

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE: To ensure that curriculum development is in accordance with performance standards and best practice. The learning environment and lesson planning must be based on sound curriculum foundations so that children have the best learning opportunities offered to them.

PROCEDURE: Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start classrooms utilize Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Anti-bias Curriculum, Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), and Creative Curriculum (for preschoolers and infants and toddlers) when creating classrooms and playground environments, when planning activities for children and when offering guidance to the children. Each classroom has a copy of these materials, along with other curriculum books that may be utilized.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices are based on knowledge of how young children learn. Children acquire knowledge about the physical and social world in which they live through playful interaction with objects and people. Our classroom programs are designed for the age groups served and implemented with attention to the needs and differences of the individual children enrolled, to include children with disabilities and other special needs.

Anti-bias Curriculum offers the guidance to find ways to prevent and counter the prejudices in our society while children are young and vulnerable to misconception. It discusses ways to empower children to solve prejudice problems and provides ways to set up an anti-bias environment, free from stereotypes.

Creative Curriculum offers the guidance, support, and freedom to be creative and responsive to children. Because children learn from their daily interactions with the environment, a carefully organized and rich environment will help children develop a sense of trust and belonging. Children who feel safe and are encouraged to explore materials as well as relationships with peers and adults in order to feel valued.

Positive Behavior Supports offers a comprehensive approach to classroom management that is incorporated into the daily curriculum and daily plans. This approach includes effective strategies for overall classroom management, as well as for specific behaviors and situations in Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms.

The Teachers role is to move among groups and individuals to facilitate the children's involvement with materials and activities by asking questions, offering suggestions, or adding more complex materials or ideas to a situation. Directed activities may be added to the play with adults and children as leaders. Activity participation should be a choice, but children may be encouraged to participate. Education staff expectations match and respect each child's developing capabilities. The teachers employ positive guidance techniques and set clear limits. The teachers prepare the environments in which the children select many of their own activities. Those areas include dramatic play, blocks, science, literacy, music and movement, manipulative, books, creative art, sensory play and woodworking. Our program uses the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, the Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale and the Family Day Care Environmental Rating Scale for observing and analyzing environments for success. Each site has a copy of the appropriate tool to access as a resource for developing environmental designs/layouts.

While academic proficiency is often a concern for parents, it is our job to educate them on the outcome requirements for our program and the importance of what we are providing in the environment that meets pre-academic needs. A major focus of our program is the development of social skills and emotional expression skills that will facilitate later development of feelings of competence and capability. Self-

esteem building remains our primary focus, as children begin the process of leaving the family and developing new relationships with peers and other adults. Dealing with frustration and failure as well as mastery is a goal for young children. Above all children deserve unconditional positive regard and respect.

Pedestrian Safety is important in curriculum development for both children and their parents. Education staff is required to introduce pedestrian safety within the first 30 days of services and on-going throughout the year. The curriculum can manifest in a variety of ways all of which need to be appropriate to the developmental level of the child and culturally respectful and appropriate for the families enrolled in the program. The curriculum must also be on-going, providing periodic reinforcement to building good safety habits. The Pedestrian curriculum may be included in health and safety education as part of routine building but should include appropriate teacher directed and child initiated activities that teach the basic concepts of pedestrian safety. Canned activities, dittos, and worksheets will not be utilized. Rather, open-ended, fun and interesting activities coupled with appropriate teacher-led activities would be preferable. Some ideas for pedestrian education include:

- Discussing how to cross the street using visuals or puppets, followed up by a “safety walk”
- Dramatizing “crossing the street” and “driving a car” using props and dress up materials.
- Talking about traffic lights using a felt board story followed up with traffic signals in blocks area and identifying “stop”, “go” and “caution” while riding the bus.
- Visit to the classroom by a patrol officer talking about safety with follow up police officer and safety play in the dramatic play area

Adult or parent training in Pedestrian Safety must also occur within the first 30 days and is on-going throughout the year. This training for parents may occur in a variety of ways, such as:

- Pamphlets on safety accompanied by a discussion
- Safety video and discussion about prevention of accidents
- Individualized information on a home visit including pamphlets, books and activities for children
- Center Day training in lecture format from local law enforcement accompanied by discussion

Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers

The *Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers* provides a comprehensive, yet easy to use framework for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate program for infants and toddlers. This program is designed for use in both center-based and family-based childcare settings. It emphasizes that strong relationships between caregivers/teachers and children and families are the focus of curriculum for very young children.

Major features include:

- X A foundation in Child Development
- X Forms for individualizing goals and objectives for children
- X Goals for working with families
- X Letters to families
- X A comprehensive guide for planning
- X Plan for predictable routines
- X Model appropriate behavior for children
- X Utilize all activities and daily routines as learning opportunities for children rich in language
- X A balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities
- X respect for child’s needs and wants
- X allow for child-initiated activities during free exploration based on developmental needs

- X create a safe and inviting environment for infants and toddlers to explore
- X intentionally plan for language development and for problem-solving opportunities
- X Plan for child-child and adult-child interaction opportunities in a safe environment

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