



Curriculum Guide

Infant and Toddler Programs:

Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos

The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos is based on research and theory from the field of early childhood education. The focus of the curriculum is on routines and experiences and the components used to make good decisions about the routines and experiences provided for young children.

Five Components

The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos has five components which guide teachers' decisions about the routines and experiences they provide for infants, toddlers and twos. The five components are listed in detail below.

1. *Knowing Infants, Toddlers, and Twos*

The first 3 years of a child's life are a time of tremendous development and learning. Development information is divided into four areas: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language/literacy. These areas are closely related and development in one area affects and is influenced by development in all other areas.

Developmental characteristics of children birth to 36 months allow teachers to plan experiences and routines appropriate for children under their care. Individual differences such as temperament, life circumstances, dual language learning and disabilities might affect the development of individual children, and therefore are taken into account when planning experiences and routines.

The Developmental Continuum is a tool that teachers use which describes children's development and guides teachers' observations, assessment of children's progress, and program planning. The complete Creative Curriculum Goals and Objectives for Infants, Toddlers & Twos which summarizes the Developmental Continuum is provided at the end of this section. Teachers track children's progress through the continuum with ongoing observations and sampling of children's work. They use children's positioning on the continuum to guide the individual and group experiences they provide.

2. *Creating a Responsive Environment*

Teachers' knowledge of the social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language/literacy development of infants, toddlers and twos enables them to create an environment that addresses the needs and growing

abilities and interests of young children. Teachers arrange the physical environment as a welcoming place for children and families, and a pleasant, efficient place in which to work. The structural environment teachers create involves daily and weekly lesson planning, individualizing schedules for infants, and incorporating a schedule for toddlers and twos that includes transitions and individualized planning. Evidence of the structural environment of the classroom is provided to parents through posted schedules, lesson plans and individual daily reports.

3. *What Children Are Learning*

By simply observing a 2 year old for a brief period of time, you can see important things are happening. Every interaction and impression a child receives affects the development of the child's brain and builds new abilities.

There are seven traits that the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families has identified as essential for school readiness: Confidence, curiosity, intentionality, self-control, relatedness, the capacity to communicate and cooperativeness. Our teachers provide experiences that help children develop these characteristics by genuinely caring for children, talking in calm and respectful ways, taking joy in their discoveries, having appropriate expectations for them and guiding the behavior in positive ways.

Teachers build language and literacy skills by using cues during reading and reciting stories and songs with children, explaining print concepts such as letters, words and book structure, using descriptive language, actively engaging children in conversation, and providing writing/drawing experiences.

Mathematical concepts are introduced daily to young children when they explore space, compare amounts and sort and match objects. Teachers facilitate these experiences by using the language of math- more, less, smaller, the same as, how many- in discussions with children.

Children learn science concepts by exploring the physical world around them. Teachers provide a varied environment to allow children to touch, taste, look, listen, smell and manipulate objects around them.

4. *Caring and Teaching*

Teachers use their knowledge of child development and individual children's strengths and needs to build trusting, responsive relationships with children.

Teachers promote children's self-regulation by helping young children express their feelings and regulate their behavior in acceptable and appropriate ways. They use a guided sequence to manage children's challenging behaviors. The sequence involves identifying children's actions, responding to them, and providing them with an acceptable alternative or rule.

Everyday routines and experiences in the classroom guide children's learning. Teachers help children learn through play and encouraging new skills. An ongoing assessment process occurs in every classroom in which information is collected and used to determine future planning.

5. *Building Partnerships With Families*

Teaching staff assure families that our program will respond positively to concerns and encourage the trust and confidence essential to building a partnership. Placing a young child in a child care program often involves stress and conflicting feelings in parents. By building partnerships with families, teachers encourage family members to actively participate in their child's experiences at child care and help to alleviate some of the stress the family is going through.

Classrooms are designed with a welcoming environment that includes photographs of family members, family take home projects and special objects from home to comfort children in care.

Individual care plans are developed for each infant to summarize how to best handle daily routines for that child. Teachers use the plans to ensure that they care for each child in a way that is consistent with the child's home experiences.

Daily communication through take home reports and informal daily exchanges allows teachers and parents to discuss children's progress at home and at care. Monthly newsletters are sent home to parents to give an overview of what's happening in each classroom along with any special news or events. Important information is also located on the program's website, www.charlottenet.org. Family events for individual classrooms as well as the whole program occur several times a year for parents and families to gather and meet with other families in the program.

Routines

Daily routines are an important part of our curriculum. Routines are opportunities to build relationships with children that promote the development of trust. Routines addressed daily in our infant and toddler programs include hellos and good-byes, diapering and toileting, feeding, dressing and soothing a child to sleep. As children gain confidence in their skills they are able to participate more actively in daily routines, and develop competence. Teachers use routines to guide children as they make increasing sense of their world.

Experiences

Teachers engage children in playing with toys, imitating and pretending, enjoying stories and books, connecting with music and movement, creating with art, tasting and preparing food, exploring sensory materials and going outdoors. While teachers plan the experiences for children to participate in, they are prepared to be able to respond to the children's curiosity and interests.

Preschool Programs

Creative Curriculum® for Preschool

Our curriculum is based on theories and research that inform decision making in the early childhood field. These theories and research provide the foundation for the experiences we provide at preschool. The core believe of the Creative Curriculum® is that all children can learn and benefit from developmentally appropriate practice. That is, providing experiences and opportunities that nurture a child's social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language/literacy development.

The curriculum framework includes the five components listed below and the interest areas the components are applied to.

Five Components

1. *How Children Learn and Develop*

CPS Child Care observes children in the following areas: social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language/literacy development along with the characteristics and experiences that make each child unique. Goals and objectives from each of the development areas are presented in a Developmental Continuum that teachers use to assess and track children's progress. An abbreviated version of the Developmental Continuum titled Goals and Objectives is located at the end of this section.

2. *The Learning Environment*

Teachers set up and maintain learning centers throughout the classroom that are dedicated to a specific interest area. During free choice times, children are able to choose the areas and activities they'd like to participate in. A daily schedule is posted in each classroom along with daily and weekly lesson plans. There are several organized large group times where children participate in activities as a class and are introduced to new ideas and concepts. Small group times occur daily that provide children the opportunity to interact directly with a teacher while participating in an activity. Small group activities are designed to track children's progress on a particular goal or objective from the Developmental Continuum.

Preschool classrooms create a community in which children learn how to get along with others and solve problems peacefully. Children are assigned classroom jobs daily to help in the daily activities in their classroom. Teachers use a guided sequence to help children resolve

conflicts or choose appropriate behaviors. The sequence involves identifying children's actions, responding to them, and providing them with an acceptable alternative or rule.

3. *What Children Learn*

Preschool classrooms incorporate the following six learning content areas into children's daily activities and lesson plans: literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts and technology. The classroom learning centers each reflect a specific content area and provide unique opportunities and experiences for the children. Teachers assist children through the process skills they need in order to learn the content.

4. *The Teacher's Role*

Teachers interact with children during in-depth learning studies such as large and small group times, as well as while children are exploring interest areas. They ask purposeful questions of the children in order to spark curiosity and wonder as children carry out their work (play). Teachers document observations of children as they work independently and as a group in order to track children's progress through the Developmental Continuum. Three times a year, teachers invite parents to a formal conference to discuss children's progress.

5. *The Family's Role*

CPS Child Care strives to develop a partnership with families of the center. We firmly believe that children's optimal development and learning occurs when teachers and parents work together. Parents are welcome in their child's classroom at any time and we often encourage parents to take part in family activities and events. Teachers have conversations with parents on a daily basis about their child's day at care. During this time, we encourage parents to share with teachers progress children are making, or perhaps problems they may be having at home. By having an understanding of what achievements children are working on at home, teachers are able to better plan for individual needs in their classrooms.

Interest Areas

Each classroom incorporates eleven interest areas into daily schedules. These areas include: Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovery/Science, Sensory, Music and Movement, Cooking, Computers and Outdoors. Children progress in each developmental area (social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language/literacy) through their experiences in interest areas along with guidance from teachers. Each interest area has a connection with the Goals and Objectives of the Creative Curriculum®.

School Age Programs

Before and after school programs as well as school vacation camp programs use the following curriculum framework to develop and implement activities in eight core content areas.

Arts and Humanities

The visual and performing arts are easily integrated into school age programs. Children and staff are easily attracted to most arts experiences such as drama, music, art, crafts and poetry. Self-expression and a greater sense of imagination are just a few of the benefits children experience through Arts and Humanities programming.

Values Building

In today's challenging and complex world, children need reinforcement of positive values even when they're away from home. By incorporating the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility into play, learning and social activities, children learn positive interaction skills.

Health, Wellness and Fitness

Young bodies develop properly when good health habits and regular physical activity are a routine part of their day. By the incorporation of healthy eating and daily physical activities, the children in the School Age program learn and experience first hand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

Homework Support

Homework time is often a request of parents, freeing up evening time with the family. The program staff offer a homework center for after-school homework time away from the busy activities of the full program. Staff support the children in the homework center by answering questions and helping the children acquire resources available to them.

Literacy

Literacy includes reading, writing, speaking, gathering information, using information, thinking critically, understanding others and expressing oneself. Open opportunities to share ideas, create and perform together are a regular part of the programming.

Science and Technology

Through age appropriate science activities, children begin to understand the world around them – both in and out of doors. The children learn from the choices they make and how these choices affect the earth and the quality of life

for others. They use technology to research, study and learn what happens in the world around them.

Civic Responsibility

Civic Responsibility is a deliberate process through which the children in our program can develop skills, knowledge and civic awareness while making meaningful contributions to the Charlotte community. It encourages community awareness, volunteering, leadership skills and value building. Community projects could be anything from canned good drives and recycling collections to helping younger children with homework.

Pro-Social Behaviors

School age programs need to be places where children, parents and staff feel safe, understood, respected, secure and valued. When these basic requirements for healthy living and socialization are missing, learning rarely takes place. With regular incorporation of pro-social behavior activities, the children, staff and parents become comfortable in their surroundings and the program as a whole. With this feeling of comfort and security, children feel more confident in their actions and risk taking. The staff educates the children in understanding natural and logical consequences and encourages them to accept responsibility for their behaviors. They guide activities, give children strategies for dealing with conflict when it comes their way, and help them develop socially acceptable ways of interacting with one another.