Office of Early Childhood Education
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Recommendations for High-Quality Pre-kindergarten Implementation: Interpretation of the Early Learning Guidelines

MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Mississippi Department of Education

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Acknowledgements

The *Recommendations for High-Quality Pre-kindergarten Implementation: Interpretation of the Early Learning Guidelines* were developed as an essential step in building continuity from preschool to kindergarten and in response to school districts' questions about developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten practices. The *Recommendations for High-Quality Pre-kindergarten Implementation: Interpretation of the Early Learning Guidelines* reflect research and best practice recommendations combined into one usable document for school administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and families.

The recommendations take a close look at the major components of successful pre-kindergarten programming. Applied systematically and comprehensively, these components can yield quality programming for Mississippi's pre-kindergarten classrooms.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Recommendations for High-Quality Pre-kindergarten Implementation: Interpretation of the Early Learning Guidelines* are designed to give administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals guidance and resources to effectively implement the components of a pre-kindergarten program. Based on research and best practice in the field and informed by position statements authored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three-and Four-Year Old Children* clarify appropriate pre-kindergarten structures, practices, and environments. The *Recommendations for High-Quality Pre-kindergarten Implementation: Interpretation of the Early Learning Guidelines* are also intended to advance a comprehensive and seamless educational continuum from preschool through kindergarten.

The pre-kindergarten year is critical in establishing a strong foundation for the future of every child. Some trends, including teaching skills in total isolation and eliminating opportunities for children to engage in "choice" activities, are not in keeping with the best ways young children learn. Children learn through ample opportunities to explore, practice, apply, and extend on the concepts presented in the classroom.

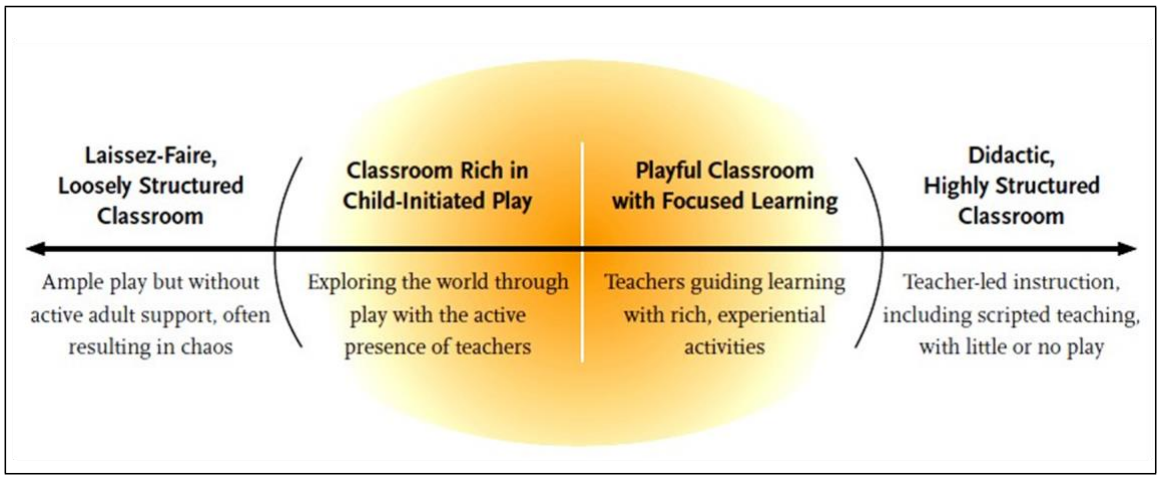
The *Recommendations for High-Quality Pre-kindergarten Implementation: Interpretation of the Early Learning Guidelines* provides developmentally appropriate practices for working with four- and five-year-old children and details what a pre-kindergarten classroom should look like, and what should be occurring in that environment on a daily basis throughout the pre-kindergarten school year.

School districts are encouraged to use this document as a resource to strengthen discussions and actions that ensure children's pre-kindergarten experiences are developmentally appropriate and that the environment is conducive for teaching and learning in Mississippi's preschool through grade 12 education system.

PRACTICES IN PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Understanding Child Development

While experts agree that child-initiated play is about “whole child” development – social-emotional, cognitive, and physical - the idea that, “letting students loose for extended periods of time is going to automatically yield learning gains,” is far from true (Pianta in Wilson, 2009). This is particularly so for young children still learning to self-regulate, collaborate, and become good listeners and communicators. Both extremely chaotic classrooms and overly didactic teacher-directed classrooms are counterproductive to young children’s skill development in all domains. There must be a balance for learning to be optimized.



(Miller, 2009)

Pre-kindergarten programming hinges on fostering children’s development and learning in all domains—cognitive, language, physical, adaptive, and social-emotional.

COGNITIVELY, pre-kindergartners can show more flexibility in their thinking and greater advances in reasoning and problem-solving. They retain concepts best when presented in contexts meaningful to them. As a result, active, experience-based learning, while good for all ages, is key to this period of development.

LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY SKILLS of pre-kindergartners vary widely. Pre-kindergartners can generally answer open-ended questions (“What would you fix for dinner if you were the cook?") with relatively complex sentences, can retell a story or relay details about an experience or event, and can participate appropriately in conversations. Their vocabulary is growing at a fast

pace, and they still make frequent incorrect generalizations and grammatical errors when they speak (“Look at all of those deers.”).

PHYSICALLY, pre-kindergartners become increasingly more competent in physical skills such as gross and fine motor skills. Many pre-kindergartners initially struggle with fine motor tasks such as holding tools for drawing, writing, and cutting. Four- and five-year-olds benefit from many opportunities to practice their fine-motor skills through painting, working with clay, constructing with blocks, stringing beads, zipping, buttoning, using scissors, and pouring juice at snack time. They are also becoming more competent in their gross motor skills and can skip, hop, and climb with increasing ease by the end of their pre-kindergarten year.

ADAPTIVE SKILLS are becoming increasingly independent during pre-kindergarten. Children are developing self-help skills and are increasingly able to respond to instructions given to a group and to begin to initiate appropriate tasks. They are learning personal information such as phone numbers, and what to do in situations involving personal responsibility (Battelle Developmental Inventory-2 NU, 2016.).

SOCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY, forming and sustaining relationships with adults and other children is central to a young child’s development. Studies show that children who fail to develop minimal social skills and suffer neglect or rejection from peers are at risk for later outcomes such as school dropout, delinquency, and mental health problems (McClelland, Acock, & Morrison, 2006).
Entering pre-kindergartners vary in their ability to self-regulate by intentionally controlling emotions, behaviors, and thoughts (Tomlinson in Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). It is important for their teachers to minimize sources of frustration, overstimulation, and stress in the environment that might be more than young children can handle.

Teacher-Child Interactions

The emotional support that teachers give to children provides a solid foundation for developing the motivation and cognitive skills critical to positive long-term academic outcomes (Crosnoe et al., 2004; Greenberg et al., 2003; Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; Pianta et al., 2002; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2005; Roeser et al., 2000; Zins et al., 2004). Indicators of social adjustment in school settings include self-control, emotional regulation, getting along with peers, and enjoyment of school (Birch and Ladd, 1997).

Fostering Social Development and Learning through Teacher-Child Relationships

Social development and learning are fostered when a teacher is warm, caring, and responsive to children's interests and feelings.

Teachers are generally more successful in cultivating these social skills when they:

- consistently demonstrate that they care about their students as individuals;
- validate children's interests and feelings; and
- support children's efforts to regulate themselves.

Part of a pre-kindergarten teacher's role is to monitor children's social activities and to provide positive ways for solving problems, settling disputes, and keeping interactions fair and inclusive. Teachers must provide children with ample time and opportunities to work cooperatively through problem-solving, conversations, group discussions, and other activities.

Teachers should model appropriate behaviors by helping children label emotions and link them to appropriate ways to respond. Explicit and consistent rules with clearly described age-appropriate consequences should be applied. Children who need social assistance to find play partners should be coached by teachers in strategies for entering and participating in activities with classmates. This might include directly teaching the words a child needs to communicate ideas and feelings while negotiating differences. Warmth and genuine acceptance of each child's social learning process should be apparent in every teacher-child interaction.

Developing Self-Regulation through Teacher-Child Relationships

Successful self-regulation means that a child can purposefully monitor him or herself. Children who can self-regulate are able to control their social-emotional and cognitive processes. The child can exert self-control, think about what he or she is learning, consider alternate perspectives, and adjust the amount of mental energy needed based on a task's level of difficulty.

Learning to self-regulate requires daily participation in experiences that:

- involve children being regulated by a teacher or classmate;
- give children the opportunity to regulate others; and
- provide opportunities for children to voluntarily practice regulating themselves (Leong et al., 2009).

Comprehensive Standards-Based Curriculum

All public schools have access to the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children* which state what pre-kindergartners are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the grade level, and how pre-kindergarten children should demonstrate mastery of the standards, concepts, or skills.

STANDARDS refer to the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children*, adopted by the state of Mississippi in 2018. These standards outline concepts teachers should instruct. In pre-kindergarten, teachers use thematic units to present the standards to children in a way that allows them to make connections between the standards and their world.

CONCEPTS are the broad ideas embedded in the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children* which children must understand in order to master the standards. Concepts are what are discussed and practiced in whole group and small group settings to help children understand and make connections with the standards.

SKILLS are the tasks which children must be able to perform to show understanding and mastery of the concepts within the standards. Skills are the tactile representation of standards mastery and how children can show concept mastery. Skills are what children practice in small groups and in learning centers.

Teachers should utilize the standards as a foundational guide when planning lessons and designing instructional strategies and activities. Lesson Plans must address all domains of children's development and learning weekly. Additionally, the weekly plan can serve as a tool for making anecdotal notes that reflect differentiated instruction tailored to meet the diverse needs of students.

Teachers should:

- pay attention to what children are interested in, what they already know, and what they may be ready to learn next when planning lessons that present the standards to the children in an engaging manner;

- share the children's instructional goals with them as well as their families. Allow families/caregivers to have input when determining children's learning goals for specific skills being addressed at home;
- differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the children they teach; and
- plan experiences across disciplines (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, the Arts, Physical Education, Social and Emotional Development, and Approaches to Learning).

The *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children* should be supported by a high-quality pre-kindergarten program rich in classroom experiences that promotes higher-level thinking skills while stimulating curiosity, experimentation, brainstorming, and problem-solving. Child-initiated play-based activities and intentional teacher-designed experiences that incorporate purposeful play, should frame pre-kindergartners' learning during the school day. Competence and skill development in all learning areas will be optimized from these experiences.

Content area subject matter should be woven into thematic learning experiences and projects, allowing children to develop new understandings by making meaningful connections during hands-on applications. "A high-quality pre-kindergarten curriculum is anchored in state content standards, principles of child development, and age-appropriate teaching strategies" (Gullo, 2006).

A thematic approach of teaching and learning is an approach where many different areas of the required curriculum are connected using a common theme. For example, a pre-kindergarten class focusing on a beach theme might learn vocabulary for common objects on the beach in large group, read or view books about the beach in the library center, count and sort seashells in the math center, and experience beach-themed artwork in the creative arts center. One advantage of this system is that it allows teachers to teach multiple standards at one time. By constantly making connections in the classroom, children learn and begin to understand how things they experience at school relate to the real world.

Having one overarching theme allows all content standard areas to be interrelated throughout all learning centers, increases children's interest in learning, and maximizes children's engagement. Thematically connected books should be available as resources for children to reference during learning center time and as needed for differentiated instruction. Classroom instruction dominated by worksheet activities, pre-determined topics, and/or scripted themes *provides little opportunity for lessons that are individualized to meet children's needs and interests.*

It is recommended that home activities include reading to a child, doing simple science experiments or hands-on mathematics activities, and drawing or writing in journals. These

activities carry the message that learning is an important and engaging pursuit. It is not age-appropriate for pre-kindergartners to be subjected to negative consequences if home activities are not completed.

When Approaching Curriculum Content

- Concepts are best taught when related to a topic or theme, introduced in a variety of formats, and embedded across curricular domains.
- Concepts are best taught through project-based learning, a balance of child-initiated and teacher-guided learning that starts with a central idea and is studied over an extended period of time. This method carefully considers children's interests and evolves as they explore and investigate, represent, and share their findings (Heroman and Copple, 2006).

Within the Daily Schedule

The pre-kindergarten curriculum should support a daily schedule that allows enough flexibility for extending experiences that children find particularly engaging. Center Time (choice time) should be long enough to give children the opportunity to interact deeply with materials and peers. NAEYC recommends that Center Time (choice time) each day be sixty (60) minutes or more in full-day programs and at least forty-five (45) minutes in half-day pre-kindergarten programs. The state of Mississippi requires pre-kindergarteners to participate in learning centers for a minimum of one hundred twenty (120) minutes. Children should be active participants in all activities and never be required to sit passively.

Each segment of the day should fully incorporate purposefully planned learning, including arrival, meals, quiet time, snack, transitions and routines, outdoor time, and departure. Teachers should plan daily routines and transitions that incorporate rhythm, rhyme, songs, chants, and math story problems.

Weaving gross motor activities into indoor and outdoor learning experiences addresses a pre-kindergartner's developmentally appropriate need for movement while facilitating large muscle development. It also gives children a break from academic learning, helping them to better concentrate and self-regulate for the duration of the day. Scheduled physical education classes are not considered a substitute for recess, the time for children to socialize and self-select their physical activities (NAEYC, 2009).

Outdoor time for a minimum of forty (40) minutes daily, maximum of sixty (60) minutes, should be considered part of the curriculum. The outdoor environment should include materials for making choices, planning, socializing, and collaborating, in addition to using large muscles in gross

motor play. Portable equipment, such as balls, hoops, ropes, and parachutes can provide additional opportunities for play besides the stationary equipment that is on the playground. Indoor gross motor activity should be substituted for outdoor time during inclement weather conditions.

Play-Based Learning

The pre-kindergarten school day should include extended time for play. Children do best and learn best when their education blends play with academics (Levin, as cited in Miller, 2009). Play-based learning helps children acquire higher-order thinking skills, including generating testable hypotheses, imagining situations from another's perspective, and thinking of alternate solutions (Engel, 2010).

Pre-kindergarten play-based, child-initiated activities are best accomplished through learning centers. Centers give children the opportunity to make their own choices, assimilate new concepts, and practice a variety of skills through interactions with peers, materials, and teachers in an integrated, coordinated context.

When pre-kindergarten-age children engage in complex socio-dramatic play, they act out specific roles, interact with one another in those roles, and plan how the play will go. Research shows that make-believe play in small groups, with opportunities to learn how to get along, contributes greatly to four- and five-year-olds' understanding of emotions and social relations. Repeated success with social and emotional problem-solving helps pre-kindergartners become even better with self-regulating and "reading" emotions.

Four- and five-year-olds are highly motivated to stay within the roles and rules of play and act out their self-regulation abilities. They practice inhibiting impulses, acting in coordination with others, and making plans (NAEYC, 2009). For example, when pre-kindergartners play "restaurant", they must regulate their behavior to remain in the roles of customer, waiter, cashier, or restaurant manager. Children of this age still need guidance and support from teachers to help them engage in the sustained, complex play that is most beneficial to their development. However, the level and nature of the teacher's support will be differentiated for each child over the course of the year.

When scaffolding children's play-based learning, the teacher's role is to share control and, without dominating the play, engage with children to scaffold increasingly complex and sustained interactions and situations. The teacher subtly facilitates when children's play stalls, adds materials that stimulate children to extend their current play scenarios and projects, and rotates or provides different materials to spark new play ideas. This type of purposeful play fosters executive functioning skills which consist of working memory, self-control, and cognitive

flexibility. These skills are essential to life-long learning and being successful as an adult (Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2011).

A full-day pre-kindergarten class is required to have a minimum of one hundred twenty (120) minutes of play in centers in addition to an extended outdoor play period of forty (40) minutes that should be rich in child-initiated play. By emphasizing this time for play- based activity, pre-kindergarten programs afford children the opportunities to become deeply engaged at a complex level that supports every content area in the curriculum.

Pre-Kindergarten Teaching Practices

Recognizing and using effective teaching strategies in the pre-kindergarten classroom means reflecting on ways pre-kindergartners develop, meeting each child at his or her developmental level, and bridging children's individual developmental differences. It means using evidence- and research-based teaching strategies in the pre-kindergarten environment all day long and in each learning context.

Some pre-kindergartners have been in childcare since birth, others have one or two years of nursery/preschool experience, and some have no pre "school" group experiences with peers. A child is eligible for a pre-kindergarten program if they reach four years of age on or before September 1. Pre-kindergarten cut-off dates result in some children entering just prior to their fourth birthday while others, based on birthdates or family preference, may not begin school until age five or six.

Therefore, instruction in the pre-kindergarten year is differentiated with multiple entry points, understanding and accommodating young learners' varying background knowledge, life experience, home culture, prior exposure to school or childcare settings, physical, adaptive, social-emotional, and cognitive development, and facility with the English language.

Building Community

A well-run pre-kindergarten classroom functions as a community. Predictable routines and schedules, rules developed by all and applied fairly, and shared classroom responsibilities are hallmarks of an environment responsive to children and their needs. Rules should not be punitive or negative. Guidelines for acceptable behavior should be expressed in simple language accompanied by a clear rationale. Work and play settings should be planned so that children can navigate through daily activities with as much independence as possible.

When children understand that they are able and expected to regulate many of their activities independently, they, in turn develop self-control and self-direction. These attributes,

complemented by the presence of consistently warm and caring adults who nurture academic success and successful relationships between and among classroom community members, contribute to feelings of well-being and security that instill confidence in everyone in the classroom community.

Supporting Social-Emotional Development

Pre-kindergarten children need opportunities to label their feelings and ideas for managing strong emotions in socially acceptable ways. Classroom libraries should contain books with social themes (feelings, friendship, managing anger). Dramatic play, art easels, clay, sandboxes, and water tables can be outlets to express frustrations. Teachers can also provide opportunities for children to role play and talk about their feelings in small or whole group settings (ex. facilitating Problem Stories).

Teachers should step in and provide one-on-one coaching when a child is less adept at developing friendships with peers, or less practiced in essential skills such as sharing, turn-taking, and collaborating. Adults in the room can model prosocial behaviors by interpreting social situations in ways that show sympathy and caring. A housekeeping or dramatic play center in the classroom, equipped with dress-up clothing and props, gives children the opportunity to enact family and community roles and scenarios. It also provides a safe way for children to discuss their feelings and practice alternative ways of approaching conflict. The emotional security found in classrooms that fosters trusting, nurturing relationships frees pre-kindergartners to focus on the curriculum's cognitive demands.

Facilitating Cognitive Development

Workbooks and worksheets are not be used to engage children with academic content. Rather, teachers should systematically incorporate essential cognitive skills into the scope and sequence of hands-on learning activities. Teachers can involve children in planning activities as well as in discussions about experiences after they take place. This approach encourages children to make appropriate choices, problem-solve, and reflect, in addition to practicing specific skill sets such as letter and number knowledge.

Teachers should plan to engage in two-way conversations with children throughout the school day, using rich vocabulary and descriptive language to extend learning. Active listening and speaking on the part of the teacher should include consideration for what children are seeing and saying as equal partners in a verbal exchange. This requires listening attentively to children's plans, interpreting and expanding on what children do and say, and asking questions that provoke and encourage children to think more deeply.

Techniques that Enhance Learning Activities (Epstein, 2018)

- Incorporating daily planning and reflection times into the schedule
- Ensuring easy access to classroom areas and materials that provide the backdrop for children's activities, projects, and plans
- Using open-ended questions to encourage children's thinking
- Observing children to learn about their interests, what they know, and what they are thinking about
- Listening carefully to children's plans and the questions children ask in order to prepare appropriate supports
- Encouraging children to describe in detail the outcomes of their plans
- Encouraging children to use their outcomes as stepping stones to new plans
- Making opportunities available for children to represent ongoing activities and projects through writing, drawing, and three-dimensional media

When a task is just beyond a child's independent reach, adults and more competent peers can provide the scaffolding that allows the child to succeed at that task. When the child stretches to a new level in a supportive context, he or she can go on to use the skill independently and in a variety of new contexts. This lays a foundation for the next challenge.

The most effective scaffolding occurs when a teacher is flexible and takes advantage of an array of techniques, including:

- giving encouragement rather than evaluative praise
- making instructions or directions, when called for, direct and specific
- providing the factual background or information children need in order to explore, extend, and apply
- modeling desirable behaviors and skills for children to see and hear in action
- giving visual or verbal hints or prompts
- offering specific feedback instead of general comments
- building on prior knowledge to encourage higher-order thinking
- developing incremental challenges that go just beyond a child's current level of comfort or mastery
- prompting children to elaborate on their conversations and explain their answers
- gradually reducing scaffolding as children's skills develop, until the task or activity can be performed independently

Retention In Pre-Kindergarten

Retention in pre-kindergarten is not advised. (Squires, 2015)

- Research shows that early retention does not improve student outcomes in later years.
- Studies prove retention, based on a single, high-stakes test score, is ineffective.
- Long-term results of retention confirm that children retained in the early years are 20-30% more likely to drop out of school.
- Children, who are retained in the early years, reveal negative results in academic achievement and social-emotional development in subsequent year.
- To read the entire article, follow the link Retention in the Early Years.

ESTABLISHING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Classroom arrangement and organization impact children's experiences in the pre-kindergarten learning environment. A predictable schedule gives pre-kindergartners the structure they need to navigate independently through the school day. Each pre-kindergarten day should include blocks of time that engage children individually, in whole group, and in small group configurations, with a balance of child-initiated and adult-guided experiences. Children's evolving interests and skills should determine the materials and learning activities offered during group times and in classroom learning centers.

Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms

Pre-kindergarten classrooms should be clean and safe, uncluttered, bright, and arranged with dividers, storage units, and bookshelves with consideration for the ways children use materials in the classroom. The furniture should be child-sized and appropriate for four- and five-year-old children. The classroom should include tables that encourage small groups of children to work together and spaces for children to store work and personal belongings. Materials should be organized logically, enabling children to find what they need and return materials to their proper locations. Labels with words and pictures in centers and storage places should feature legible print in English and the children's home language(s) to convey functional messages and foster independence.

Displays

Displays in the classroom should be current and hung at a child's eye level. Evidence of the children and teachers who occupy the space should be visible when entering the room. Commercially made products and signs do little to convey what is happening in the classroom. Photographs and names of teachers and children, along with photos and drawings of the children's families and pets, reflect individual interests and culture, create a sense of belonging, and help children and families feel valued (Curtis & Carter, 2014). The daily schedule, in photos or graphics, should be visible year-round. Original children's work, both two- and three-dimensional, should be changed at least monthly, referenced during ongoing instruction, and used as a way of documenting the rich learning that is taking place in the classroom.

Learning Centers

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) recognizes the definition of learning centers as identified in literature as “distinct areas in a classroom that offer various materials and opportunities for hands-on learning at individually appropriate levels”. (Copple & Bredekamp, 2006). In addition, the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC, 2007) publications state that learning centers should engage children in learning, promote development of the whole child, integrate multiple subject matters so that learning happens in a meaningful context, assess children’s understanding and knowledge through observation and authentic assessment practices, and foster a love of learning.

Learning centers should be available every day for open exploration. Daily Center Time/ Choice Time gives children an important opportunity to practice and master the academic and social skills introduced during more formal lesson times. Center Time provides teachers critically important time to interact with individual children and informal small groups while reinforcing skills across curricular domains. Centers should contain open-ended, concrete materials geared to different developmental levels, as well as hand-on activities that reinforce content area skills and concepts. Priorities should be set for purchasing materials that align with the pre-kindergarten curriculum and reflect diversity, families, and children’s interests. Teachers should examine materials carefully to avoid stereotypical roles and language. Using recycled and natural materials provides an inexpensive way to add a variety of stimulating resources to the classroom.

Daily Use of Learning Centers

- Establish a minimum of five different learning centers in a classroom. Depending on instructional focus, number of children, and size of classroom, learning center numbers may increase. Learning centers should be used individually or in groups of two to five children.
- Three required primary centers are: a Book/Library Center, a Math/Manipulative Center, and a Creative Arts Center.
- Additional integrated learning centers are added to address child interest and support current learning topics so that at least five (5) integrated learning centers are available. These centers should contain interactive, collaborative activities that support the mastery of all standards, skills, and concepts.
- A teacher-led small group (teacher or assistant) may occur simultaneously during the learning center time period.
- An additional adult (assistant, inclusion teacher, etc.), if present, may lead another small group or may move among independent centers, actively interacting with

children by asking questions, evaluating children's understanding, and monitoring progress.

- Learning Center activities must be directly connected to theme, content standards, and developmental expectations (integrated Math, Science, Social Studies, English/Language Arts, Creative Arts, Physical Development, Social and Emotional Development, and Approaches to Learning). Multiple standards can be mastered within different learning centers, rather than taught in isolation or at a single learning center.
- Children are given adequate time and multiple opportunities throughout the day/week to complete learning center activities and accomplish established mastery of standards, skills, or concepts (if a child is observed having difficulties completing a learning center activity, the teacher should scaffold support to accomplish mastery of standards, skills, or concepts; thus, giving multiple ways for the child to master the standard). During Learning Center Time/Choice Time, the use of a timer or any device that may restrict children's freedom of choice and participation is not encouraged. Children are able to freely choose the centers they participate in and are uninterrupted during engagement. During this uninterrupted time, teachers should be interacting with students and having conversations about the skills they are trying to accomplish in the center. This is an opportunity for children to explain ideas and concepts to the teacher and create depth of learning.
- Provide differentiated activities for children that are challenging, meeting their needs and developmental levels. Learning center activities for children who finish early should be enjoyable, meaningful, and push children toward their learning goals (not busy work, more work, or "helping" other children). Differentiated extensions will allow children to expand what they have learned to a higher thinking level. For example, a child may be searching for letters in a plastic sealed bottle filled with beads and laminated letters of the alphabet. When the child finds the letter, he/she will write the letter down on paper or a dry erase board. To extend the activity when the child finishes, he/she can write the upper-or lowercase version of the letter, draw a picture of something that begins with one or more of the letters that the child found, find words in the classroom that begins with the letters found, or write the found words and make a sentence with the words orally and/or written.

In addition to the three (3) primary learning centers, the pre-kindergarten classroom should include the following suggested areas/learning centers:

- Meeting Area
- Dramatic Play Area
- Blocks, Wheel Toys, and Construction Center

- Oral Language/Phonemic Development Center
- Creative Writing Center
- Social Studies Center
- Listening Center
- Technology Center
- Dramatic Play Center
- Science/Discovery Center
- Creative Arts Center
- Sand and/or Water Center
- Music Center
- Motor Development Center
- Quiet Area

Pre-Kindergarten classrooms may also include:

- Cooking Center
- Woodworking Center
- Outdoor Centers (Creative Art, Sand and Water, Motor Development, Science/Discovery)

If space is limited, some of the learning centers may be combined.

Whole Group/Meeting Area

Suggested materials:

- a rug for comfortable floor seating
- an interactive board or whiteboard
- a stand that will support the reading of large-sized books
- an easel to write on or to hold chart paper for teacher-modeled and interactive or shared writing with children
- a flannel board, pocket charts
- instruments to use during music and movement

Where children can:

- preview new learning centers
- practice listening and speaking skills through activities such as Thinking and Feedback, Story Acting, SWPL, Fourth Read Aloud, etc.
- develop a sense of time through participation in a brief, developmentally appropriate calendar activity such as which extension class they are attending that day or which student has a birthday that week. (2 minutes)
- explore concepts of print during SWPL and Read Alouds
- listen and participate in Read Alouds

And teachers can:

- conduct a whole group lesson outside or another safe area, whole groups does not always need to be children sitting on the carpet
- give children a mental map of the day by previewing new learning centers and additions to ongoing learning centers
- model reading and writing
- engage in interactive writing with children
- facilitate a sense of community by structuring the Whole Group Meeting with familiar daily activities that encourage:
- responsibility (jobs such as graphing attendance, snack choices, weather, etc.)
- feelings of competence (singing familiar songs with movements together)
- membership (including children in the planning process for the day)
- implementing class rules (that are consistent and developed with the children)
- turn-taking (during SWPL and Read Aloud activities)
- listening (posing questions that require critical thinking)

Whole Group/Meeting Area

- sharing of ideas and feelings (teaching conflict resolution skills when addressing classroom problems and issues – Problem Stories)

Block Center

Suggested materials:

- wooden unit blocks
- hollow blocks
- non-interlocking sets of small blocks
- props (people, animals, signs, vehicles, construction worker hats)
- plastic piping
- cardboard tubes
- clipboards and writing/drawing materials
- books, photos, floor maps or blueprints of buildings, roads, and bridges

Where children can:

- recognize and compare shapes while building a tower
- talk about the similarities and differences between and among shapes with peers or the teacher
- build a structure from imagination or by using a picture as reference
- use different shaped blocks to complete a structure (a triangular prism for the roof of a house)
- substitute blocks for other blocks (two triangular prisms for a rectangle when building a castle)
- represent their work by drawing the structure and discussing the process
- think about measurement (length: “Which boat is longer?”, width: “Which object, the placemat or the book, is wider?”)
- build ramps to explore velocity and distance

And teachers can:

- interact with individuals and small groups of children
- encourage children to recognize geometric shapes and their particular characteristics (attributes)
- explore relationships between the characteristics of two- and three-dimensional shapes
- use blocks as units to measure classroom items
- explore physics (“What did you do to make your tower so tall without falling?”)
- expand children’s vocabulary and language while talking about constructions (“Do you think your building is strong enough to withstand a hurricane?”)
- allow block structures to stay up for several days - photograph children’s structures
- place clipboards, pencils, and paper in the block area
- add and change out props (decorative cubes, traffic signs, vehicles, animals, people)

Block Center

- add reference material (information books, pictures, and maps)

Literacy Center

Suggested materials:

- **Library Center** with a diverse selection of fiction and non-fiction reading materials, pictures, class-made books, big books; and floor pillows or other soft seating
- **Listening Center** with headphones, books and songs on compact disc, tablet or cassette
- **Writing Center** with an assortment of lined and unlined paper, clipboards, plastic slip sleeves, wipe-off boards, writing and drawing tools (pencils, crayons, markers, dry-erase markers, etc.) Wiki Stix; and book-making supplies (scissors, tape, glue, stapler, hole punch, brads, yarn, etc.)
- **Technology Center** with computers/tablets/laptops/, a printer, access to appropriate software and websites; headphones, drawing/writing materials
- **Phonological/Phonemic Awareness Development Center** with a variety of rhyming pictures/objects, pocket charts, vocabulary cards with pictures, photographs for describing, alphabet letters (upper- and lowercase letters: felt, plastic, magnetic), Bingo games, drawing/writing materials

Where children can:

- become familiar with a variety of literary genres, read individually or with a friend or adult
- create and recreate stories using puppets, props, and flannel boards
- listen to books and songs on audio devices
- visit familiar websites
- play educational games
- compose and/or illustrate stories on paper and/or on the computer
- discuss, manipulate, view, and sort various pictures/word cards or objects to experience letter sounds, rhyming words, alliteration, etc.
- create books using materials

Literacy Center

And teachers can:

- facilitate a print-rich environment throughout the classroom (signs, charts, morning message, labels, directions, chants, class-made books)
- arrange areas of the room to accommodate language and literacy by designing a library with comfortable seating, a listening center, a computer, and a writing area
- stock a diverse collection of authentic literature and songs for use with a cassette, CD player, or tablet
- rotate book collections that include fiction, non-fiction, picture books, and emergent readers
- preview all material and websites prior to children's use on the computer
- encourage children to collaborate in pairs while at the computer
- stock the writing center with a variety of writing tools (pens, pencils, crayons, markers of different thicknesses), a variety of paper that is lined and unlined, and book-making supplies (cardboard, stapler, wallpaper, tape, scissors, glue)
- assist children in using the printer
- prominently display children's work in the classroom
- provide frequent opportunities for children to share their written work (informally, with a friend or two, and formally, with the whole class)

Dramatic Play

Suggested materials:

- props and clothing to simulate a variety of familiar home and community environments such as kitchen, office, doctor's office, restaurant, laundromat, shoe store, grocery store
- materials for drawing/writing
- a selection of fiction and nonfiction books that include social studies content

Where children can:

- incorporate math skills by counting, pouring, measuring, setting the table (one-to- one correspondence), using a cash register (coins)
- incorporate literacy skills by viewing books about a range of home and community roles or writing a recipe, making lists, creating signs, writing a prescription, or taking orders (restaurant)
- role play scenarios (food store, hair salon, school)
- rehearse roles (father, sister, baby, community helpers, jobs/career choices)

- problem-solve with peers

And teachers can:

- facilitate individual children's social skills (turn-taking, patience, manners, entering into play, welcoming another person entering into play in a small group setting)
- as a co-player, scaffold children's play by role playing (walking an imaginary puppy)
- introduce vocabulary related to the particular play topic while conversing with children
- stimulate children's mathematical thinking by asking, "How many plates will you need if you invite two friends to have supper with your family?"
- have extended conversations while engaged in play with children to expand speaking and listening skills

Science Center

Suggested materials:

- science tools for observing, comparing, and measuring
- notebooks, clipboards, and writing materials to record observations
- living things (plants and animals)
- collections of natural materials (rocks, shells, bark, etc.)
- examples of simple machines (gears, pulleys, wheels, etc.)
- informational books with accurate illustrations

Where children can:

- observe, question, predict, and investigate a wide variety of living and nonliving things over the course of the year
- care for a pet
- learn about animal habitats
- draw and write observations of a growing plant
- classify insects, animals, rocks, and plants by their attributes
- explore manufactured materials and recycled materials (different kinds of paper)
- use simple machines in classroom applications (a clothesline on a pulley to hang artwork)
- ask questions, make predictions, investigate problems, and discuss findings with classmates and teachers
- use computer technology and concept books to learn about science topics

And teachers can:

- provide living and non-living things for children to explore, compare, and classify
- make available notebooks and clipboards, books, video material, computer software, and websites that help answer children's questions
- post KWL (What We Know, What We Wonder, and What We Learned) charts from class discussions
- hang accurate pictures or posters aligned with topics under study
- provide opportunities to investigate (exploring light by examining shadows at different times of day, exploring playdough and clay to compare their attributes, exploring sound by listening to rain drops on an umbrella)
- demonstrate simple science experiments with opportunities for children to replicate the experiments
- demonstrate how to use science tools (how to collect an insect in a magnifying container)
- provide sensory experiences with sand and water

Science Center

- have science conversations with small groups of children that encourage them to ask questions and reflect
- provide science journals for children to record observations through drawing/writing

Creative Arts Center

Suggested materials:

- an easel with paints
- tools (a variety of paint brushes, staplers, hole punches, glue, scissors)
- clipboards with writing/drawing materials for outdoor drawing
- a table with nearby access to materials for drawing (a variety of paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils), painting (tempera and watercolor), collage (natural and recycled materials), sculpting (clay), and construction (wood, recycled cardboard and plastic), adhesives (tape, glue)
- a variety of visual material and non-fiction books featuring art techniques, media, and artists

Where children can:

- explore a variety of materials
- develop control of small muscles through fine motor activities: cutting, drawing, painting, stringing, rolling, kneading
- translate experience, imagination, and feelings into art
- make two-dimensional and three-dimensional art
- become involved in the creative process of making art
- learn and use art vocabulary
- have repeated opportunities to practice a technique, such as print-making
- see, hear, and talk about art from different people, places, and times
- learn to take turns, share items, develop patience, build perseverance

And teachers can:

- provide children with access to a variety of art materials instead of craft projects or pre-drawn coloring activities
- demonstrate the appropriate use and care of art materials
- model various techniques (how to roll clay into a coil)
- use visual arts vocabulary
- use children's work and the works of artists to discuss concepts ("What shapes do you see in this painting?")
- make specific observations about children's work ("I see you drew three big blue circles", rather than, "That's beautiful!")
- observe and encourage children's problem-solving and persistence during the creative process ("You worked so hard figuring out how to make your sculpture stand without toppling over.")
- expose children to a wide range of visual arts and artists

Creative Arts Center

- exhibit children's artwork with descriptions, avoiding commercially purchased classroom decorations
- provide storage so children can revisit their work overtime

Sand and Water Center

Suggested materials:

- a sand and water table or deep dishpans
- sand, water, or other materials (corn, rice, dry beans, pebbles) for filling, pouring, scooping, and measuring with different sized objects
- plastic tubes, funnels, turkey basters, sponges, items that sink or float, spray bottles, and/or pumps

Where children can:

- compare and contrast the characteristics of different substances
- explore the properties of water
- experience sand mixed with water
- investigate the concept of flow by pouring and sifting
- think about measurement (weight: using a balance scale, “Which cup of pebbles is heavier/lighter?”, capacity: “Which container holds more cups of sand?”)
- record work by drawing/writing in a journal
- discuss the experience of a particular process/exploration with other children and with the teacher

And teachers can:

- rotate materials throughout the year to spark children’s interest and support concepts under study
- introduce tools purposefully to the sand/water table based on the type of exploration being encouraged (a variety of sieves to encourage exploration of the concept of flow)
- encourage children to discuss ongoing investigations
- encourage children to explain and draw/record their experiences and reasoning
- record anecdotes and take photos of children’s investigations in progress for discussion at Sharing Time

Math/Manipulative Center

Suggested materials:

- Lego or Duplo blocks (large), counting cubes, Unifix Cubes, Snap blocks, pattern blocks
- assorted math counters
- sorting trays and a variety of beads and buttons to sort
- laces and lacing cards/boards
- puzzles: shape, number, jigsaw, patterning materials
- tools for measuring: cups, spoons, containers, scales, rulers/yardsticks, tape measure
- toy money, cash register
- board games, dice, playing cards (ex. Uno, Old Maid)
- magnetic numerals, tactile numerals
- 3D shapes, tangrams
- digital timer

Where children can:

- explore mathematical concepts including counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, and geometry
- choose from a wide variety of hands-on materials to meet their different abilities
- play games to practice mathematical concepts and to develop social skills
- have access to books aligned with the unit to deepen their understanding
- use paper and writing tools to communicate thoughts, ideas, and observations
- be encouraged to ask questions, problem-solve, reflect, make connections to real-world experiences, and improve reasoning skills

And teachers can:

- provide a wide variety of hands-on materials for children to explore mathematical concepts including counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, and geometry
- integrate mathematics learning with other content areas within the current unit
- intentionally plan center activities to encourage interest in mathematics by drawing on children's background knowledge and making connections to the current unit and to real-world experiences
- have conversations with children that encourage them to ask questions, reflect, and build on their problem-solving and reasoning processes
- offer guidance, prompting, and support to children in their learning processes
- provide math journals for children to record observations, thoughts, and ideas through drawing/writing

Music Center

Suggested materials:

- musical instruments, such as drums, bells, rhythm sticks, xylophone, maracas, Chilean rain stick, tambourine, triangle, etc.
- CD/cassette player with headphones, different types of music recordings (classical, contemporary, music from other cultures), familiar songs
- props, costumes
- books and pictures/photos about instruments and music

Where children can:

- investigate and experiment with instruments and props
- listen to recorded music and play instruments and/or sing along
- take turns using the instruments
- look at books/pictures that depict instruments, composers, music from around the world

And teachers can:

- demonstrate how to play instruments, but give children freedom to play instruments as they wish
- read aloud about composers, music from other cultures, instruments
- give children opportunities to create music in small groups or as a whole group
- guide children to refine social skills with taking turns, sharing, accepting others' expressions of music
- incorporate movement and dance as music is played or created to express emotions and improve balance/coordination

Quiet Area

Suggested materials:
• soft furnishings • quiet activities for one or two children to use
Where children can:
• reflect, read alone, relax while listening to music • remove themselves briefly from the group to self-calm
And teachers can:
• foster respect by and for all children regarding use of the privacy area • encourage children to use the privacy area to think, relax, or problem-solve

Routines and Transitions

Routines are procedures that are established, taught, modeled, and completed in the classroom so that children know what they are expected to do according to their daily schedule. Transitions are the movements of children to a different place in an intentionally structured and routine manner.

Teachers determine the agreements, expectations, and procedures so that class routines and transitions operate effectively (center chart, transition chart, etc.). A list of the information teachers should consider when establishing routines and transitions includes, but is not limited to:

- How to assign class roles or leaders
- How to use visual schedules and instruction
- What centers children will be working in that day
- How to access and use materials appropriately
- How children should ask for help
- How children should clean up
- How to transition from center to center
- How to recognize a transition is about to occur
- What to do with completed work and what to do after work is completed

- What songs will be used to help with routines
- What are the behavior and academic expectations for children

Sample Schedules Accommodating Play-Based Learning Across Content Areas

The schedules shown for pre-kindergarten programs are arranged to permit a predictable flow to the school day. They allow children to fully engage in planned activities without interruption for extended periods of time. The schedules include time for content area-specific experiences, but anticipate that literacy, math, science, and social studies experiences will be blended across segments of the day. They are based on the premise that children spend most of their time in activity that is not sedentary. Rather, experiential, hands-on activities dominate the day and asks each child to explore, apply, and extend on concepts and ideas from each content area through investigations and projects. Quieter and more active times are balanced throughout the day. The earlier portion of the day is scheduled with activities that demand the most focus. The sample schedules are intended to be used flexibly, with timing determined as much as possible by children's needs and interests in the course of their activities and investigations.

Sample Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY	MINUTES
7:00 – 7:30	**Arrival/Free Choice Centers**	30 Minutes
7:30 – 7:50	**Breakfast*/Storytelling**	20 Minutes
7:50 – 8:10	**Whole Group Read Aloud**	20 Minutes
8:10 – 8:20	**Morning Exercise ("Move to Learn")**	10 Minutes
8:20 – 8:55	**Extension Class (music, library, art, physical education, computer)/Teacher Planning**	35 Minutes
8:55 – 9:10	**Whole Group/Intro to Centers**	15 Minutes
9:10 – 10:30	**Free Choice Centers /Literacy & Math Small Group**	80 Minutes
10:30 – 10:50	**Lunch***	20 Minutes
10:50 – 11:05	**Whole Group Math**	15 Minutes
11:05 – 12:05	**Free Choice Centers /Literacy & Math Small Group**	60 Minutes

12:05 – 12:15	**Thinking and Feedback**	10 Minutes
12:15 – 12:55	**Physical Activity**	40 Minutes
12:55 – 1:40	**Quiet Time**	45 Minutes
1:40 – 2:00	***Snack/Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI)/Problem Stories**	20 Minutes
2:00 – 2:30	**Story Acting/Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)/Closure**	30 Minutes
2:30 – 2:45	**Dismissal**	15 Minutes
2:45 – 3:30	**Teacher Planning**	45 Minutes

REQUIRED MINUTES		SAMPLE SCHEDULE TOTAL MINUTES	
Instructional Time	360 Minimum	**Instructional Time**	450 minutes
Center Time	120 Minimum	**Center Time**	170 minutes
Quiet Time	30 Minimum- 60 Maximum	**Quiet Time**	45 minutes
Physical Activity	40 Minimum - 60 Maximum	**Physical Activity** **Due to physical education extension class, physical activity may be more than 30 minutes on certain days.*	50 minutes
Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)	15 Minimum	Can be done throughout the day	

NOTES:

*Snack/Mealtimes for this age group should be a learning time. Promotion of different skills can be learned during mealtime such as taking turns, pre-reading and pre-math skills, problem-solving skills, fine motor skills, etc. Teachers will discuss concepts with children that support standards for social and emotional development, physical development, speaking and listening skills, approaches to learning, science, and science studies.

Sample Half-Day Pre-Kindergarten Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY	MINUTES
7:30 – 7:55	**Arrival/Breakfast*/Storytelling/Free Choice Centers**	25 Minutes
7:55 – 8:15	**Whole Group Read Aloud**	20 Minutes
8:15 – 8:35	**Physical Activity**	20 Minutes
8:35 – 8:45	**Whole Group/Intro to Centers**	10 Minutes
8:45 – 9:45	**Free Choice Centers /Literacy & Math Small Group**	60 Minutes
9:45 – 10:05	**Thinking and Feedback/Snack***	20 Minutes
10:05 – 10:35	**Extension Class/Teacher Planning** (music, library, computer, art, physical education)	30 Minutes
10:35 – 10:55	**Whole Group Math/Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)**	20 Minutes
10:55 – 11:35	**Free Choice Centers /Literacy & Math Small Group**	40 Minutes
11:35 – 11:50	**Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI)/ Problem Stories**	15 Minutes
11:50 – 12:00	**Story Acting/Closure**	10 Minutes
12:00	**Dismissal**	

REQUIRED MINUTES		SAMPLE SCHEDULE TOTAL MINUTES	
Instructional Time	180 Minimum	**Instructional Time**	270 minutes
Center Time	60 Minimum	**Center Time**	100 minutes
Quiet Time	As Appropriate	**Quiet Time**	0 minutes
Physical Activity	20 Minimum - 30 Maximum	**Physical Activity**	20 minutes **Due to physical education extension class, physical activity may be more than 30 minutes on certain days.*
Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)	15 Minimum	Can be done throughout the day	

NOTES:
*Snack/Mealtimes for this age group should be a learning time. Promotion of different skills can be learned during mealtime such as taking turns, pre-reading and pre-math skills, problem-solving skills, fine motor skills, etc. Teachers should discuss concepts with children that support standards for social and emotional development, physical development, speaking and listening skills, approaches to learning, science, and social studies.

Using In-Depth Investigations to Support Children's Learning

Long term studies or investigations offer integrated opportunities for deep involvement in play, problem-solving, and creativity. Using this approach, children are motivated to work through their interests and individual strengths while seeking answers to their questions. Learning through projects avoids teaching content area skills in isolated segments. The scope and duration of a project is determined by the children's level of interest and engagement. Projects allow children to be partners in learning with other children and with the teacher, who is a facilitator and a co-researcher in learning.

Science and social studies content offer many possibilities for investigations. Literacy and the arts come into play as children listen, read, and write about what they learn and represent what they know and understand. Classroom learning centers can be designed to support the topic of study. Families and community places of business can donate items to enhance the learning opportunities in the classroom. Field trips into the community and invitations to community members can support the study (Jacobs & Crowley, 2010).

A QUALITY APPROACH TO CURRICULUM

Curriculum, broadly speaking, is “what schools teach.” This includes all that is planned for children in the classroom, such as learning centers, whole group, or a teacher-initiated small-group activity. Curriculum also includes the unplanned experiences a child has while building a bridge with paper towel tubes, string, and popsicle sticks; waiting for the bus; at the snack table; or when frustration leads to a temper tantrum. Curriculum is the entire range of experiences that children have at school. Content objectives and learning outcomes, knowledge of child development, and careful observation of the needs and interests of individual children guide a curriculum. The National Association for the Education of Young Children calls this “developmentally appropriate practice” (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000). Developmentally appropriate practice follows the interactive or constructivist approach.

Children need opportunities to engage in application of the principles being introduced through the curriculum. Therefore, one of the requirements for classrooms serving three- and four-year-olds is that most of the instructional delivery be organized around a variety of integrated learning centers with responsive interactions among children, their peers, and adults. These experiences provide opportunities for children to acquire skills and concepts through hands-on engaged learning while the teacher is facilitating appropriate language development through meaningful conversations with others.

Each segment of the pre-kindergarten day, from arrival and whole group, to learning centers and small group experiences, to mealtime, snack time, and recess, serves a purpose in building the foundation for long-term school success. Pre-kindergartners make meaning out of content when contexts for learning draw on their experiences and immediate world. They develop a strong sense of purpose toward learning when teachers skillfully plan and execute experiences and integrate content areas throughout every segment of the school day.

ARRIVAL

Arrival is a welcoming time that should transition children to the school day. ▼

Teachers should:

- convey a sense of warmth and predictability in the school environment by welcoming children with individualized greetings and maintaining predictable settling-in routines that children can manage independently
- spend extra time supporting children who need more assistance with routines, teaching them how to manage the start of their day with confidence
- design the classroom environment (areas for children's coats, lunches, and other belongings; sign-in procedures; returning library books; transitions to Free Choice Centers) so that children can independently manage settling-in routines
- simplify arrival routines so that the first Whole Group can begin promptly to ensure a smooth start to the school day
- ask one or two children if they would like to tell a story (Storytelling component)

Children should:

- independently or with assistance as needed, manage their belongings; sign-in, greet classmates and teachers; perform other routines such as selecting a free choice learning center
- have opportunities to tell a story during Storytelling
- transition to Breakfast or Whole Group after putting away toys and other materials in free choice learning centers

At the beginning of the year:

- the routines, procedures, and expectations of Arrival will need to be *taught* and *practiced* every day until these are a natural part of the beginning of the school day for the children
- children will need assistance learning to manage their belongings; sign-in, greet classmates and teachers; perform other routines such as selecting a free choice learning center

STORYTELLING

Storytelling is a component that usually occurs during Arrival. Children can tell stories to the teacher about anything they would like to share as the teacher records their words. Storytelling helps the child build connections between home life and school. Oral language development, vocabulary building, and social/emotional development skills are areas that are strengthened during this part of the day. ▼

Teachers should:

- invite one or two children each morning during Arrival to tell a story
- sit closely, side-by-side, with the child as he/she tells a story about his/her experiences, a retelling of a familiar book, or personal ideas and thoughts
- write down the child's words on paper or in a child's journal (just as the child says with no editing/grammar changes)
- ask guiding, open-ended questions to extend the child's story
- read the story back to the child and ask if he/she would like to add anything
- encourage the child to continue the story in the Creative Writing Center and illustrate his/her story, if desired
- remind the child that during Story Acting time, he/she may choose friends to help act out this story
- create a system for ensuring that each child has an opportunity to tell a story during the course of a week or two

Children should:

- feel comfortable dictating a story as the teacher writes his/her words
- have the opportunity to tell stories and to act them out during Story Acting time
- (optional) have a tablet or journal in which to keep the compiled stories

At the beginning of the year:

- time should be set aside during Arrival each day for Storytelling
- teachers should model the process by "telling" a story as another teacher records his/her words and reads them back
- personal journals should be provided for each child in which to keep compiled stories

WHOLE GROUP*/READ ALOUD

Whole Group provides a framework for the school day by building community and giving children information they need to anticipate what will happen during the day. Prior to the Read Aloud, a brief greeting activity, such as a Good Morning song, will help build connections and set a positive tone for the day. An interactive, linear calendar can also be displayed with the focus on that month/week and any upcoming events that are relevant to the children. This guided conversation should be limited to 2-3 minutes.

During the Read Aloud ▼

Teachers should:

- use selected Read Aloud texts for each unit that are sophisticated, use advanced vocabulary, have complex characters, and require higher-order thinking and conceptual learning.
- follow the Read Aloud protocol in the Weekly Schedule, staggering the readings of the same text throughout the week
- facilitate concepts and vocabulary through higher-order questioning and guided conversations

Children should:

- explore concepts and vocabulary to be engaged in Learning Centers, Small Group activities, and other components throughout the day that will achieve the goals of each read
- be able to bring understanding to the next read of the text

At the beginning of the year:

- teachers will incorporate the Read Aloud component during the first three weeks of school so children will become accustomed to this part of the daily schedule
- teachers will select children's literature that focuses on the first days of school
- teachers will develop discussion questions that build vocabulary, oral language development, and story comprehension will be utilized by teachers as these stories are read
- children will be provided a rich springboard for classroom investigations and conversations through Read Alouds

***The daily schedule should allow time for more than one Whole Group meeting.**

Continued from above: READ ALOUDS 1-4

There are four reads that have distinct goals/purposes. ▼

Read Aloud 1 – Orientation:

- The title, author, and illustrator are read. The book is read in its entirety as the teacher reads fluently with minimal stops, highlights key vocabulary that is *briefly* defined in child-friendly terms, and conveys meaning and enjoyment. This is the ONLY time the book is read all the way through.

Read Aloud 2 – Reconstruction:

- The title, author, illustrator are read, along with the first 2 – 3 pages. The teacher turns to specific pages in the book where children can consider significant events. Children are allowed to think about what is known about the plot, characters, and to make connections with their own experiences. They can retell and demonstrate comprehension of the story using key vocabulary and link characters' emotions with characters' actions. The book is NOT read cover to cover.

Read Aloud 3 – Chime-In:

- The title, author, and illustrator are mentioned and the first 2 – 3 pages are read. The teacher selects 4 – 5 places in the book for children to analyze the text and practices with the children saying and using story vocabulary. Children "chime-in" to recall/retell main events and characters. As the teacher stops to leave out a word or phrase, the children can fill in with phrases from the text or retell what is happening. The teacher provides scaffolding for this process. The book is NOT read cover to cover.

Read Aloud 4 – Act Out:

- The teacher chooses 2 – 3 scenes from the book for small groups of children to act out, exploring character motivations and emotions. Different children may act out the same scenes, so everyone has a turn. This provides children with many opportunities to deepen understanding. The teacher can gain insight into the children's' understanding of vocabulary and story comprehension.

WHOLE GROUP*/INTRO TO CENTERS

Centers are a time for guided play. To set children up for successful, productive, and collaborative activity, teachers will facilitate a short, 5-10 minute Whole Group meeting to introduce learning center activities.

Teachers should:

- introduce novel materials and processes
- model activities that will be explored in centers
- refer to Read Aloud texts
- reinforce specific vocabulary
- relaunch activities or work that might have been abandoned or might be approached in a different way with added materials
- reference children's work and comments from a previous Thinking and Feedback session.

Children should:

- receive a preview of the centers that are available for the day
- see the varied materials and possibilities within each center
- practice unit-based and discipline-specific vocabulary
- interact verbally with peers, teachers, and content during the Intro to Centers process

At the beginning of the year:

- Intro to Centers should be a familiar component that children expect to occur in a Whole Group setting prior to Learning Center Time
- during Intro to Centers, teachers refer to texts that highlight the themes of First Three Weeks of School: Establishing Classroom Agreements and Expectations, Community Building, and Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution
- each day, teachers will provide a brief introduction to or review of the Learning Centers available for that day, during the first three weeks of school
- following the protocol for Intro to Centers, teachers will introduce new vocabulary, model one-two available activities using materials, and explain processes for engaging in or completing activities/products in Learning Centers

***The daily schedule should allow time for more than one Whole Group meeting. **Intro to Centers should be immediately followed by Center Time.**

LEARNING CENTER TIME

Learning centers provide children with hands-on opportunities to practice learning and thematic unit concepts. Learning relies heavily on experiential, hands-on activities; therefore, Learning Center Time requires careful organization and orchestration on the part of the teacher. During this segment of the day, Learning Center Time is devoted to activities related to the unit/theme, investigations and discoveries, purposeful play, and project work; all the while, giving children the important opportunity to **self-select** learning centers and activities.

Ample time should be given for children to complete activities. Therefore, the use of a timer to set limits on activities is not encouraged. A chart may be used to record children's individual choices for each day of the week; this helps teachers track where children are choosing to spend their "choice" time.

Working in learning centers that are designed to meet the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children* gives children an important opportunity to engage in play-based activities while practicing content across curricular areas. It is a time for children to practice (rehearsal) and to demonstrate what they know (performance). ▼

Teachers should:

- include three required, primary centers: library center, math/manipulative center, and creative arts center
- develop at least two additional learning enters so that at least five integrated learning centers are available to:
- offer opportunities to engage in skills that intentionally aligned with the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children,* to address the children's interests, and to support current learning topics
- offer access to fiction and non-fiction books and writing materials during learning center time and throughout the day
- design and implement permanent and moveable learning center areas
- rotate materials in learning centers based on unit/theme, concepts, children's interests, and skills introduced in curricular areas
- facilitate children's understanding and participation in Center Time routines
- support and facilitate learning through guided play and exploration, use intentionally rich language

- interact with children and become a co-player to scaffold children's learning in centers without dominating their activity
- help children make connections with each other by incorporating opportunities for learning social skills as children practice negotiating, cooperating, and collaborating
- ensure that, throughout the school year, Center Time is not shortened or subject to ongoing interruptions
- avoid rote paper and pencil practice in favor of hands-on activities with manipulatives, art materials, sensory materials, etc., and
- spend part of each Center Time recording anecdotes about children as part of a performance-based assessment system

Children should:

- be able to freely choose the centers they participate in and are uninterrupted during engagement
- have access to materials in each center that reflect the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children* through opportunities for hands-on, play-based experiences
- have the support of teachers who will scaffold without directing child-chosen activities during Center Time
- learn how to manage time, space, and materials in individual and small group settings under the guidance of supportive teachers

At the beginning of the year:

- the classroom should be arranged to feature the learning centers. Tables that can also be used during Learning Center Time, Small Group, Snack, and Lunch times (if applicable) should be located within centers throughout the room
- careful planning should go into a "choice" system/chart that features the center names, in pictures and words
- teachers should spend ample time introducing children to the "center/choice" system and to each of the centers. This includes daily incorporation of Intro to Centers, demonstrating some ways materials can be used in each area, and how to clean up when finished with materials in a center
- teachers may want to initiate a system of asking children to articulate their initial plans for Center Time as part of the transition to this segment of the day
- a system for performance-based assessment should be organized and ready to implement when school starts

SMALL GROUP

Small Groups are made up of two-four children who are directed/invited for instruction of literacy and/or math skills facilitated by the teachers. Small Groups can take place simultaneously during Learning Center Time and should occur daily.▼

Teachers should:

- identify smaller groups of children based on data to encourage differentiation of instruction and the ability to meet each child's needs
- invite and encourage children to come to the Small Group, reassuring them that they may return to their Center after they complete the Small Group task/activity
- work more closely with each child on specific learning objectives, reinforce skills learned in the whole group instruction, focus on skill deficit areas, and check for understanding
- permit children additional focused teacher attention and opportunities to ask specific questions about what they learned
- include targeted and effective formative feedback that will affect teacher and child next steps
- include specific, developmentally appropriate tasks, materials, and activities based on child data
- assess children through teacher-observation or completion of tasks/activities

Children should:

- respond to the teacher's invitation to attend and participate in the Small Group activity
- be attentive for a developmentally appropriate amount of time (eight-ten minutes)
- work with other children in the Small Group, practicing cooperative social skills, with teacher guidance
- complete the tasks/activities with teacher prompting and support

At the beginning of the year:

- Small Groups should be implemented in the first weeks of school to establish the routines and procedures for Small Groups that will be continued throughout the school year
- special consideration should be given to the attention span of pre-kindergartners. Teachers should be sensitive to cues from the children, planning and pacing small group times so that children's developmental needs for active engagement are met
- additional time and emphasis should be invested in building a classroom community where children can practice social skills, particularly skills that foster an environment that values collaboration in group settings (Problem Stories)

CLEANUP

Cleanup should be considered as part of the pre-kindergarten social studies curriculum. This time of day builds community by designating individual and group responsibilities for maintaining the classroom's physical environment. ▼

Teachers should:

- organize the class with rotating responsibilities for maintaining classroom areas
- systematically teach children how to accomplish the cleanup tasks
- highlight the positive outcomes of a well-maintained classroom community

Children should:

- practice responsibility in caring for their classroom environment
- practice working cooperatively in a group to achieve a common goal
- feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in a well-maintained classroom community

At the beginning of the year:

- additional time should be invested in helping children understand why classroom maintenance is important (Set Up for Success in the Classroom/The First Three Weeks of School). Supporting children in learning what is expected to maintain each area, in developing the skills to accomplish the tasks, and in cooperating with classmates to get the job done is critical to implementing a system that will run smoothly for the entire school year

WHOLE GROUP/THINKING AND FEEDBACK

Thinking and Feedback allows children to reflect on and discuss the activities they engaged in during Learning Center Time. ▼

Teachers should:

- select one –two children during or after Learning Centers to share their work during *Thinking and Feedback* (give all children an opportunity to share during the week or into the next)
- communicate the value of sharing the thoughts, ideas, processes, reasoning, and outcomes of one's work
- teach children different ways to discuss their writings, paintings, constructions, activities, investigations, and projects
- use the Thinking and Feedback protocol every time, with each child's work: *Looking, Noticing, Listening, Wondering, Inspiring/Suggesting*
- model the protocol and scaffold children's responses, as needed
- allow ample time for children to think about and respond to what they noticed, observed, and appreciated about classmates' work
- record children's responses on chart paper for later referral (AT or another adult, if present)
- encourage children to use discussions as a springboard for continuing a process, expanding on an idea, or embarking on a new exploration
- use the protocol language throughout the day ("I *notice* you are using gray paint", "I *wonder* what this block would look like on your structure")

Children should:

- experience the value of communicating their thoughts, as well as actively listening to the thoughts of others to begin to understand that people can have different perspectives about the same object, event, or situation
- practice communicating effectively and with different purposes, depending on what they are describing to the class
- expand their ability to observe and notice the activities of others throughout the day
- develop next steps/plans based on the suggestions from the group
- be encouraged by the teachers to use the protocol language throughout the day ("I *notice* you are wearing red shoes", "I am *inspired* to try this")

At the beginning of the year:

- ample time should be spent helping children understand what *Thinking and Feedback* means by modeling/demonstrating and practicing what the process looks and sounds like, and encouraging children to develop their listening and speaking skills when sharing in a group

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LUNCH

A nutritious midday meal and the opportunity to socialize with classmates should be part of each pre-kindergartener's day. The guidelines found below are generalized to accommodate classroom and cafeteria settings and should be used where applicable by setting. ▼

Teachers should:

- offer children nutritious food choices
- ensure that children are taught and able to manage lunchtime routines with assistance as needed, or independently
- encourage a lunchtime atmosphere that includes socialization
- initiate conversations and encourage children to contribute, being mindful of allowing ample time for children to eat
- model, teach, and monitor sanitary procedures including food handling and distribution, hand washing, table cleaning, and garbage disposal

Children should:

- experience a nutritious lifestyle
- be comfortable with and become able to manage lunchtime routines independently
- anticipate and participate in lunch as a social time for conversation with classmates, as well as an eating time
- learn and practice sanitary procedures, including hand washing, food handling, table cleaning, and garbage disposal

At the beginning of the year:

- school districts should implement carefully considered food guidelines for families sending lunches from home. Any school-supplied lunches should be composed of nutritious, well-balanced meal components

- if lunch takes place in a school cafeteria, pre-kindergartners should receive extra attention and time to practice, so they can learn and feel comfortable with lunch time procedures
- cafeteria staff and any school personnel attending to pre-kindergartners during lunch should receive training in developmentally appropriate expectations for and interactions with young children
- whether lunch takes place in the classroom or in the cafeteria, teachers should intentionally plan and model an atmosphere that invokes a family mealtime convention of conversing while enjoying food together

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WHOLE GROUP BUILDING BLOCKS MATH

Effective whole-group activities build far more than mathematical understanding. They strengthen children's attention and persistence, enhance both receptive (listening) and expressive (Speaking) language, and support overall cognitive, problem-solving, and social development. ▼

Teachers should:

- be well-prepared and organized so that children are not left waiting with nothing to do
- keep activities moving at an engaging pace, using varied tone and pitch to maintain children's interest and motivation
- minimize interruptions, especially those caused by focusing too much on a few misbehaving children; instead bring those children back into the activity
- use songs or finger plays to recapture children's attention when it begins to fade
- support children's language and vocabulary development by describing their actions and inviting them to do the same, helping them connect language to their activity and form richer mental representations of their work

Children should:

- be attentive for a developmentally appropriate amount of time
- complete the task/activities with teacher prompting and support
- talk about what they did during an activity strengthening their mathematical reasoning, and supporting social skills such as taking turns, listening, and speaking

At the beginning of the year:

- establish Building Blocks Whole Group Math as a daily component during the first three weeks of school so children will become accustomed to this part of the daily schedule
- special consideration should be given to the attention span of pre-kindergarteners. Teachers should be sensitive to cues from the children, planning and pacing whole group times so that children's developmental needs for active engagement are met

- additional time and emphasis should be invested in building a classroom community where children can practice social skills, particularly skills that foster an environment that values collaboration in group settings

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/OUTDOOR PLAY

Every pre-kindergarten program should be committed to daily physical activity (indoor and outdoor) where children can be physically active, build gross motor skills, and freely choose from a variety of activities that promote fitness and well-being. ▼

Teachers should:

- be committed to daily physical activity as essential to a healthy lifestyle
- be proactive in teaching and maintaining safety, using rules developed with the children
- consider outdoor play a time when children can freely choose their activity
- participate in games and activities with children
- incorporate social skills development (turn-taking, sharing, following game rules, etc.)
- make available a variety of ancillary equipment (balls, jump ropes, sand toys, tricycles) during outdoor play
- facilitate cooperation and collaboration during play
- engage in supporting children to acquire and refine skills such as skipping and balancing
- scaffold children's play by engaging in, but not dominating, play activity
- consider enhancing outdoor recess time throughout the year with materials such as a science backpack, bubbles, or paint brushes and water

Children should:

- experience physical activity as a routine part of daily life
- consistently practice safety, using rules that are developed with the teachers
- freely choose their activities
- have access to equipment such as balls, bowling pins, hula hoops, jump ropes, sand toys, and tricycles in addition to gross motor structures
- practice cooperation and collaboration while playing with classmates
- have adult support, when appropriate, to acquire and refine gross motor skills such as running, jumping, throwing, climbing, kicking, skipping
- have opportunities to engage with the teachers during physical activity

At the beginning of the year:

- all indoor and outdoor playground equipment should be thoroughly checked prior to the beginning of the school year
- teachers should be proactive at the start of school, assuming that every child needs to learn how to safely use outdoor equipment
- safety should be discussed, demonstrated, and practiced consistently when on the playground
- simple, positively stated indoor and playground rules should be developed with the children
- demonstrate how to use gross motor equipment
- encourage perseverance as children are engaged in gross motor activities

QUIET TIME

It is required that all pre-kindergarten children receive a quiet time each day to rest, read, or complete a quiet activity. ▼

Teachers should:

- plan for a quiet period of time each day with an atmosphere conducive to rest, relaxation, meditation, and reflection for children
- individualize this time to allow resting, quiet reading, drawing, or listening to soft music as a choice

Children should:

- be able to anticipate a time of day that quietly invites rest, relaxation, and reflection
- have the alternative of reading a book, drawing, or listening to soft music while resting

At the beginning of the year:

- children need different amounts of rest. Some children may sleep during this time while others may just rest their bodies and their minds to recharge for the remainder of the day. While the focus may shift from rest to a quiet activity during the course of the year, the tone for a quieter time of day should be set at the beginning of school

EXTENSION CLASSES (SPECIALS)

Specials, if part of a school district's pre-kindergarten programming, should be used to directly support specific aspects of the classroom curriculum. Specials teachers will ideally work in conjunction and consultation with classroom teachers. Pre-kindergarten specials should never require that children sit still and attend for inappropriate periods of time. With the exception of physical education, the content of pre-kindergarten specials is best delivered in the context of the children's classroom and curriculum.

Specials should always enhance the content being studied in the classroom. Specials teachers should be familiar with teaching practices best suited to pre-kindergarten-age children, have training in the pre-kindergarten curriculum, and meet regularly with classroom teachers to discuss and coordinate programming. ▼

Teachers should:

- synchronize lessons with the pre-kindergarten curriculum goals and the classroom's current unit/activity focus
- plan experiences in consultation with classroom teachers
- provide resource materials to classroom teachers
- consider diverse populations of learners when planning lessons
- use teaching methods developmentally appropriate for pre-kindergarten age children

Children should:

- be exposed to content area information, ideas, and activities that complement their curriculum unit/theme and current classroom investigations or project work
- not be required to be sedentary and attend for inappropriate periods of time

At the beginning of the year:

- professional development for specials teachers should include the pre-kindergarten curriculum, age-appropriate methods for delivering instruction, and support for diverse populations

SNACKS

Having a snack, even in a half-day pre-kindergarten program, gives the teacher and children an opportunity to participate in a mealtime ritual that includes the important element of conversation, which allows the reinforcement of speaking and listening standards. Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI) or Problem Stories may be incorporated during Snack Time.▼

Teachers should:

- be proactive regarding nutritious snack choices
- plan an informal atmosphere that encourages social conversation
- rotate during the week to engage in conversation with small groups at their tables
- ensure proper sanitation with any food handling and distribution, hand washing, table cleaning, and garbage disposal
- engage the children in a LFOAI lesson or a Problem Story during Snack Time

Children should:

- experience choosing nutritious snacks
- converse socially with classmates
- have opportunities for conversation with the teachers
- learn and practice mealtime sanitary procedures, including hand washing, food handling, table cleaning, and garbage disposal
- have opportunities to participate in a LFOAI lesson or help solve a Problem Story during Snack Time

At the beginning of the year:

- school districts should implement carefully considered snack food guidelines for families sending snacks from home. School-supplied snack foods should be nutritious food choices
- teachers should intentionally plan and model an atmosphere that invokes a family mealtime convention of conversing while enjoying food together
- Problem Stories or LFOAI could be a part of Snack or other mealtimes during the day

WHOLE GROUP/LFOAI* (Let's Find Out About It)

Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI) provides children with additional information about specific concepts that are introduced during the Read Aloud. Through the use of non-fiction texts and first-hand exposure to objects, processes, and phenomena, clear and concrete connections are made to the Read Alouds.▼ *This can be done during snack time, outdoors, or as a separate component at a time that works best for the teacher. It is important that the teacher monitor the time children spend in whole group.*

Teachers should:

- schedule LFOAI lessons/activities two-three times a week
- emphasize key vocabulary that is new or familiar from the Read Aloud
- present information in child-friendly terms
- demonstrate concepts using visual supports and resources, such as pictures/text illustrations, experiments, and relevant objects
- clarify potential misunderstandings

Children should:

- have opportunities to participate in LFOAI activities through experiments, reading of non-fiction texts, and back-and-forth questions and answers
- apply knowledge and understanding gained in LFOAI to enhance their learning in Learning Centers, Small Groups, and throughout the day

At the beginning of the year:

- LFOAI is an opportunity to familiarize children with how to use classroom materials (correct use, clean up, and storage of Art Center materials) and how to complete classroom routines (the importance of handwashing)
- LFOAI should be implemented as a regular part of the school day that complements the unit of study and the Read Aloud selections

*LFOAI can be alternated during the week with Problem Stories

WHOLE GROUP/PROBLEM STORIES*

Weekly Problem Stories provide children with the ability to develop higher-order and critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, as well as strengthen community with their peers and teachers. The processes of social-emotional development are pivotal during the early childhood years and are foundational to the classroom experience. ▼ *This can be done during snack time, outdoors, or as a separate component at a time that works best for the teacher. It is important that the teacher monitor the time children spend in whole group.*

Teachers should:

- plan for Problem Stories Whole Group two-three times a week and are specific events that occur in children's daily lives or relevant to their diverse experiences
- choose to use real-time problems that may occur during the day, problems that Read Aloud book characters may have, or create "problems/conflict" to be identified and solved
- establish a goal of not eliminating conflict, but create an atmosphere where conflict can be dealt with peacefully and productively
- assume the role of facilitator and problem-stimulator
- allow children to consider many options that they construct for themselves
- engage in dialogue and inquiry with the children
- provide props such as puppets, stick puppets, or Block People for acting out problems
- not offer a pre-determined solution

Children should:

- have opportunities to identify the problem and accompanying emotions
- manage strong emotions non-violently
- brainstorm possible solutions
- use props such as puppets, stick puppets, Block People to act out problems
- maintain relationships with each other after a conflict

At the beginning of the year:

- Problem Stories should be an integral part of each week's plans that will create an atmosphere where conflict resolution and problem-solving naturally occur

* Problem Stories can be alternated during the week with LFOAI

WHOLE GROUP/STORY ACTING*

Story Acting is a dramatization component that uses children's stories from Storytelling (during Arrival). These brief performances link children's lives and perspectives. Story Acting enhances the ability to deepen children's understanding of dictating a story, seeing their words written, read aloud, and performed. ▼

Teachers should:

- give children the choice to participate in Story Acting
- allow children to decide if they would like to act out their own story or to choose classmates to help act it out with him/her
- keep a record of the children who have participated throughout the week so all may have an opportunity to act

Children should:

- engage in acting out their own stories from Storytelling
- have the freedom to explore characters' emotions and motivations in their acting
- be guided by the teacher to use key vocabulary, and characters' names and actions

At the beginning of the year:

- establish Story Acting as a daily component that the children may look forward to as they tell their own stories

*Story Acting may take place during Snack, Outdoor Play, Quiet Time, Whole Group, Closure, etc.

WHOLE GROUP/CLOSURE/SWPL

It is important to close the classroom day as it began, with everyone coming together as a community, in a Whole Group setting. In Whole Group, Small Group, or transitional settings, SWPL (Songs, Word Play and Letters) builds print and phonological awareness through word games, songs, poems, fingerplays, and predictable texts. Children interact with and attend to features of language such as letter names, letter sounds, and rhyme. Activities follow a progression of skill development from exposure to mastery over time. ▼

Teachers should:

- daily engage children in brief (10-12 minute) songs, poems, fingerplays, and/or literacy activities that follow developmentally appropriate skill progression
- use visual supports (books, song and poem charts, flannel boards, puppets, etc.)
- develop a consistent closing routine for packing up/preparing for dismissal
- briefly reflect on the day's highlights with child input
- give children some information that allows them to anticipate and visualize what the next day will be like
- implement an interactive closing ritual (song, story, poem) to preface goodbyes and departure

Children should:

- participate in a packing-up routine that is consistent and can be managed with assistance, as needed, or independently
- engage in summing up their school day
- be able to anticipate what the next school day will be like
- feel the rhythm of their school day come to an end by transitioning with a predictable, comfortable closing
- experience a joyous, engaging time of singing, chanting, and reading with the teacher
- be familiar with the songs/poems charts and props that are used as visual supports
- have opportunities to move during the poems, chants, and songs
- be given many chances to lead songs/poems, place flannel board pieces, answer questions, etc.

At the beginning of the year:

- being sensitive to the fact that the end of the class day is yet another transition for pre-kindergartners will lead to establishing a routine that assures:
    - that children do not leave belongings behind
    - that the teacher and classmates will be there the next day

    - that the flow of activity from one day to the next will remain predictable and consistent
- participate with children in the singing, chanting, movement, and reading of familiar and new poems, songs, and texts
- reinforce SWPL throughout the day during transitions (lining up, washing hands, clean-up, end-of-day rituals, etc.)
- SWPL should be implemented as an expected part of the daily schedule/routine

EXTENDED INVESTIGATIONS/PROJECT WORK (Optional)

Extended investigation or project work gives children the opportunity to engage in activities that integrate content areas around a central question, idea, or topic. This extended project/work can be an optional, ongoing component of the current unit of study. ▼

Teachers should:

- use unit literature, social studies and science content, explorations of new materials, and problem-solving opportunities as springboards for longer term investigations and project work
- embed language, literacy, mathematics concepts and skills, and creative arts
- encourage children to work in cooperative pairs or groups
- employ an approach that emphasizes critical thinking skills in the process of learning or exploring something
- document the children's processes with work samples, anecdotes, photographs, audio and video recordings

Children should:

- make connections with unit book characters and events within the projects/investigations
- have opportunities for extended explorations in social studies and science topics that raise questions about natural and manufactured things in their environment, about naturally occurring events, and about people and places in their immediate world
- practice and apply foundational literacy and mathematics concepts and skills in the context of the project or investigation
- experience the creative arts by representing their project/investigation work through drawing, painting, three-dimensional constructions, music, movement, and dramatization
- engage in making predictions, collecting and analyzing information, drawing conclusions during the project/investigation
- regularly discuss questions, ideas, observations, and findings with their peers
- work collaboratively with peers to investigate, research, complete, and share a group project

At the beginning of the year:

- teachers should begin observing and collecting information about children's interests to inform planning for longer term investigations and project work potential community resources and events should be surveyed*

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SNAPSHOT OF A PRE-KINDERGARTEN DAY

▼ ARRIVAL/STORYTELLING

Mrs. Smith greets children individually as family members drop them off at the classroom door. “Good morning, Jana.” “Good morning, Mrs. Thompson. How did that shoe tying tip work out for Jana?” “Hi, Parker! Did you have fun last night at your big brother’s baseball game?” “Bye, Mary. Thanks for dropping Sam off. Have a great first grade day.” Mrs. Smith is invested in establishing community in her classroom. She knows that offering friendship, sharing feelings, and hearing about family happenings helps the relationships grow. “Take care, Rita. You don’t want to trip over Jack’s backpack. Jack, let’s get that backpack out of the way of your friends.” Respect and caring are two important elements taught through teacher modeling. The teacher is fostering a classroom climate where children’s respect and caring for each other is as much in evidence as their developing abilities in all areas of content.

Mrs. Smith turns to greet three children who appear at the doorway accompanied by the teacher assistant, Mr. Grant, “I thought I heard you coming, singing ‘The Name Game’. Good morning!” During Arrival, Mr. Grant always escorts children who ride the bus to school. Aside from ensuring the children get to class safely, he doesn’t miss a moment’s opportunity for learning. From rhymes, chants, and songs that enhance phonemic awareness, to math story problems, Mr. Grant knows which skills Mrs. Smith is focusing on and turns transitions into opportunities to extend those concepts. The children put their coats and backpacks away, sign in on the attendance chart, and complete a variety of class responsibilities (charting home/school lunch, watering plants, feeding the hamster, exchanging lending library books, etc.). Then they freely select Learning Centers while chatting informally with classmates.

As the children are arriving and working in Learning Centers, Mrs. Smith asks John and Sandra if they would like to share a story with her. The children eagerly retrieve their story journals from their cubbies and sit on the floor beside Mrs. Smith. As the children dictate their stories to Mrs. Smith, she records their words in their story journals. This time of Storytelling helps children build connections between real-life home and school occurrences. After the Storytelling time with Mrs. Smith, John and Sandra put their story journals back in their cubbies and choose a Learning Center.

When it is time for Whole Group, Mrs. Smith claps her hands in a pattern to signal it is time to clean up and go to the Meeting Area. The children “echo” the clapping pattern and begin to clean up their Learning Center areas. They move to the Meeting Area with Mr. Grant to sing along with a Greg and Steve video while they wait for Whole Group to begin. On other days, they might read books or participate in movement activities with music with Mr. Grant.

▼ WHOLE GROUP/READ ALOUD

Read Aloud is a collaborative, whole group activity designed to introduce the children to a variety of genres, authors, and illustrators within the unit of study. Over the course of the four Read Alouds, Mrs. Smith will guide children as they explore literary elements, conventions of print, comprehension, vocabulary, phonological awareness, and language.

Mrs. Smith's goals for Read Aloud are facilitating children's:

- understanding that reading is important and enjoyable
- connections to text through their personal experiences and background knowledge
- understanding and use of advanced vocabulary
- development of higher-order thinking and conceptual learning
- knowledge and continued learning of foundational literacy skills
- interest in becoming readers and writers, themselves
- connections made to Read Aloud texts while participating in Learning Centers, Small Groups, and throughout the school day

*There are four Reads that have distinct goals/purposes. Each Read (four) of the same text should be staggered throughout the week according to the Weekly Schedule.

On this day, Mrs. Smith is prepared to engage the children in the Second Read of the book, *A Hat for Minerva Louise.* She begins by saying, "We read this book before, so you know the title is….*A Hat for Minerva Louise*." She pauses before she reads the title so that the children can chime in. She underlines the title with her finger as she reads it. Mrs. Smith reminds the children of the author and illustrator, Janet Morgan Stoeke. "Today we're going to read it again and remember what happened in the story."

Mrs. Smith reads the first two-three pages, then reads only a few, specific pages, stopping to engage the children where she has notated key vocabulary and/or significant events.
She says, "Why do you think the other hens didn't like snowy days? Why would they keep their heads tucked under their wings like that?" Mrs. Smith shows the illustration as she waits for the children to respond. Justin answers, "It's too cold!" She continues, "How did Minerva begin to feel after she went outside?" Diana raises her hand, "She thought it was beautiful and wanted to stay out." Sandra adds, "But it was too cold".

Mrs. Smith continues to stop on specific pages, pointing out the illustrations and highlighting key vocabulary. She asks higher-order thinking questions for children to consider and answer with more than a one-word response. As she closes the book, Mrs. Smith facilitates a discussion with the following questions that feature thought-provoking connections to social and emotional development:

- "Is Minerva Louise a real chicken? How do you know?"
- "How is Minerva Louise similar or different from the baby rabbits in *Rabbits & Raindrops*?"
- "How did the other hens feel about Minerva Louise's 'hat' when she returned to the hen house? How do you know?

She allows ample time for children to think and respond. The children are allowed to retell parts of the story and make connections with their own experiences. They demonstrate comprehension of the story by using key vocabulary and linking characters' emotions with characters' actions.

Mrs. Smith makes a point to adapt her questioning to accommodate Tori, a child with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by speaking slower and using pictures. Each year, Mrs. Smith has one or two children in her class with IEP's. She works closely with the school's child study team to implement these children's functional goals.

As Read Aloud comes to a close, Mrs. Smith transitions the class to a brief Physical Activity with a "Move to Learn" video and activity to "get the wiggles out".

▼ EXTENSION/SPECIALS CLASS

After "Move to Learn" the children line up with Mr. Grant as he begins the song, "Mary's Wearing a Red Dress". The children join in the song and line up as their names/clothing colors are sung. Today, the children are going to Music.

When the children return, they know to come to the rug for Whole Group/Intro to Centers.

▼ WHOLE GROUP/INTRO TO CENTERS

Giving the children a chance to stretch, she transitions them with a song/movement activity, "Raindrops Are Fallin' on My Head".

After asking the children to sit down, Mrs. Smith begins Intro to Centers by briefly describing the two new Learning Centers that have been added: Sand and Water Center – Absorbent Materials and Library and Listening Center – Animal Research. Sharing pictures from the book, *Rabbits & Raindrops*, she says, "Remember the rabbits in *Rabbits & Raindrops*? They had to take shelter from the rain. Do you remember why they had to hide in the hedge?" Penny says, "Because they didn't want to get wet." "Right!" Mrs. Smith says, "Today in the Sand and Water Center, you will experiment with what kinds of materials will absorb – soak up, get very wet - water." She shows some of the materials that will be available in the Sand and Water Center and demonstrates how to use them. She also uses specific vocabulary in her

descriptions, such as “absorbent” and “damp”. Mrs. Smith continues with a brief description of the opportunities in the Library and Listening Center.

After Intro to Centers, Mrs. Smith immediately begins asking groups of two or three children to select a Center.

▼ CENTER TIME/SMALL GROUP

During Center Time (learning centers and teacher-led small groups), the children engage in math, language and literacy, science, and social studies activities embedded in the classroom learning centers aligned to the pre-kindergarten standards. The classroom’s materials and resources reflect the home languages of the children in the class. Particular attention is given to labeling, props, and literature in home languages other than English. Mrs. Smith is committed to giving children time to engage deeply in pursuits of their own choosing. She carefully balances child choices with teacher guidance by using a Center Chart. The chart contains pictures/labels for each learning center and specifies how many children may play/work in each center.

As Center Time begins, both teachers move into the Learning Center areas with the children. Sandra and Hines head for the watercolors in the Science Center. “Let’s make purple puddles together,” says Sandra. “Just like the puddles on the playground yesterday!” says Hines. Mrs. Smith spends some time with several children exploring absorption at the Sand and Water Table. Tracey is recording her findings. Using paper and crayons, she draws a picture of the foil and puts a big “x” on top. Mrs. Smith takes out her pad of sticky notes to jot down anecdotes. She makes a note to herself to add some large turkey basters to the Sand and Water Table to encourage further investigation of absorption. Mrs. Smith also records some of the extended conversation she hears going on between Hines and Sandra as they make their purple puddles in the Science Center.

Several children are building a boat in the Block Center. They study illustrations of boats in informational books and, with pencil and paper on clipboards, draw some sketches about their ideas. In the Dramatic Play Center, John, Diana, and Vera are wearing different kinds of rain gear. “My mommy bought me yellow boots and a yellow umbrella,” says Diana. Vera exclaims, “That’s a match!” “I don’t need an umbrella. My poncho has a hood,” says John.
In the Math Center, Mr. Grant sits down with Ashlee as she makes some number stories using cut-outs of umbrellas on a magnetic board. Daniel gets a clipboard and crayons and records Ashlee’s stories using numerals.

Mrs. Smith gauges when to begin the teacher-led Small Group within this segment of the day. Mr. Grant continues to participate in Learning Centers with the children, engaging them with many conversation loops and critical thinking questions.

Today, in Small Group, Mrs. Smith is working with three children. She differentiates instruction in Small Group experiences with appropriate activities (independent, high support, or medium support). In this high support group, she leads a discussion about how people and animals need water to survive and how rain is a source of water. Mrs. Smith shows the familiar book, Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain, and asks the children to recall what the story is about. Mrs. Smith reads a few pages and shares the illustrations as the children chime in with rhyming phrases. Whenever possible, Mrs. Smith draws parallels to the children's real-life experiences, previous discussions, and other literature, both fiction and non-fiction, that address the unit theme of wind and water. Mrs. Smith then shows the materials for making rain sticks. She shares pictures of rain sticks that are used as musical instruments to create the sound of rain. The children are encouraged to create their own rain sticks and experiment with tilting and shaking them to make the sounds of pouring rain. Mrs. Smith offers assistance to Amanda in placing the thumbtacks in the cardboard tube. As an extension, children are encouraged to use their rain sticks in the Science Center – Precipitation or during SWPL activities. As the three children transition back to the Learning Centers they left, Mrs. Smith asks another group of three children to join her in Small Group.

As Learning Center time comes to an end, Mr. Grant flashes the lights to let the children know they have 5 minutes left to work. After 5 minutes, he begins to sing a familiar song to signal that it's time to start Cleanup. The children join in the song and begin to clean up their selected learning centers.

▼ CLEANUP

Mrs. Smith considers Cleanup a daily routine that contributes to each child's growing abilities to collaborate, cooperate, and negotiate; to develop a strong sense of belonging to and responsibility for the well-being of a small community; and to develop oral language and critical thinking skills. During the first three weeks of school, Mrs. Smith took the time to teach each child how to complete a cleanup task along with the importance of a job well done. During the year, she continues to draw the children's attention to the fact that their classroom community is a pleasant and inviting place to be because everyone cares about each other and their environment. As children complete the cleanup, they transition to the Meeting Area where everyone (teachers and children) is engaged in a movement activity that includes language/word play: "Susan's galoshes make splishes and sploshes and slooshes and sloshes, as Susan steps slowly along in the slush". Then, the children are asked to line up by birthday months to use the restroom and wash hands before lunch.

▼ LUNCH

The children walk quietly down the hall to the cafeteria where they take their lunchbox or get a lunch tray and move to their class's assigned table. Each day, the teachers join in lunch conversations with the children. Everyone's thoughts and ideas are valued in Mrs. Smith's pre-kindergarten class. Typically, the children have many anecdotes to share with classmates and teachers about their interests and daily experiences. The teachers know to allow children ample time for eating as well as engaged conversations.

▼ WHOLE GROUP/BUILDING BLOCKS MATH

When the children return to the room, they know to come to the meeting area for Whole Group Math.

Building Blocks Whole Group ensures that mathematical understanding is built through activities that are modeled and then practiced in Math Small Group and in the Hands-On Math Center.

Mrs. Smith begins Whole Group using the *Building Blocks* Clipboard activity, "Build Cube Stairs". Today's focus is *adding on*. She reminds the children, "When we look at stairs, they go up one by one. We walk up or down stairs one step at a time. I am going to show you how to build stairs using connecting cubes." Mrs. Smith shows the children how to place and link the connecting cubes (one cube for one step, two cubes connected for the second step). She then asks, "How many cubes will it take to make the next step?" Ashlee raises her hand to say, "Three." "Right! Now let's 'walk' your fingers up these steps," Mrs. Smith says. Ashlee places her two "walking fingers" on the cube stairs and "walks" up as all the children count, "One, two, three!" Mrs. Smith gives Daniel a turn to "walk" up the stairs. Then, she tells the children that when they go to the Hands-On Math Center, they can build their own cube stairs.

The Hands-On Math Center in Mrs. Smith's classroom contains carefully chosen manipulatives that complement the curriculum and provide differentiated opportunities for math explorations and practice. Materials and activities are rotated to complement the current theme. Mrs. Smith's goals for mathematics learning include:

- encouraging interest in mathematics by drawing on children's background knowledge and making connections to everyday situations
- building on children's problem-solving and reasoning processes
- integrating mathematics learning with other content areas
- embedding mathematics throughout the school day including counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, and geometry

When the *Building Blocks* lesson/activity is completed, Mrs. Smith asks the children to stand and stretch by singing the familiar song, “Heads, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes”. Both teachers participate with the children by singing along and going through the motions.

▼ CENTER TIME/SMALL GROUP #2

After the song and movement, the children prepare for the second Learning Center time of the day. They will return to a Learning Center in which they were working or select a different center during this Learning Center time. Mr. Grant calls three children’s names and asks them to move to their chosen center in a particular way: “jump like a frog”, “tiptoe like a mouse”, “stomp like an elephant”, etc. Then, he calls three more children’s names and continues until all children have made center choices.

Mrs. Smith and Mr. Grant move into the Learning Centers with the children to observe, participate, and engage the children in meaningful conversations about their activities. The teachers ask two-three children if they would like to share their Learning Center products during Thinking and Feedback.

After spending quality time with children in the Visual Arts Center – Painting and in the Library Center, Mrs. Smith asks three children to join her in Small Group to create rain sticks.

When Learning Center time is over, the children clean up their learning centers and come to the rug for Thinking and Feedback.

▼ THINKING AND FEEDBACK

Thinking and Feedback (selected children present their Center work) is considered “performance”, an important step in the learning process. Mrs. Smith and Mr. Grant have previously modeled the first three steps in Thinking and Feedback: Looking, Noticing, Listening; and the children know the process. Today, Mrs. Smith invites Sandra and Hines to share their purple paintings.

Mrs. Smith asks Sandra and Hines to come to the front of the circle and hold their paintings where all can see. The children are asked to “look” for a minute or two. Mr. Grant stands ready by the chart with markers to record the children’s responses during Thinking and Feedback.

Then, Mrs. Smith asks the children to raise their hand if they would like to tell Sandra or Hines something they “notice” about their paintings. Parker raises his hand. “I notice the colors look like puddles,” he says. Vera raises her hand and says, “Sandra, I notice you used a lot of blue paint.” Tori raises her hand to speak. “I see yellow.” Mrs. Smith prompts her to repeat and say,

'I notice'. Tori then says, "I notice yellow." Mr. Grant records the children's words on the chart as they are speaking.

▼ PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/OUTDOOR PLAY

When Sandra and Hines have finished their Thinking and Feedback presentation, Mr. Grant begins to sing, "If You're Happy" and asks three-four children at a time to line up for Outdoor Play.

He asks the children to select from jump ropes, hula hoops, different sizes of balls, and sidewalk chalk to take outside for play. The teachers facilitate this outdoor time by encouraging cooperation and collaboration, but do not dominate the children's activity and imagination as they freely choose what they would like to do.

Mr. Grant shows Valerie and John how to draw a hopscotch grid with the sidewalk chalk, then demonstrates how to play. Mrs. Smith joins in a game of Tag with a group of children.
As they play, children are reminded of the safety rules, as needed.

When Outdoor Play time is over, the children are asked to pick up their toys/equipment and line up to go inside.

▼ QUIET TIME

When the children come inside, they know to put away the outdoor toys/equipment, use the restroom, wash hands, and get a sip of water. Mrs. Smith remains in the room while Mr. Grant goes to lunch. Mrs. Smith is sensitive to the children's varying rest needs. Everyone benefits from experiencing a quiet time of day, but, as the year progresses, many children prefer to engage in looking at books on their mats/blankets with soft music in the background. Mrs. Smith may also use the time for an individual intervention or small group read aloud/story time. The children particularly enjoy hearing re-readings of favorite literature and answering comprehension questions during this time.

▼ SNACK/LFOAI/PROBLEM STORIES

After Quiet Time, the children put their mats and activities away, wash their hands, and come to the tables for snack. Snack Time gives everyone an opportunity for socializing while eating healthy foods. The school district provides nutrition education for families and outlines the kinds of healthy foods that families should send to school for Snack Time, if applicable.

At tables throughout the classroom (sanitized by Mrs. Smith during Quiet Time), groups of children may choose from two snacks: raisins or apple slices. During Snack Time, Mrs. Smith and Mr. Grant each engage in extended conversation with small groups of children to build oral language.

****Mrs. Smith plans LFOAI activities and Problem Stories on alternating days so that the daily schedule is flexible and will not have too much going on each day.****

LFOAI (Let's Find Out About It)

After a few minutes of socialization and conversation, Mr. Grant shows the children the book, *Living Things Need Water.* He says, "Today, we will learn why water is important for living things - animals, people, and plants. The title of this book is *Living Things Need Water*. The author is Bobbie Kalman - she wrote the words." Mr. Grant shows the cover of the book as he points to and reads the title and the author's name. He proceeds to read the book to the children, summarizing some of the pages and pausing occasionally to focus on some of the pictures/photos. After reading the book, he asks, "What are some of the ways that we learned water is important to living things?". Justin raises his hand and responds, "A drought is when there is not enough water somewhere." "That's exactly right!" exclaims Mr. Grant. He calls on two other children who also have their hands raised. "Plants can't grow without water," remarks Vera. "Animals get so thirsty. People too," Ashlee says. "We found out how important water is to all living things, didn't we?" Mr. Grant asks. "This is another book that tells a story about a drought in Africa. Do you remember when we read it before? The title of this book is *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*. It is written and illustrated by Verna Aardema." Mr. Grant points to the title and the author's name. "It looks really dry there!" says Jana. Mr. Grant proceeds to read some of the book as long as the children remain focused. The children chime in as the story repeats in a cumulative style. Because the children have been seated for over 10 minutes, he decides to finish the book the following day.

PROBLEM STORIES

After Snack Time, the children help with cleaning up and throwing trash away. Mrs. Smith gathers the children around in a circle on the rug and says, "Today, I want to tell you about two friends who have a problem." She brings out the Block People. "Here are the children in my story. Say hello to Jaden and Isabel. Jaden is playing with a red truck. Let's see what happens." Mrs. Smith changes her voice to be Isabel: "That looks like fun. Can I play?" Then,

Mrs. Smith uses a different voice for Jaden: “Not now, I’m playing with it.” She continues the Problem Story, acting out the story with animation:

> Isabel: “’But I want to play with it now.’”
> Jaden: “I said no! GO AWAY!’”
> Isabel: “’That’s not nice, we’re supposed to share! I’m telling!’”

Then, Mrs. Smith looks at the children to say, “Now I’m going to stop the story and ask you some questions. What is the problem in the story?” Kelly raises her hand, “Jaden won’t share!” “How does Isabel feel about that?” asks Mrs. Smith. “She’s sad,” says John. “She’s upset,” adds Amanda. “Has this problem ever happened to you? What might they do to solve their problem?” asks Mrs. Smith. After each question, Mrs. Smith takes a couple of children’s responses. She allows children to “speak” to the characters directly, offering them their solutions. “Let’s see how that will work,” she says. She acts out some of the children’s solutions with the Block People. Finally, Mrs. Smith summarizes the problem and some of the children’s solutions, “In today’s Problem Story, we saw Jaden and Isabel argue over who can play with the truck. You gave them solutions to their problem. Thank you for being so thoughtful. If you have any more ideas later, I would like to hear about them,” comments Mrs. Smith.

▼ SWPL

Mrs. Smith asks the children to stand for SWPL (Songs, Word Play, and Letters) activities. The children, Mrs. Smith, and Mr. Grant sing, chant, and move to some familiar songs and poems printed on large paper, previously illustrated by the children (interactive anchor charts). The songs and poems selected are grounded in foundational literacy and aligned to the unit theme. Mrs. Smith uses each familiar selection as an opportunity to differentiate her instruction, attending to conventions of print, phonological awareness, and alphabet and letter knowledge through poems, songs, and predictable texts.

After the class sings and moves to, “It’s Raining, It’s Pouring”, Mrs. Smith asks the children to be seated. She uses some words from the song to play a phonological awareness game. “Let’s play a word game! Which word has a different beginning sound: *rain, roar, train*?” Tori raises her hand and says, “Train!”. “That’s right, Tori. I could see you were thinking so hard!”, Mrs. Smith exclaims. After a few more songs and games, the children are asked to gather around the rug for Story Acting.

▼ STORY ACTING

Today, Mrs. Smith chooses to have Story Acting take place at the end of the day just before Closure/Dismissal. The children are gathered on the rug before dismissal. Mr. Grant sits on the rug with the children, near the back.

Mrs. Smith tells the children, “This morning, John and Sandra each told me wonderful stories! I wrote their stories in their story journals, and now they would like to act out the stories they told. John told me an exciting story about going to the fair last night with his family. John, would you like to choose some friends to be the characters in your story?” John chooses Parker to be his dad and Kelly to be his sister. The children come up and John gives them a few details about his story. Mrs. Smith begins to read John’s story, “’Last night, my daddy and my sister and me went to the fair at the mall. We got tickets to ride all the rides. We picked the Ferris wheel first. Sissy was scared, but I wasn’t! It was fun! Then, we ran to get cotton candy and a Coke Icee. Daddy paid for the food. He smiled at us the whole time. He ate a corn dog. We had so much fun! I want to go back this afternoon after school!’” As Mrs. Smith reads John’s story, John, Parker, and Kelly act out the scene. At the end of the story, John and his friends take a bow as the children clap loudly.

When John, Parker, and Kelly return to their spaces on the rug, Mrs. Smith asks Sandra to come to the front. Mrs. Smith tells the children that Sandra told her a good story about her dog, Precious. “Sandra, would you like to choose characters for your story?” Sandra picks Amanda to be Precious. She tells Amanda she has to get down on her hands and knees to pretend to be a dog. When the girls are ready, Mrs. Smith begins to read Sandra’s story, “’My dog, Precious, is so cute. She can beg. She can roll over. She can shake.’” As the story is read, Amanda acts out the dog’s tricks as Sandra gives her commands to beg, roll over, and shake hands. Mrs. Smith continues, “’I take care of Precious every day. I feed her and give her water. I take her on a walk after school. I love Precious!’” Sandra and Amanda act out this scene as the children laugh and clap. Mrs. Smith says,” Let’s give them a great round of applause!” Sandra and Amanda return to their spaces on the rug.

Mrs. Smith reminds all the children that they, too, will have an opportunity to act out stories they have told in Storytelling this week.

****Story Acting can take place at any time during the day that will work within the daily schedule. ****

▼ REFLECTION/CLOSURE/DISMISSAL

After Story Acting and as the school day is coming to a close, the children prepare for departure. They follow a regular closing routine that eases the transition from school to home.

Backpacks are retrieved from cubbies. The girls and boys tuck their home activity (ten rhyming picture cards to use with a family member) into their backpacks along with books chosen from the class library.

As everyone gathers on the rug, Mrs. Smith asks the children to reflect on their day and invites several children to share with the whole group. Everyone will have a chance to share over the course of the week. Interspersed with the children's comments, Mrs. Smith reviews the day's important happenings. She mentions concepts under investigation, problem-solving opportunities, interesting moments, and cross-curricular activities.

Closing includes a story or poem and a familiar song or two as an end-of-day ritual. Today Mrs. Smith, uses a wordless book, *Yellow Umbrella*, by Jae Soo Liu. She makes certain to build a bridge to the next school day with a brief preview. This foreshadowing builds the children's motivation for tomorrow's learning.

"Bye, Mrs. Smith. Bye, Mr. Grant!" says Sandra, "See you tomorrow!" She gives her teachers quick hugs and skips out the door.

ASSESSMENT IN PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Data from assessments can be used to inform a classroom teacher's lesson planning process, to monitor trends, to screen children for potential issues in learning and development, and for accountability purposes when communicating with families, other school personnel, and the community. School districts should never use child assessment data to recommend a delay in any age-eligible child's kindergarten entry.

A continuous evaluation through a variety of techniques, procedures, and tools is used to determine each child's needs. Information obtained from ongoing assessments is reflected in lesson plans to address children's needs collectively, as well as individually.

Regular assessment helps teachers understand what each child knows and can do. Using this information, they decide which materials, activities, and experiences to provide so children continue learning. Assessments should be used for screening, planning for children's learning, and evaluating program quality.

Transition Folders

To document children's learning and development, teachers should develop individual transition folders* which must include:

- end-of-year Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) results
- end-of-year Literacy Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Score/Summary Sheet
- end-of-year results from other assessments used in the classroom
- a school-issued final skills checklist OR a completed Observational and Performance-Based Checklist for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children (located here: www.mdek12.org/EC)
- a child information sheet containing some or all the following (a sample sheet is located here: www.mdek12.org/EC):
    - Child's name, date of birth, preferred
        - name, photo, languages spoken
    - Parents' names (and/or other adults/caregivers),
        - address, phone, and preferred time and way to contact
        - (in accordance with school policy)

- Child's favorite things (activity, toy, food, color, book, center, etc.)
- Child's play and learning styles
- Child's skills and proficiencies
- Child's areas of growth and what they do not like to do
- Child's personality/temperament traits

- focused observations of children's performance, teacher notes, and samples of children's authentic drawings, free and guided art, writings, and other work throughout the year to show progression toward Early Learning Standards, through guidance, prompting, and support
- purposeful photos and/or videos of instructional "hands-on" activities that are aligned and demonstrate progression toward early learning standards, skills, or concepts (Chatterpix Kids, Seesaw, ClassDojo, WriteReader, etc. – note that parental permission will be required)

*Transition Folders will be sent to the receiving kindergarten teachers at the end of the school year.

Checklists and Screeners

Checklists and screeners are used to identify areas in which children need additional support. The physical or developmental screening results should be conducted within forty-five (45) days of the beginning of school by either a private health care provider of the family's choosing, or through school resources such as school nurses, or the local Department of Health.

Results of these screenings are reviewed, and all necessary educational or developmental referrals are made within thirty (30) calendar days of the initial screenings. The results of these screenings are placed in the child's cumulative folder.

- The *Observational and Performance-Based Checklist* is a resource that includes all of the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children*. This checklist for pre-kindergarten children is not mandatory; however, it is a good resource for documenting children's progress if the school/district wants to monitor the standards being taught and the progress for each child or individual children for the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The *Observational and Performance-Based Checklist* for pre-kindergarten children can help determine a child's strengths and weaknesses and use the information to plan appropriate strategies for Tier I instruction, intervention time, and learning center activities.

- The Whole Child Developmental Kindergarten Readiness Assessment shall be used by all accredited public schools with four-year-old pre-kindergarten programs. All four-year-old children as of September 1, including children with disabilities in inclusive and self-contained classrooms, shall be screened. The Screener shall be administered twice per year. Screening must be completed, in person, generally by October 1; and between the middle of March/beginning of May. Children who indicate areas of deficiency on the developmental screener should be provided targeted interventions to remediate the deficiency, and progress monitoring should be documented by the classroom teacher.
- A comprehensive health screening (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment-EPSDT) or a standard physical conducted by a child's health care provider or health department is recommended for all pre-kindergarten students. EPSDT screenings/standard physicals should be conducted within 45 calendar days of the beginning of school by either a private health care provider of the parents' choosing, or through school resources such as school nurses, or the local Department of Health. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend screenings conducted at the school. A standard physical form is submitted for all screenings conducted by a private health care provider.
- A dental screening conducted by a child's dental care provider or health department is recommended for all pre-kindergarten students. Dental screenings should be conducted within 45 calendar days of the beginning of school by either a private dental health care provider of the parents' choosing, or through school resources such as the local Department of Health. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend screenings conducted at the school.

Literacy kindergarten readiness assessment

All four-year-old children participating in grant-funded and public pre-kindergarten programs shall be administered the state-approved Literacy Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. Paper and pencil standardized tests are not appropriate testing measures for four-year-old children and shall not be used. Any technology-based assessment should be administered using touch-based technology devices. If touch-based technology is not available, children should be familiar with the available technology before taking the assessment. The Literacy Kindergarten Readiness Assessment should be given three times per year: in the fall, mid-year, and in the spring.

Requirement for Individualized Assessments

School districts containing pre-kindergarten programs collaborate with Mississippi's state-recognized birth to three-year-old provider, First Steps, to formulate a plan regarding services. This plan ensures any child currently receiving services continues to receive appropriate services based on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), as eligible. Each school district should follow Child Find policies as stated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Children who are determined eligible shall receive services as stated in the child's IEP.

Requirement for Documentation

Teachers will use observational checklists to measure the child's progress according to the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children* and the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children* (e.g. curriculum-based, teacher-generated, or MDE developed pre-kindergarten checklists). *This checklist is particularly helpful for schools that do not have a report card. Teachers can mark the standards that are being taught during a specific grading period with a code of 1-needs development, 2-making progress, 3-developing as expected, or 4-advanced development. The observational checklist helps teachers to stay on task in making sure all standards are taught by the end of the year and students are given the fall, winter, and spring to make progress on the skills.*

Grading

As best practice, pre-kindergarten children should not receive letter or number grades. Any number grades given on a progress report or report card should be a percentage of the standards children are expected to have developed during a marking period. Remember, progress reports and report cards are a tool for parents to gauge their child's learning progress and may be abstract and difficult to interpret. Therefore, the teacher should be available for explanation/questions. For example, in math, if six standards are taught during this period, then the child's grade should be based on the number of standards out of the six that were successfully completed. If the child successfully completed five out of six standards, then, if applicable, a score of eighty-five would be given.

Retention

Pre-kindergarten children should not be retained. According to research, retention is not an effective strategy that will make a significant difference in a child's academic performance if the child spends another year in prekindergarten. There may also be negative effects on the child's social-emotional development if the child is retained. As stated above, school districts should

never use child assessment data to recommend a delay in any age-eligible child's kindergarten entry. (Retention in the Early Years)

Assessing English Learners

As children are working to learn English during the initial stages of language acquisition, it is a violation of their civil rights to retain them due to limited language proficiency. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), schools must ensure that EL children are placed appropriately and can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs. Districts are required to take steps to ensure that children are not retained solely because they are still in the early stages of learning English. Children who receive extensive language supports and classroom accommodations must have this information noted on their progress reports or report cards, and accommodations must be shared with the families of EL children to ensure they have an understanding of true academic performance in English language proficiency.

EVALUATING PROGRAM QUALITY

Continuous evaluation and assessment are an essential aspect of maintaining a high-quality pre-kindergarten program. Administrators must be able to effectively answer the questions, “How is the program working?” “For whom is the program working?” and “How can the program be modified to meet children’s needs?”

Summative assessments and classroom observation instruments provide data that will assist decision makers in determining the level of quality in early childhood programs.

Structured classroom observation instruments provide a lens for examining many components of program quality, from the nature of teacher-child interactions to the availability of materials and activities to support early learning and development.

Using standardized criteria and a scoring scale or rubric, structured classroom observation instruments equip teachers and administrators with the tools to:

- evaluate pre-kindergarten physical environments, indoors and outdoors
- determine what supports and materials are needed in each classroom
- support individual classroom teachers in modifying teaching practices
- identify areas for professional learning at all levels
- track the quality of program implementation over time

The results are a measure of accountability and a means of communicating to staff, families, and community about the quality of the school district’s pre-kindergarten program.

For specific policy and procedures please see the early childhood webpage at www.mdek12.org.

Required/Recommended Instruments for Measuring Program Quality

- What to Look For When Observing a Kindergarten and Pre-K Classroom is designed to identify the use of developmentally appropriate practices in the early childhood classroom through a checklist of goals, planning and preparation, what should happen during the lesson, and types of assessments used.
- Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System is designed to improve student achievement by providing teachers and administrators with feedback to inform continuous improvement.
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (Pianta, R.C., K. M. La Paro, & B. K. Hamre, 2008). The CLASS measures the quality of teacher-child interactions in the areas of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.
- The Whole Child Developmental Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener
- The Literacy Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
- Grant Program Monitoring Tool
- Accountability Standard 17.2 Checklist

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

All teaching staff (teachers and assistant teachers) and program administrators must complete at least fifteen (15) contact hours of professional learning annually, related specifically to principles and methods of early childhood education; specifically, the education of pre-kindergarten children. Training should reflect appropriate best practices for early childhood (pre-k through grade 3) and should be evidence- or research-based *(The Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Old Children, pg.19).* Administrators that manage pre-kindergarten teachers shall gain the required hours of professional learning through online or on-site training. This variety of content could include program administration, family engagement, and early childhood instructional content approved or offered by the Mississippi Department of Education and/or the Mississippi Department of Health. Additional resources can be found here: www.mdek12.org/Professional-Development.

The Office of Professional Learning of the Mississippi Department of Education (http://www.mdek12.org/OPD) has an approved list of online training resources with codes (CANVAS) that can be accessed by all administrators. edWeb (http://home.edweb.net) is another method to obtain online professional learning.

Approved professional learning does not include staff meetings or professional learning geared toward the whole school/site or agency staff. The Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education, defines the professional learning training year as beginning on June 1 and ending on May 31.

Based on the results of structured and unstructured classroom observations, professional learning specific to pre-kindergarten might include:

- incorporating permanent learning centers into the classroom environment
- developmentally appropriate scheduling
- integrating curriculum across content areas
- play-based activities within content areas
- facilitating long-term projects
- developmentally appropriate practice for English Learners
- CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) support
- guiding children's cognitive development during Learning Center Time
- effectively engaging families in supporting children's school success

SYSTEMS FOR CHILD, FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is used to ensure current resources and initiatives meet the academic and behavioral needs of ALL children. In Mississippi, MTSS is a method of organization that is implemented to ensure successful academic and behavioral outcomes for all children. MTSS encompasses Response to Intervention (RtI) and Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) to systematically address support for all children. MTSS aligns the entire system of supports to ensure effective team-based problem-solving that is data-informed, evidence-based, and flexible enough to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all children. Evidence supports that providing intervention as early as possible for both academic and behavioral deficits will allow for student growth and academic achievement. The primary goal of Mississippi's MTSS framework is to improve student outcomes. Please refer to the MTSS support pages at https://www.mdek12.org/OAE/OEER/InterventionServices.

While the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is not required for pre-kindergarten students, districts can develop and utilize their own procedures for determining what intervention services, if any, pre-k students may receive.

Supports for English Learners

Mississippi's English Learner (EL) population has grown more than ten-fold since 2012 and continues to grow each year. Additionally, the EL population has also shown significant diversity. While in the past a majority of our EL students were from Mexico, it is important to note that even the diversity within the Hispanic EL population has grown with children coming from not only Mexico, but also many other countries in Central America. While student data shows that Spanish is the language spoken by the majority of Mississippi's English learners, more than one hundred different languages are spoken by school children across the state. This diversity in countries of origin means that there is also a difference in the cultural backgrounds of children which must be addressed when educating EL children and when communicating with their parents. For more information, please refer to https://www.mdek12.org/EL.

Family Engagement – School, Family, and Community Connections

Family is the key to a child's academic success. Every educational learning community should invest in a system that embraces and empowers families throughout the academic achievements of children from birth to young adulthood. Family engagement for school success should focus on building trusting relationships with families and maintaining consistent communication throughout the learning continuum. Effective family engagement programs should provide and implement activities that prepare, teach, and engage responsible individuals invested in the educational success of a child. For more information about the Family Engagement Tool Kit refer to https://www.mdek12.org/earlychildhood.

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APPENDIX 1:

Sample Pre-Kindergarten Day

UNIT 3: Wind and Water Week 2 Day 5

The schedule and activities listed in this document are designed to help provide guidance in developing a schedule and a thematic unit to enhance the quality of service and activities provided to young children. The times, activities, and materials listed are not all-inclusive. Official time, activities, and lessons will vary by schools, districts, and child care centers.

7:00 – 7:30 (30 minutes)		
Arrival/Free Choice Centers		
GROUP TYPE	**ACTIVITY**	**EXAMPLES**
Learning Centers **Pre-Kindergarten** 120 minutes required per day	Arrival/Free Choice Centers	Learning Centers open for choice play

7:30 – 7:50 (15-20 minutes)		
Breakfast/Storytelling/Free Choice Centers		
GROUP TYPE	**ACTIVITY**	**EXAMPLES**
Learning Centers **One-on-One**	• Children may still be arriving • Breakfast • Learning Centers • Storytelling	• Some children may arrive after breakfast in the cafeteria or eat as they arrive in the classroom • Learning Centers are open for choice play • Teacher/child engage in Storytelling

7:50 – 8:10 (20 minutes)		
Whole Group Read Aloud		
GROUP TYPE	**ACTIVITY**	**EXAMPLES**
Whole Group	Read Aloud	• The teacher reads the selected text, *Rabbits and Raindrops* by Jim Arnosky, Read Aloud 2

8:10 – 8:20 (10 minutes)

Morning Exercise

GROUP TYPE	ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Whole Group	"Move to Learn" or SWPL	• Teachers and children engage in 5-10 minutes of physical activity • Teachers and children engage in songs, poems, fingerplays that involve movement along with the foundational literacy skills.

8:20 – 8:55 (35 minutes)

Extension Class/Teacher Planning

GROUP TYPE	ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Whole Group	Children move to an Extension/Specials Class for activities provided by a Specials teacher	Extension/Specials classes are offered on specific days each week: • Monday – Music • Tuesday – Library • Wednesday – Art • Thursday – Physical Education • Friday - Computer

8:55 – 9:10 (15 minutes)

Whole Group/Intro to Centers

GROUP TYPE	ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Whole Group	The teacher demonstrates the expectation and opportunities for work/play in Learning Centers.	The teacher briefly describes and demonstrates 2-3 new learning centers that have been added or that have new materials for exploration. • Sand and Water Center – Absorbent Materials • Library and Listening – new books and recorded stories

9:10 – 10:30 (80 minutes)

Free Choice Learning Centers

GROUP TYPE	CENTERS	EXAMPLES
Individual/ Self-Selected Centers Children move around independently to the different learning centers engaging in various types of developmental activities related to the lesson plan. No timer is used during Learning Centers	Teachers/adults move among the centers to facilitate and engage with children in activities and conversations. (see Center Language Supports resource) Unit and thematic books (fiction/non-fiction) and writing materials should be available in the classroom for children to access during the day	• Creative Arts – Easel • Creative Arts – Table • Library and Listening • Puzzles (Manipulatives) • Creative Writing • Blocks • Science • Dramatic Play • Hands-On Math
	CENTER: Creative Arts – Easel	**DURING CENTERS**
	Wind Illustrations Standard Connection: **ELA.RL.PK4.1** **ELA.L.PK4.1e** **M.MD.PK4.2** **S.PS.PK4.1** **S.PS.PK4.4** **PD.FM.PK4.4** **VA.CR2.1.PK** **VA.PR4a.1.PK**	Children • will be encouraged to use any paint colors that were mixed in Week 1 • may experiment with different kinds of brush strokes • will be encouraged to use key vocabulary to describe their work (depict, observation, illustration, etc.)

	CENTER: **Creative Arts – Table**	**DURNG CENTERS**
	Box Lid Paintings Standard Connection: **ELA.SL.PK4.2** **ELA.L.PK4.1c** **M.MD.PK4.2** **S.PS.PK4.1** **PD.FM.PK4.4** **PD.SHS.PK4.3** **VA.CR2a.1.PK** **VA.CR2a.2.PK**	Children • are encouraged to collaborate • will compare and contrast box lid paintings to Crayon Resist and Straw Paintings art • are encouraged to mix colors by tilting box lids at different angles
	CENTER: **Library and Listening**	**DURING CENTERS**
	Weather Research Standard Connection: **ELA.RI.PK4.1** **ELA.W.PK4.5** **M.MD.PK4.2** **S.ES.PK4.2** **PD.FM.PK4.5**	Children will • have access to non-fiction weather books, drawing and writing materials • be encouraged to record their research using a variety of modalities (graphs, pictures, diagrams, etc.) • compare and contrast weather in non-fiction texts to depictions of weather in Read Alouds
	CENTER: **Puzzles** **(Manipulatives)**	**DURING CENTERS**
	Weather Puzzles Standard Connection: **ELA.RL.PK4.4a** **ELA.SL.PK4.2** **S.ES.PK4.1a** **PD.FM.PK4.4**	Children will • be supported in their puzzle-solving strategies • be encouraged to count the number of pieces in the puzzle • be provided images of completed puzzles for reference (scaffolding)

	CENTER: **Creative Writing**	**DURING CENTERS**
	Storm Stories Standard Connection: **ELA.RI.PK4.10** **ELA.L.PK4.2c** **S.ES.PK4.1** **PD.FM.PK4.5** **PD.SHS.PK4.3** **VA.CR2a.3.PK**	Children will • be supported in their writing by teachers taking dictation • be encouraged to collaborate with writing and illustrating • use weather research from Library and Listening and vocabulary in their stories
	CENTER: **Blocks**	**DURING CENTERS**
	Rabbit Habitats Standard Connection: **ELA.RL.PK4.10** **ELA.RI.PK4.7** **M.G.PK4.5** **S.ES.PK4.2b** **PD.FM.PK4.4** **PD.FM.PK4.5**	Children will • be encouraged to use work created in other centers to enhance their habitats • have non-fiction text available to reference rabbit habitat structures • be encouraged to use what they know about stable structures to construct their habitats
	CENTER: **Science**	**DURING CENTERS**
	Clay Boats Standard Connection: **ELA.RL.PK4.4a** **ELA.RI.PK4.3** **M.MD.PK4.1** **M.MD.PK4.2** **S.PS.PK4.2** **PD.FM.PK4.1** **PD.FM.PK4.4** **VA.CR1.1.PK**	Children will • be provided appropriate fine-motor support for working with clay • be supported in experimenting with different clay boat sizes, shapes, and weights • be supported in recording their results

	CENTER: **Dramatic Play**	**DURING CENTERS**
	Caring for Animals Standard Connection: **ELA.W.PK4.1b** **ELA.SL.PK4.1a** **M.MD.PK4.1** **M.CC.PK4.1** **S.LS.PK4.3** **SS.FC.PK4.7** **PD.SHS.PK4.4** **TH.RE8b.1.PK**	Children will be • encouraged to write pretend prescriptions and label medicines • encouraged to try out different roles (veterinarian, pet owner, etc.) • encouraged to record data about animals (length, weight, etc.) • encouraged to use pretend money to pay for veterinarian visits • supported in creating name tags
	CENTER: **Hands-On Math**	**DURING CENTERS**
	Dinosaur Shop Standard Connection: **M.CC.PK4.3** **M.CC.PK4.4a** **M.CC.PK4.4b** **M.CC.PK4.5** **PD.FM.PK4.1**	Children will • recognize numerals and the quantities they represent • compare small amounts of objects • sort and classify small groups of objects • count objects to 10 and beyond

9:10 – 10:30 (15-20 minutes/per group)

Math or Literacy Small Group /Free Choice Centers

GROUP TYPE	ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Small Group *Small Groups are held simultaneously during Learning Center Time	Children are invited to join the teacher in a small group activity with instruction and practice of specific skills and the creation of authentic products.	• High Support • Medium Support • Independent

High Support	Procedure
Absorbency of Materials Standard Connection: **ELA.W.PK4.1b** **ELA.SL.PK4.1** **S.PS.PK4.1** **S.PS.PK4.4** **PD.SHS.PK4.5**	Children will • watch as the teacher demonstrates • use various materials to experiment with absorption • be encouraged to record their results with drawings • and/or words • be encouraged to use content-specific vocabulary • (eye dropper, absorb, waterproof, etc.)

Medium Support	Procedure
Sound Cans Standard Connection: **ELA.RL.PK4.4a** **ELA.RI.PK4.4** **S.ES.PK4.1** **PD.FM.PK4.1** **PD.FM.PK4.4**	Children will • review rain-related vocabulary (pouring, shower, splatter, etc.) • watch as the teacher demonstrates different ways to create • rain sounds • use materials provided to experiment with making rain sounds • be encouraged to listen to the rain sounds their friends make

10:30 – 10:50 (20 minutes)		
Lunch		
ACTIVITY		
Includes Restroom/Lunch Prep		
10:50 – 11:05 (15 minutes)		
Whole Group Math		
GROUP TYPE	**ACTIVITY**	**EXAMPLES**
Whole Group	Whole Group Math *Building Blocks* Clipboard, Day 5	Numeracy • Children will participate in reciting the poem, "Ten Little Birdies" as the teacher leads and demonstrates counting backwards from 10-0. Numeracy • Children will listen as the teacher reminds them that "Mr. Mix-Up" makes mistakes. The teacher will make errors in counting order, skipped numbers, repeated numbers, and substituted numbers.
11:05 – 12:05 (60 minutes)		
Free Choice Learning Centers/Literacy and Math Small Group		
GROUP TYPE	**ACTIVITY**	**EXAMPLES**
Individual/ Self-Selected Centers Children move around independently to the different learning centers engaging in various types of developmental activities related to the lesson plan; no timer is used during Learning Centers.	**Learning Centers/Literacy and Math Small Groups** Teachers/adults move among the centers to facilitate and engage with children in activities and conversations. Unit and thematic books (fiction/non-fiction) and writing materials should be available in the classroom for children to access during the day	Children will • continue free choice learning centers from the morning • work in independent and teacher-led small group activities

12:05 – 12:15 (10 minutes)

Whole Group Thinking and Feedback

GROUP TYPE	ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Whole Group	**Thinking and Feedback** Teachers will select 1-2 children to share their learning center product/activity with the group. The teacher and the group will follow the procedure (at right) as children discuss and reflect on the activities explored in Learning Centers.	• Looking • Noticing • Listening • Wondering • Suggesting/Inspiring

12:15– 12:55 (40 minutes)

Outdoor Play/Physical Activity

GROUP TYPE	CENTERS	EXAMPLES
Required 40 minutes minimum, 60 minutes maximum, daily	Indoor or Outdoor Physical Activities	Children may • play group games with the teachers • choose to play with equipment (balls, hula hoops, tricycles, jump ropes, etc.)

12:55 – 1:40 (45 minutes)

Quiet Time

GROUP TYPE	ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Required 30 minutes minimum, 60 minutes maximum, daily	Quiet Activities	According to need, children may • rest on mats • look at books, draw, or put puzzles together • work w/teacher one-on-one or in a small group

1:40 – 2:00 (20 minutes)		
Snack/LFOAI/Problem Stories		
GROUP TYPE	**ACTIVITY**	**EXAMPLES**
Whole Group Children will enjoy a nutritious snack as the teachers engages them in LFOAI or Problem Story activities*. *LFOAI and Problem Stories are to be alternated each day during the week.	**LFOAI** – Living Things Need Water Standard Connection **ELA.RI.PK4.6** **ELA.RI.PK4.5** **S.LS.PK4.3** **PD.SHS.PK4.4** **Problem Stories** Problem Stories can be created by the teacher to reflect character conflict in a Read Aloud text or in a related situation in the children's daily lives.	Children will • listen to, respond, and focus on non-fiction text, *Living Things Need Water* • listen to, respond, and focus on fiction text, *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* • be introduced to Tier 3 vocabulary words Children will • be engaged as the teacher acts out a problem using Block People or puppets • be invited to discuss possible solutions
2:00 – 2:30 (30 minutes)		
Story Acting/SWPL (Songs, Word Play, and Letters)/Closure		
GROUP TYPE	**ACTIVITY**	**EXAMPLES**
Whole Group Story Acting may take place at the end of the day or within the day, as the schedule allows.	**Story Acting** The teacher will select a child's story told earlier to the teacher during Arrival and read it aloud to the child allow the child to choose friends to act out the story or use a structure to ask for volunteers read the child's story as the child and/or classmates act out the scenes	Children will prepare for acting out his/her story as the teacher reads it aloud choose friends to be characters in his/her story

SWPL may take place at a scheduled time and throughout the day during transitions	**SWPL** The teacher will lead the foundational literacy activities using props, songs and poems with posters, fingerplays, chants, and movement Standard Connection **ALL ELA (RF)** **ELA.RL.4.4b** **ELA.L.PK4.1a, 1b** **ELA.L.PK4.2, 2d** **ELA.L.PK4.4, 4a** **ELA.L.PK4.5, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d ELA.L.PK4.6** **ELA.L.PK4.6**	Children will • join in singing and reciting songs/poems/fingerplays such as: "Willoughby, Wallaby, Woo", "If You're Happy", "Raindrops", and "The Itsy, Bitsy Spider"
Closure		Children will • reflect on the day and be invited to share with the group • listen as the teacher offers a brief preview of the next day's learning opportunities

DISMISSAL 2:30 – 2:45 (15 minutes)

GROUP TYPE	ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Whole Group	**Dismissal**	• gather belongings to take home

TEACHER PLANNING 2:45 – 3:30 (45 minutes)

APPENDIX 2:

Early Childhood Materials Guide for Learning Centers

This preschool learning center materials list is designed to help provide guidance in selecting materials to enhance the quality of services offered to young children. The materials listed are not all-inclusive; therefore, materials may be exchanged, substituted, added to, or deleted from this list.

LITERACY/LIBRARY CENTER		

• Pillows, bean bags, cushions, mats, or carpet squares
• Assorted books:
  ○ big/small
  ○ fiction/non-fiction
• Flannel board
• Flannel board story sets
• Assorted puppets:
  ○ family
  ○ animal
  ○ community helpers, etc.
	• Magazines (age appropriate)
	• CD player/ headphones
	• Markers
	• Crayons
	• Assorted paper
	  ○ construction
	  ○ manila
	  ○ white
	• Pencils (regular/colored)
		• Pre-made books/ class books
		• Picture file
		• Magnetic letters
		• Wikki Stix
		• Bingo games
		• Write and Wipe boards
		• Clipboards
		• Plastic slip sleeves

MATH/MANIPULATIVE CENTER		

☐ Lego or Duplo blocks (large)
☐ Counting cubes
☐ Unifix Cubes
☐ Snap blocks
☐ Assorted math counters
☐ Sorting trays
☐ Patterning materials
☐ Board Games
☐ Playing cards (ex. Uno)
☐ Magnetic numerals
	☐ Toy money
	☐ Tools for measuring:
	  ○ cups
	  ○ spoons
	  ○ containers
	  ○ scales
	  ○ rulers/yard sticks
	  ○ tape measure
	☐ Beads and button (variety)
	☐ Laces (large)
		☐ Tangrams
		☐ 3D shapes
		☐ Digital timer
		☐ Cash register
		☐ Puzzles:
		  ○ shape
		  ○ number
		  ○ jigsaw
		☐ Games
		☐ Dice
		☐ Tactile Numerals

SCIENCE CENTER

- ☐ Collections of natural objects
- ☐ Magnets
- ☐ Mirror trays
- ☐ Magnifiers/ Hand lenses
- ☐ Balance Scales
- ☐ Science games
- ☐ Science books
- ☐ Science magazines
- ☐ Realistic plastic animals
- ☐ Living things to take care of:
  - ○ animals
  - ○ plants
  - ○ garden
- ☐ Eye droppers, tweezers, funnels
- ☐ Sink/float items
- ☐ Thermometers
- ☐ Prisms
- ☐ Maps/globes
- ☐ Sound boxes
- ☐ Feely box
- ☐ Smelling boxes

CREATIVE ARTS CENTER

- ☐ Blunt point scissors
- ☐ Old t-shirts or smocks
- ☐ Paint drying rack
- ☐ Paint cups with lids
- ☐ Play-Doh, Play-Doh tools
- ☐ Lap whiteboards/ chalkboards
- ☐ Trays for finger painting
- ☐ Alternative painting utensils
- ☐ Stampers/stamp pads
- ☐ Colored markers, dry-erase markers
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Glue/glue sticks
- ☐ Colored pencils
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ White paper
- ☐ Manila paper
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Shiny, reflective paper/aluminum foil
- ☐ Clear tape, duct tape, double-sided tape, painter's tape
- ☐ Modeling clay
- ☐ Magazines
- ☐ Variety of stickers
- ☐ Paint brushes/sponges
- ☐ Easel
- ☐ Craft items:
  - ○ pom-poms
  - ○ foam sheets/ shapes
  - ○ pipe/chenille stems
  - ○ colored tissue paper
  - ○ craft sticks (various sizes)
  - ○ metal brads

BLOCKS CENTER

- ☐ Lego or Duplo blocks (large)
- ☐ Wooden Unit blocks
- ☐ Magnetic blocks
- ☐ Counting cubes
- ☐ Unifix Cubes
- ☐ Pipes to connect
- ☐ Gears
- ☐ Tinkertoys
- ☐ Traffic signs
- ☐ Family figures (multiethnic)
- ☐ Play people with differing abilities
- ☐ Assorted animals:
  - ○ aquatic
  - ○ forest
  - ○ jungle
  - ○ farm
  - ○ domesticated
  - ○ dinosaurs
- ☐ Community vehicles
- ☐ Lacing shapes
- ☐ Pattern blocks
- ☐ Locks/latches
- ☐ Floor puzzles
- ☐ Wooden Puzzles
- ☐ Cars/Trucks
- ☐ Puzzles with knobs
- ☐ Nesting toys
- ☐ Beads and laces

DRAMATIC PLAY CENTER		
☐ Toy food ☐ Pots/pans ☐ Kitchen set ☐ Phones ☐ Multiethnic dolls: ○ Removable clothes ○ Bibs/bottles/diapers ○ Doll bed/bedding ☐ Toy iron/ironing board/clothespins ☐ Child size chair/sofa	☐ Newspaper/magazines ☐ Dishes/flatware ☐ Mirror (unbreakable) ☐ Dress-up items ☐ Play tools ☐ House-cleaning tools: ○ mop ○ broom ○ dustpan ○ vacuum ○ duster	☐ Prop boxes developed around scenarios: ○ grocery store ○ post office/ mail carrier ○ hospital, doctor's office ○ fire station ○ veterinarian office ○ restaurant

SAND/WATER CENTER		
☐ Waterproof smocks ☐ Large spoons, shovels, cups, etc. ☐ Clean sand	☐ Boats ☐ Eye droppers ☐ Vehicles for sand	☐ Molds ☐ Strainers or funnels

MUSIC/MOVEMENT CENTER		
☐ CD Player ☐ Multicultural CDs ☐ Voice Recorder ☐ Scarves, ribbons, streamers for dance	☐ Rhythm instruments: ○ sticks ○ bells ○ drums ○ shakers	☐ Headphones ☐ Xylophone

APPENDIX 3:

Comparing Learning Centers and Small Groups

LEARNING CENTERS	SMALL GROUPS
• Are "distinct areas in a classroom that offer various materials and opportunities for hands-on learning at individually appropriate levels" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2006). • Include a minimum of 5 different learning centers; with required Library/Literacy Center, Math/Manipulative Center, and Creative Arts Center. • Are child-directed. • Occur daily at designated times throughout the day (no timers). • Are created by the teacher to include integrated content to support current learning topics, developmentally appropriate activities, and materials needed to complete tasks. • Encourage independent, discovery learning. • Include activities or tasks that reinforce consistent progress toward Early Learning Standards, through guidance, prompting, and support. • Allow free choice for children with uninterrupted learning time.	• Are teacher-directed. • Can occur daily, simultaneously with learning centers; at a set time each day; or 2-3 days a week at a minimum. • Include all children, in groups of 3-5, throughout the week, as designated by the teacher. • Allow the teacher to work more closely with each child on specific learning objectives, reinforce skills learned in whole group instruction, to focus on skill deficit areas, and to check for understanding. • Allow time for the teacher to intervene with smaller groups of children on common, data-identified deficiencies using evidenced-based materials to differentiate instruction. • Provide children with a reduced child-teacher ratio (two to four children) in balanced heterogeneous and homogeneous groups. • Provide children with additional, focused teacher attention and opportunities to ask specific questions about what they are learning. • Include specific skills or lessons with instruction that reinforces progress

• Include assessment through observation and/or product completion. • Require a minimum of 120 minutes daily.	toward Early Learning Standards, through guidance, prompting, and support. • Include required, specific developmentally appropriate tasks, materials, and activities based on child data to be completed, as applicable. • Are assessed through teacher observation and/or project completion. • Include targeted and effective formative feedback that will affect teacher and child next steps. • Last for a maximum of 8-10 minutes per group.