plan for transitions, consider the following strategies and examples.

- Give clear instructions, e.g., "In 10 minutes we will be going outside. You can finish that puzzle before it's time to clean up and go out to the playground."
- Give children a 10-, 5-, or 3-minute notice before an upcoming transition, e.g., "Five more minutes until cleanup. I see that there are only a few puzzle pieces remaining. I'll make sure to take a picture of the puzzle when you are finished putting it together."
- Allow plenty of time for each transition to ensure that children do not feel rushed or anxious, e.g., "It is cleanup time. Reese, could you start taking the puzzle apart and putting it into the box? Charlie, could you please make sure to pick up any puzzle pieces on the floor and give them to Reese?"
- Be flexible, e.g., "I see that you are still working on your block structure; I will give you five more minutes to finish while the others begin cleaning up."

Planning for Each Time of Your Day, *continued*

Outdoors

Outdoor play is crucial to children's health and well-being. The time children spend outdoors each day is just as important to their development and learning as the time they spend in the classroom. The outdoor environment in your program will offer endless opportunities to interact with children and guide their learning as they explore and play.

- ☐ Create outdoor spaces for sand and water play, wheeled toys, indoor materials that can be brought outdoors, playing games, building, and pretend play (Vol. 2, pp. 250–251).
- ☐ Add equipment to your outdoor play area such as tunnels, cones, balls, and boxes.
- ☐ Collect measuring tools to use in outdoor sand and water play, such as measuring cups and spoons (Vol. 2, p. 251).
- ☐ Provide materials for labeling plants outdoors.
- ☐ Incorporate signs that the children might see elsewhere in the community, e.g., road signs, exit signs, and warning signs (Vol. 2, p. 252).
- ☐ Plan opportunities to sing and recite rhymes or chants while children are outdoors.
- ☐ Inspect the outdoor area daily to ensure that it is safe and free of hazards (Vol. 2, p. 251).

Outdoor areas in early childhood programs often vary widely. No matter what kind of outdoor space you have, you can create a setting where children can enjoy the outdoors. To make the most out of your program's outdoor areas, refer to the suggestions in chapter 11 of *Volume 2: Interest Areas*.

Choice Time

Choice time nurtures children's growing independence and helps them become engaged and active learners as they decide for themselves where they will work or play, what they will do in those interest areas, and the materials they will explore. The discoveries children make during child-initiated learning experiences provide a great starting point for group discussions as children share what they worked on during choice time.

- ☐ Familiarize yourself with the different ways you can help children decide which interest area to visit during choice time (e.g., displaying a chart with pictures, offering a sign-up sheet for favorite activities, or using timers to manage children's time) (Vol. 1, pp. 85–86)
- ☐ Add writing, drawing, and construction materials to all areas so children can represent their discoveries and learning (Vol. 4, p. 125).
- ☐ Include a variety of fiction and nonfiction books in each interest area (Vol. 2, p. 110).
- ☐ Write and post rules or directions for using particular tools, materials, and equipment (e.g., screwdrivers, nails, staplers). Note, however, that posted rules and instructions do not take the place of direct supervision. Plan to closely supervise children who are using items that could be misused or pose a hazard to children (Vol. 1, pp. 167).
- ☐ Display intriguing pictures in interest areas to encourage conversation and writing (Vol. 4, p. 54).
- ☐ Organize interest area materials in ways that encourage children to interact with them in meaningful ways, such as by sorting and classifying them (Vol. 5, p. 55).

Choice time provides some of the richest opportunities for you to build relationships with children through observation. By actively engaging with children and following their lead, you can note what interest areas they typically visit, the materials they select, how they manipulate and explore materials, and how they interact with other children. Making comments and asking open-ended questions allows you to extend their learning as you observe how they predict, experiment, explore, and play in the interest areas (Vol. 1, pp. 85–86). Making choices is an important skill that young children may need your help with, especially at the beginning of the year. To help children decide what they want to explore, consider using large-group time to discuss the interest areas and activities using visual cues, such as a chart displaying pictures of the available interest areas. Talking through the different activities children can do in each interest area helps children consider their options and decide what they want to explore.

Planning for Each Time of Your Day, *continued*

Read-Alouds

The teacher–child interactions that take place before, during, and after read-alouds refine children’s comprehension skills and their understanding of language. When children hear books read aloud to them, they

- learn how to listen to and comprehend stories and other informational texts,
- begin to understand what a story is (e.g., stories have characters, a plot, a setting, and a problem to be resolved), and
- develop the knowledge that books have various purposes (e.g., to describe ideas, feelings, and emotions; provide information; or tell a story).

The repeated read-alouds you will find throughout the *Teaching Guides* reflect a research-based approach that supports children’s literacy, language, and comprehension skills. High-quality children’s books are often more complex in their plots, problems, and ideas and should be read at least three times to allow children to fully engage with the text.

Elements of a repeated read-aloud include

- reading a book at least three times;
- asking children questions about characters and story events;
- defining words while reading the story; and
- building on children’s reconstruction of the text by asking them how the characters feel, why characters do what they do, and what the children think will happen next.

- ☐ Plan for two or three read-alouds each day (Vol. 1, p. 91).
- ☐ Establish regular read-aloud times during the classroom day. Plan reading experiences for your whole group, small groups, and individual children (Vol. 4, pp. 86–88).
- ☐ When selecting potential books for read-alouds, estimate the length of time each book might take to read aloud and consider children’s capacity for sustaining attention, especially at the beginning of the year (Vol. 4, p. 87).
- ☐ Try to minimize potential distractions (Vol. 4, p. 87).
- ☐ Introduce complex books in small-group experiences (Vol. 4, p. 87).
- ☐ Refer to the explanation of the repeated read-aloud that details what to do in the first, second, and third read-aloud (Vol. 4, pp. 95–97).

While *Teaching Guides* provide specific guidance for one or two read-alouds per day, we strongly encourage you to plan for additional read-alouds if your schedule permits. When selecting titles for these, make sure that they reflect children's interests, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and life experiences. At the beginning of the year, dynamic read-aloud discussions provide a wonderful way to introduce vocabulary and scaffold children's understanding of different emotions. Stories that focus on topics such as building community, meeting new people, feeling nervous, welcoming others, and becoming a good friend set the stage for additional informal discussions as you help children make connections to their everyday experiences.

Remember to keep the following in mind as you plan read-alouds for the beginning of the year:

- A book does not need to be read all at once; you can spread a story over two or three read-alouds.
- Invite children to sit or even lounge comfortably while you read.
- Make sure that children are near enough to see the book and can hear you as you read.
- Provide children with different seating options, such as a chair, pillow, or carpet square.
- Remember, active engagement does not mean children are sitting cross-legged, completely still and silent.

Planning for Each Time of Your Day, *continued*

Small Group

Small-group activities are ideal for introducing new concepts and materials and for reinforcing skills that children are already developing. These small-group learning experiences encourage children to have conversations and share materials, while giving teachers opportunities to extend children's thinking by posing new challenges for them to solve.

- ☐ Familiarize yourself with the guidelines for leading small-group experiences (Vol. 1, pp. 84–85; 167–169).
- ☐ Review the detailed example of how to guide learning during a small-group activity (Vol 1, pp. 168).
- ☐ Become familiar with a few of the *Intentional Teaching Experiences*.
- ☐ Decide the length of time necessary to complete a small-group learning experience. Remember that some activities like cooking may take longer than other activities (Vol. 1, p. 84–85).
- ☐ Ensure you have materials such as chart paper and markers easily accessible when leading small group so you can record children's ideas.
- ☐ Consider inviting children who are not participating in the small-group activity to engage in a modified, independent choice time activity (e.g., a quieter experience in the Library, Art, or Discovery area) (Vol. 1, p. 84–85).
- ☐ After the first week, consider what you know about each child's interests, strengths, and needs as you plan activities and decide which children will participate in each small group (Vol. 1, p. 84–85).

Meals and Snacks

Meals and snacks present another opportunity for you to lovingly interact with children, engage them in learning, and support their social–emotional development. Make it a priority to sit with children as they eat, and take part in their discussions.

- ☐ Find out whether any children in your class have food allergies or other dietary restrictions and take the appropriate steps outlined by your program's guidelines and practices (Vol. 1, p. 88).
- ☐ Take time to talk with families in person, over the phone, or through email to learn about their children's eating habits and food preferences (Vol. 1, p. 88).
- ☐ Create a calm and pleasant atmosphere to encourage socialization during meal and snack times. A read-aloud right before lunch can help set a relaxed tone for mealtimes (Vol. 1, p. 88).
- ☐ Write, review, and post any breakfast, lunch, and snack menus.
- ☐ Include snack and/or lunch helpers' jobs on the job chart (e.g., setting the table and passing out supplies).
- ☐ Post written procedures for washing hands and cleaning dishes. Use numerals to indicate what to do *first*, *second*, *third*, etc.
- ☐ Post a picture and word recipe if children are going to make their own snacks.

Encourage and support children to serve themselves independently. Help them read the self-serve snack charts and recipes beforehand. As children serve themselves, help them count, measure, and follow the appropriate steps in the preparation process.

- ☐ Try to reduce the need to get up and down from the table when sitting with the children so that you can actively participate in group discussions. You might need to keep extra food, napkins, paper cups, sponges, and paper towels near enough for you to reach from the table (Vol. 1, p. 89).
- ☐ Be tolerant of spills and accidents as children take on more active roles, such as pouring their own milk or water and serving food (Vol. 1, p. 89).
- ☐ If meals are served in the classroom, be sure to store the child- and adult-sized cleanup supplies where they will be readily available (Vol. 1, p. 89).

You can support children's content learning during meals and snack time by guiding and taking part in their conversations. You might say, "Yes, Alejandro, your orange looks like a ball. Another word for ball is sphere," or "You found the letter *L* on your milk carton; what other words do you know that start with the letter *L*?"

Caring for Self and the Classroom

As children become members of the classroom community, they learn to take care of themselves and share the responsibility of caring for the classroom space. It is everyone's responsibility to care for classroom materials, use them appropriately, and clean up after each use.

- ☐ Make a sign with pictures and words demonstrating the steps for proper handwashing (Vol. 1, p. 173).
- ☐ Create a handwashing song or chant to use in the first few weeks as children learn the procedure, e.g., sing "This is the way we wash our hands," to the tune of "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush."
- ☐ Label cubbies or spaces for each child's belongings (Vol. 1, p. 75).
- ☐ Become familiar with *Intentional Teaching Experience* SE12, "Classroom Jobs."
- ☐ Create and post a job chart (Vol. 1, pp. 76–77).

Rest Time (full-day programs)

In full-day programs, designated rest times help rejuvenate both children and teachers before the afternoon activities and experiences. All children benefit from having the opportunity to rest and have quiet time to relax and recharge.

- ☐ Find a safe space in the classroom to store children's cots and blankets (Vol. 1, p. 75).
- ☐ Select a quiet story or two to read before rest time to help children transition into this low-energy time of day (Vol. 1, pp. 89–89).
- ☐ Find soft music or recordings of environmental sounds, e.g., ocean, wind, and night sounds, to play during rest time (Vol. 1, pp. 89–90).
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with any "lovies" or other comfort items that children will be bringing from home to have at rest time (Vol. 1, pp. 89–90).
- ☐ Make plans for the children who do not sleep and/or the children who wake up early and decide which quiet activities and materials you will have available for them. Include a balance of quiet, open-ended math and literacy materials, such as pattern or attribute blocks, magnetic slates, drawing boards, and writing materials (Vol. 1, pp. 89–90).

Planning for Ongoing, Observation-Based Assessment

When rooted in ongoing observations, assessment is a powerful tool that supports children's learning and informs teachers' instructional decisions. Formative assessment is the practice of using assessment information to guide your teaching, individualize instruction, and scaffold children's learning. When you have a process for ongoing formative assessment, you are able to continuously gather information about individual children that directly informs how you tailor your instruction to meet the unique developmental needs of each child in your class.

- ☐ Begin collecting and dating samples of children's work (e.g., writings, drawings, story dictations, photos of creations and constructions). Use this documentation over time as evidence of children's progress (Vol. 1, pp. 183).
- ☐ Decide on a system to collect, store, and manage observation notes and assessment information (Vol. 1, pp. 180–181).
- ☐ Become familiar with best practices for documenting focused observations and writing observation notes that are dated, objective, and factual (Vol. 1, pp. 181–182).
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with how to analyze documentation using the learning objectives (Vol. 1, pp. 183–184).
- ☐ Encourage families to share their observations and knowledge of their children's development and learning with you (Vol. 1, pp. 210–212).
- ☐ Use assessment information to inform and guide interactions with children and to plan for learning experiences (Vol. 1, pp. 192–193).

Conclusion

We hope this checklist helps you reflect on and refine your teaching practices as you plan and prepare for the beginning of the year. When you make the learning environment an inclusive, caring, and responsive place for children and their families, you are not only creating a positive and dynamic classroom—you are inspiring children to become enthusiastic and joyful learners.

You are ready to jump into *The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community Teaching Guide* to begin planning. Get ready for a great year! And thank you from all of us at Teaching Strategies for what you do every day to support the children and families you serve.