

Exploration One: Our Community

Interdisciplinary Instructional Guidance

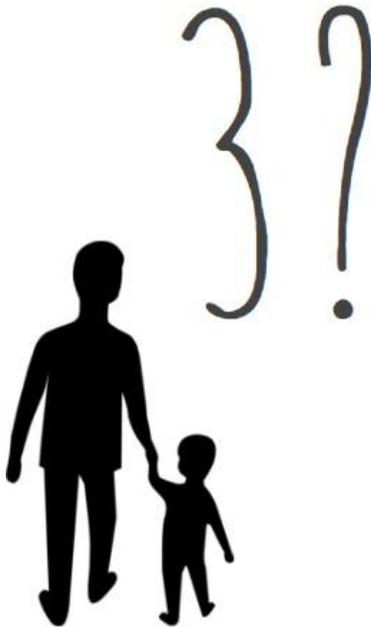
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I. Foundation

WHAT DOES IT
MEAN TO BE



| PLEASE REMEMBER: | YOU CAN SUPPORT ME IN THE CLASSROOM BY: |
|---|---|
| I am developing a sense of being separate from my caregiver, so saying goodbye can be scary. | Being caring and patient. Stay close to me so I know there is a secure adult who will help me. Help me to learn the classroom schedule so I'll know what to expect in school. |
| I am learning to control my impulses. When I want something I might grab it even if someone else is already using it. | Putting out multiples of materials and giving me strategies so I can begin to learn to take turns. |
| I am learning to use my words. | Labeling my feelings for me and modeling language so I can practice. |
| I get immersed in what I am doing. | Using visual and verbal reminders before and during transitions to help me transition throughout the day. |
| I am excited about many things and curious about the world. | Letting me know when you see me trying hard and sharing in the joy of my accomplishments. |
| My attention span is short. I need to move my body a lot. | Making sure sitting group times are 6 minutes or less. |
| I am still learning to listen to my body's signals that I have to go to the bathroom. | Helping me understand the bathroom procedure. Bring me to the bathroom frequently to help me learn when my body is telling me to go. |

References: Gopnik, A. (2009). *The Philosophical Baby: What Children's Minds Tell Us About Truth, Love and the Meaning of Life*. New York: Picador
 Lieberman, A. (1993). *The Emotional Life of the Toddler*. New York: The Free Press
 Neville, H. (2007). *Is This a Phase: Child Development & Parenting Strategies, Birth to 6 Years*. Washington: Parenting Press

Explorations: Comprehensive, In-depth Learning Across Domains

New York City 3-K for All Interdisciplinary Explorations are designed to connect children, families and teaching staff and invite them to engage in comprehensive, in-depth, play-based learning across domains. The three Explorations are designed to be implemented over the course of the ten-month program year. Topics and activities in the Explorations begin with routines and learning about the classroom and progress to more abstract ideas throughout the year. Explorations are grounded in research on developmental expectations as described in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* (ELOF), which outlines the skills, behaviors and concepts programs foster as they engage with our youngest learners. By using the three Explorations as written, programs will support all of the preschool goals included in the framework. Teaching staff should refer to the ELOF and their authentic assessment system when implementing Explorations in order to connect their observations of each child with ELOF goals, developmental progressions and indicators, and to guide their planning as they work to meet the needs of each child in the class.

Guiding Principles of the Early Learning Outcomes Framework:

Each child is unique and can succeed. Children are individuals with different rates and paths of development. Each child is uniquely influenced by their prenatal environment, temperament, physiology, and life experiences. With the appropriate support, all children can be successful learners and achieve the skills, behaviors, and knowledge described in the Framework.

Learning occurs within the context of relationships. Caring families, teachers, and other adults matter in a young child's life. Responsive and supportive interactions with adults are essential to children's learning.

Families are children's first and most important caregivers, teachers, and advocates. Families must be respected and supported as the primary influence in their child's early learning and education. Their knowledge, skills, and cultural backgrounds contribute to children's school readiness.

Children learn best when they are emotionally and physically safe and secure. Nurturing, responsive, and consistent care helps create safe environments where children feel secure and valued. In these settings, children are able to engage fully in learning experiences.

Areas of development are integrated, and children learn many concepts and skills at the same time. Any single skill, behavior, or ability may involve multiple areas of development. For example, as infants gain fine motor skills, they can manipulate objects in new ways and deepen their understanding of cause and effect. As preschoolers gain new verbal skills, they can better manage their emotions and form more complex friendships.

Teaching must be intentional and focused on how children learn and grow. Children are active, engaged, and eager learners. Good teaching practices build on these intrinsic strengths by providing developmentally appropriate instruction and opportunities for exploration and meaningful play.

Every child has diverse strengths rooted in their family's culture, background, language, and beliefs. Responsive and respectful learning environments welcome children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Effective teaching practices and learning experiences build on the unique backgrounds and prior experiences of each child.

Click [here](#) to access the Guiding Principles of the Head Start *Early Learning Outcomes Framework* online

Early Learning Outcomes Framework Domain Organization

| CENTRAL DOMAINS | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | APPROACHES TO LEARNING | SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT | LANGUAGE AND LITERACY | COGNITION | PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT |
| ▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS | Approaches to Learning | Social and Emotional Development | Language and Communication | Cognition | Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development |
| ● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS | Approaches to Learning | Social and Emotional Development | Language and Communication | Mathematics Development | Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development |
| | | | Literacy | Scientific Reasoning | |

Click [here](#) to access the interactive ELOF

II. Introduction

Welcome to Exploration One: Our Community, 3-K for All's first Interdisciplinary Instructional Guidance. The beginning of the year is an exciting time for teaching staff, children and their families. For many children, this will be their first educational experience outside of the home. For other children, this year may be a major transition as they move from a toddler care setting to 3-K for All. You have the privilege of welcoming each family and child into your classroom and setting the stage for a joyful year and life-long love of learning.

As the year begins, it is especially important to remember that children arrive with their own experiences and expectations. During the first few weeks, it is important to acknowledge children's feelings. As children separate from their families and caregivers, they will likely look to you, the teaching staff, to provide the support they need. During the first few weeks of the year, children's emotions can range from excitement and confidence to anxiety and confusion. A child may fluctuate in and out of these emotions or hold onto one for an extended period. It is important to accept and acknowledge where children are as they enter your classroom and to create a safe, predictable and stable environment in order to help them transition.

Children and families are attuned to you in many ways and it is important for you to be attuned to them as well. Since families are children's primary teachers, they can share valuable information with you about their children. Dedicating the time and effort to learn about and connect with the children and families in your class helps to support emotional

connections and build the bridges you need to create meaningful relationships. Take the time to get to know the children in your class. Pay close attention as they engage with you, the classroom and their peers. Note their preferences, interests and abilities and thoughtfully consider how you can connect with them and foster their connections with the classroom and their classmates.

3-K for All Interdisciplinary Instructional Guidance offer instructional guidance for teachers of three-year-olds. Built around child development principals and research, they support intentional interactions between children and adults (Copple C. & Bredekamp, 2009). In Explorations, adults and children engage in play-based, hands-on learning and make discoveries together about ideas, materials and each other.

In this first Exploration, particularly in the first month, children will have the opportunity to explore the classroom. When children first experience a new setting, they need time to explore the materials as they begin to play. Keep this in mind as the year begins and support children in their need to familiarize themselves with classroom materials. Join children in the Learning Centers and help them consider how to use the materials as well as how to put them away when finished. Look for opportunities to make connections between their prior knowledge and experiences and the classroom.

The second month of this Exploration taps into the egocentric nature of three-year-olds by providing space for them to consider their preferences, interests and needs. In the third month, children will also have the opportunity to learn about and connect with the other children in the class.

Throughout the Exploration, children are learning what it means to be together with friends and family as well as be apart.

3-K for All Interdisciplinary Explorations offer instructional guidance for teachers of three-year-olds. Built around child development principals and research, they support intentional interactions between children and adults (Copple, C. & Bredekamp, 2009). In Explorations, adults and children engage in play-based, hands-on learning and make discoveries together about ideas, materials and each other.

As you engage in this Exploration with your children, you will be working with them to create a positive classroom culture. There are resources to support you in this work throughout the Exploration. Additional resources, such as Tools of Autonomy, ground children in the daily routine and help create a flexible structure where expectations are appropriate and predictable (see Tools of Autonomy in Appendices).

Sample schedules, policy addenda and additional resources are available from the Division of Early Childhood Education website.

Practical Tips

- Reach out to all families prior to the beginning of the year through personalized letters, phone calls, and/or home visits to welcome them individually to your program.
- Get to know your families before the school year begins through thoughtful conversations and needs assessments.
 - Collect information from families regarding their children's strengths, interests, and needs.
 - Ask families about their unique skills, backgrounds, values, and hopes for their child.
 - Gather information from families regarding their language needs and preferences so that you can accommodate them accordingly.
- Conduct informal welcome events at your site (open-houses) before the school year begins and at the beginning of the school year to help families and their children develop connections with each other and program staff.
- Learn the name of each family member or caregiver that brings children to school and picks them up each day. Address them by their names as a way to create a connection.
- Take pictures of each child and family member(s) or caregiver(s) on the first day of the year. Post the pictures in the classroom or on the classroom door.
- Ask family members to write a note or to draw a picture for their child. Post the note in the child's cubby or another place where the child can see it. Laminate these to make them more durable.

Exploration One: Our Community is designed to be implemented over the course of about three months. Teaching teams can make developmentally appropriate adjustments to the activities and timing to meet the needs of their children and families.

Enjoy Exploration One: Our Community! Please email prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov with any questions or feedback.

III. Snapshot

Exploration Topic

Our Community

Essential Question

What is our community?

Focus Areas

Classroom: Children will have the opportunity to explore their classroom.

Self: Children will have the opportunity to explore their emerging sense of self.

Us: Children will have the opportunity to explore their emerging sense of belonging.

Student Outcomes

Children will show growth in their ability to navigate and explore the classroom.

Children will show growth in their understanding of personal characteristics, behaviors, likes and dislikes.

Children will show growth in their understanding of their personal connections with others.

Key Vocabulary

This list should be adapted to fit the needs of individual programs and classrooms.

| | | |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| absent | far | remind |
| apart | favorite | sad |
| away | feel | scared |
| back | friends | schedule |
| best | frustrated | see |
| body | fun | sensory |
| brave | gone | share |
| buddy | happy | strangers |
| build | help | students |
| calm | here | support |
| care | hug | taking turns |
| centers | invite | teacher |
| cheer | like | thoughtful |
| children | love | together |
| classroom | mad | tools |
| close | manipulatives | upset |
| collage | materials | us |
| comfort | me | work |
| community | miss | worst |
| dislike | notice | you |
| dress up | others | |
| encourage | paint | |
| enjoy | pal | |
| equipment | play | |
| excited | prefer | |
| explore | present | |
| family | puzzle | |

IV. Framework

Essential Question

This question connects the experiences teaching staff plan throughout the entire Exploration. Consider this question while planning and implementing the Exploration.

Focus Areas

These represent the major inquiries of the Exploration. They build over time and invite children to make connections across all content areas. Each focus area may take about one month to explore and should guide teaching staff through the planning and reflecting process.

These are key components of each Exploration.

Invitation to Explore

These experiences provide opportunities to deepen children's experiences within the Exploration. Each Invitation aligns to one of the three focus areas and should be implemented accordingly. Teaching staff use the question posed in each Invitation to ask children to explore a material or concept with them.

Suggested Texts

These are a combination of literary and informational texts to read throughout the Exploration. Multiple readings of engaging, informative and literary texts provide opportunities for exploring content, expressing ideas, using imagination and developing critical thinking skills. Reading books multiple times also helps all children build a deeper understanding of content, make meaningful connections between concepts or experiences and builds their confidence as learners and as future readers.

See Section VII for text-based critical thinking questions to support the read aloud experience.

In addition to texts specifically related to Exploration content, there is also an Explorations Master Book List. When creating your classroom library, use a selection of these books to supplement the Suggested Texts for Read Aloud.

Key Vocabulary

These words help children understand the major inquiries of the Exploration and build background knowledge. Use these words, as well as additional vocabulary words that come up throughout the Exploration.

Family and Community Engagement

These ideas connect classrooms with families by inviting families to share their experience and knowledge with the class, as well as extending learning outside of the classroom. Use these suggestions to build relationships with families and enhance children's learning. Note the alignment to the NYC DOE Division of Early Childhood Education Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ).

Culminating Celebration

This is an opportunity to reflect on the Exploration with the children, as well as to note and celebrate the growth and learning that has occurred. It is implemented at the end of each Exploration.

Sample Weekly Plans

EXPLORATION ONE: OUR COMMUNITY

Essential Question:

What is our community?

Month One:

Our Classroom

Key Vocabulary:

build, centers, children, classroom, collage, dress up, equipment, explore, family, friends, invite, manipulatives, materials, paint, play, schedule, sensory, share, students, taking turns, teacher, together, tools, work

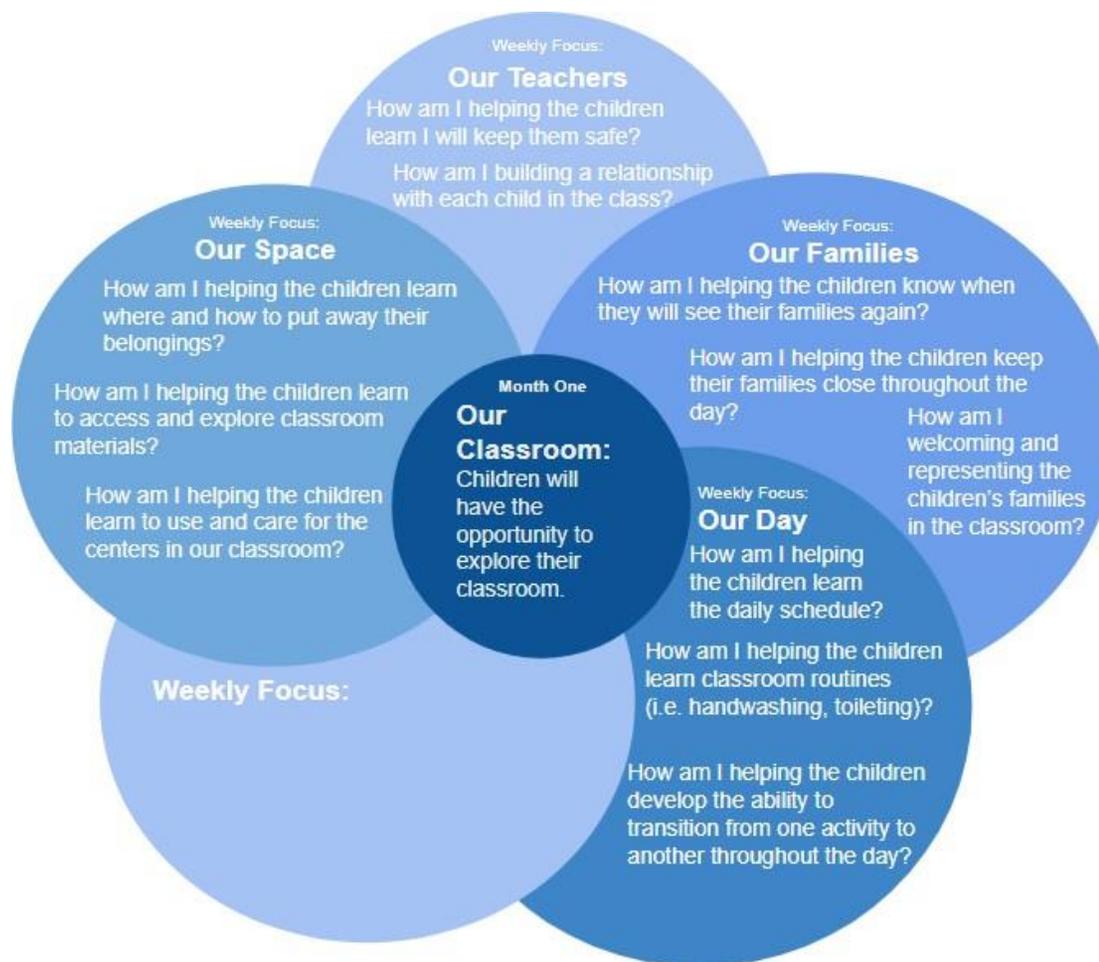
Invitations to Explore:

Blocks/Construction
Dramatic Play
Art
Toys and Games/Math
Manipulatives

Family and Community Engagement

Suggestions:

Computer
Art
Sand and Water/Sensory
Outdoors/Gross Motor



DECIDING WHICH TOPICS TO EXPLORE



Review the sample weekly focus areas. Consider the children in your class and how they are adjusting to the program. What is going really well? Where are children still adjusting? Which focus areas best match what you see in the classroom and hear children and families talking about? Begin by focusing on areas that best match their needs and interests. Use the questions on this page as a guide to determine how you help children explore the big ideas in this Exploration. Choose one of the suggested topics each week or observe the children and develop themes that are unique to your environment and the children's interests and experiences.

EXPLORATION WEEKLY PLAN

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Exploration: Our Community | | | | | |
| Essential Question: What is our community? | | | Month: One | | |
| Focus Area: Our Classroom | | | Week: One | | |
| Weekly Focus: Our Space | | | Room: | | |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Greeting Routine (20 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help children and families feel welcome by greeting everyone by name. • Support children as they engage in arrival routines by using step-by-step directions (i.e. put belongings away, mark themselves as present on the attendance chart, wash hands). • Consider designating one teaching team member to greet children and another to support children as they engage in arrival activities/breakfast. | | | | |
| | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Paper/crayons</i> <i>Manipulatives</i> <i>Play dough/cutters</i> <i>Puzzles</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Paper/crayons</i> <i>Manipulatives</i> <i>Play dough/cutters</i> <i>Puzzles</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Paper/crayons</i> <i>Manipulatives</i> <i>Play dough/cutters</i> <i>Puzzles</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Paper/crayons</i> <i>Manipulatives</i> <i>Play dough/cutters</i> <i>Puzzles</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Paper/crayons</i> <i>Manipulatives</i> <i>Play dough/cutters</i> <i>Puzzles</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: |
| Large Group Exploration (10 minutes including transitions: 6 minutes for Large Group content, 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting song/chant: Select a greeting song/chant to welcome each child and build community. • Daily schedule: Use a picture schedule to briefly review the day. Highlight changes or special events • Introduce Centers: Show sample materials children may choose to play with in each center • Tell the children where each member of the teaching team will start playing when Center Time begins and what materials they will be exploring. Invite children to join if they would like. • Transition to Centers: Use an activity, song, rhyme or finger play to keep children engaged, minimize wait time and stagger the transition as they make choices about where to play | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>minutes to transition in and out of Large Group)</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Hello Song (with home languages) refer to Section X Supporting Resources</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Blocks) show children a few unit blocks, show where they can be found in the classroom and show children how to match them to their outline (prepare a sample in advance) to clean up.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center Book (see Appendix H) to transition children by asking where they want to play.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Hello Song (with home languages)</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Art) Show children a paint container, brush and paper. Model how to dip brush in paint and paint a few brushstrokes on paper. Show where these materials can be found in the classroom and what children should do when they finish painting.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center Book to transition children by asking where they want to play.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Hello Song (with home languages)</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Sensory) Show children a small amount of sand and a few toys. Show where these materials can be found in the classroom and use visuals to share any important safety reminders about sand use (i.e., wash hands before and after using sand).</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center Book to transition children by asking where they want to play.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Hello Song (with home languages)</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Science) Show children a few items from a collection of natural objects. Model how they might begin to explore some of the materials. Show where these materials can be found in the classroom and how to put them away when finished.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center Book to transition children by asking where they want to play.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Hello Song (with home languages)</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Math) Show children a couple of puzzles. Model how to take apart and how to put a few pieces together. Show where puzzles can be found and share how to put away.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center Book to transition children by asking where they want to play.</p> |
| <p>Centers (70 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers for materials to consider including in each center. • Select materials that best meet the interests and needs of the children in your class. • Rotate materials regularly. <p>Implement at least one INVITATION TO EXPLORE each week.</p> <p>Center: Blocks/Construction Materials: Unit Blocks Invitation: Invite children to explore unit blocks with you. Pose the following question: What can we do with these blocks? Teacher:</p> | | | | |

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--|--|-----------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| The following centers should be available during center time: | *Materials to highlight each day: <p style="text-align: right;">*Note, children should also be able to explore other materials in each center per their own interests and needs.</p> | | | | |
| Blocks/Construction (page 33) | Invitation to Explore (see above) | | | | |
| Dramatic Play (page 34) | Set up as a kitchen. Introduce basic materials such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended materials such as inch cubes or other materials children could use as pretend food or other household items • Kitchen utensils (i.e., plates, cups, silverware, pots and pans) • Dolls and materials for care such as clothing, blankets and bottles • Invite children to bring a family picture (or make a copy of children’s family pictures) and display in dramatic play | | | | |
| Art (page 36) | Explore crayons/paper | Explore paint | Explore paint | Explore playdough | Explore playdough |
| Science/Discovery (page 38) | Introduce classroom pet | Explore magnets | Explore magnets | Explore natural objects | Explore natural objects |
| Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives (page 40) | Explore interlocking blocks | Explore interlocking blocks | Explore sticks and connectors | Explore sticks and connectors | Explore puzzles |
| Sand and Water/Sensory (page 42) | Various toys for sand exploration such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assorted scoops and containers | | | | |
| Library (page 44) | Explore books: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Handmade Centers Book from transition activity in Library for children to explore. See Appendix H. • Remind children that books read aloud to the class will be available for them to read in the Library. | | | | |
| Cooking and Mixing (as needed, page 46) | N/A | N/A | Make playdough (use in art on Thursday and Friday) | N/A | N/A |
| Writing (page 50) | Explore name cards | Explore name cards | Explore markers/paper (model how to put tops on markers when done) | Explore markers/paper (model how to put tops on markers when done) | Explore magnetic letters |
| Music and Movement (page 52) | Explore musical instruments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shakers, tambourines, jingle bells | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Clean-Up/Handwashing (10 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help create a smooth transition, give children advance notice before it occurs. Five minutes before the end of Center Time prepare them with an indicator (song, bell, etc.). Use a consistent indicator before each clean up. Some children may need extra support preparing for this transition. Consider designating one teaching team member to support with clean up and another to begin the handwashing process. | | | | |
| <p>Family Style Lunch/Toileting/Handwashing (40 minutes)</p> | <p>While sitting for family style meals, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on the procedures for preparing to eat lunch. Discussing how children clean up their meals and eating area when they are finished. Reminding children of what is coming next, especially toward the end of the meal Designating one teaching team member, as children are finishing their meals, to support children who are still eating and another to begin the toileting and handwashing procedures. | | | | |
| <p>Nap/Rest Time (60 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the transition to nap/rest time place children’s cots or mats in a consistent location. Remain flexible to children’s individual needs and adjust the locations of cots or mats accordingly. | | | | |
| <p>Story Time (10 minutes <u>including transitions</u>: 6 minutes for Story, 4 minutes to transition in and out of group)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Section VI Texts for suggested Read Aloud Texts. Select texts that meet the interests and needs of your children. Review Section VII Inquiry and Critical Thinking Questions for Texts for questions to enhance the read aloud experience and support the development of critical thinking skills. Introduce Centers: Briefly remind children of the materials available in centers. Tell the children where each member of the teaching team will start playing when Center Time begins and what materials s/he will be exploring. Invite children to join if they would like. Transition to Centers: Use an activity, song, rhyme or finger play to keep children engaged, minimize wait time, and stagger the transition as they make choices about where to play. | | | | |
| <p>Book: <i>Quinito Day and Night/Quinito, dia y noche</i> by Ina Cumpiano</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children by asking where they</p> | <p>Book: <i>Quinito Day and Night/Quinito, dia y noche</i> by Ina Cumpiano</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children by asking where they</p> | <p>Book: <i>Quinito Day and Night/Quinito, dia y noche</i> by Ina Cumpiano</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children by asking where they</p> | <p>Book: <i>Quinito Day and Night/Quinito, dia y noche</i> by Ina Cumpiano</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children by asking where they</p> | <p>Book: <i>Quinito Day and Night/Quinito, dia y noche</i> by Ina Cumpiano</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children by asking where they</p> | |

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|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | want to play. |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Centers (70 minutes)</p> <p>The following centers should be available during center time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blocks/Construction • Dramatic Play • Art • Science/Discovery • Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives • Sand and Water/Sensory • Library • Cooking and Mixing (as needed) • Writing • Music and Movement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the materials used in the morning and remind children how they interacted with them. • Determine whether changes should be made. • See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers for materials to consider, if necessary. | | | | |
| | <p>Materials to highlight:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*Note, children should also be able to explore other materials in each center per their own interests and needs.</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Same as morning</p> <p>Teaching Team Roles:</p> | <p>Same as morning</p> <p>Teaching Team Roles:</p> | <p>Same as morning</p> <p>Teaching Team Roles:</p> | <p>Same as morning</p> <p>Teaching Team Roles:</p> | <p>Same as morning</p> <p>Teaching Team Roles:</p> |
| <p>Clean-up/Handwashing/Snack (20 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See guidance above for tips and suggestions | | | | |
| <p>Outdoors (60 minutes)</p> | <p>See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers</p> | | | | |
| | <p>Materials:</p> <p><i>Balls</i></p> <p><i>Tunnels</i></p> <p><i>Bubbles</i></p> <p>Teaching team roles:</p> | <p>Materials:</p> <p><i>Balls</i></p> <p><i>Tunnels</i></p> <p><i>Bubbles</i></p> <p>Teaching team roles:</p> | <p>Materials:</p> <p><i>Balls</i></p> <p><i>Tunnels</i></p> <p><i>Bubbles</i></p> <p>Teaching team roles:</p> | <p>Materials:</p> <p><i>Balls</i></p> <p><i>Tunnels</i></p> <p><i>Bubbles</i></p> <p>Teaching team roles:</p> | <p>Materials:</p> <p><i>Balls</i></p> <p><i>Tunnels</i></p> <p><i>Bubbles</i></p> <p>Teaching team roles:</p> |

Closing Meeting/Dismissal

(10 minutes including
transitions: 6 minutes for
Closing Meeting content, 4
minutes to transition in and
out of Closing Meeting)

- End the day with a closing ritual or song .
- Assist children in packing their belongings and preparing to leave.

EXPLORATION ONE: OUR COMMUNITY

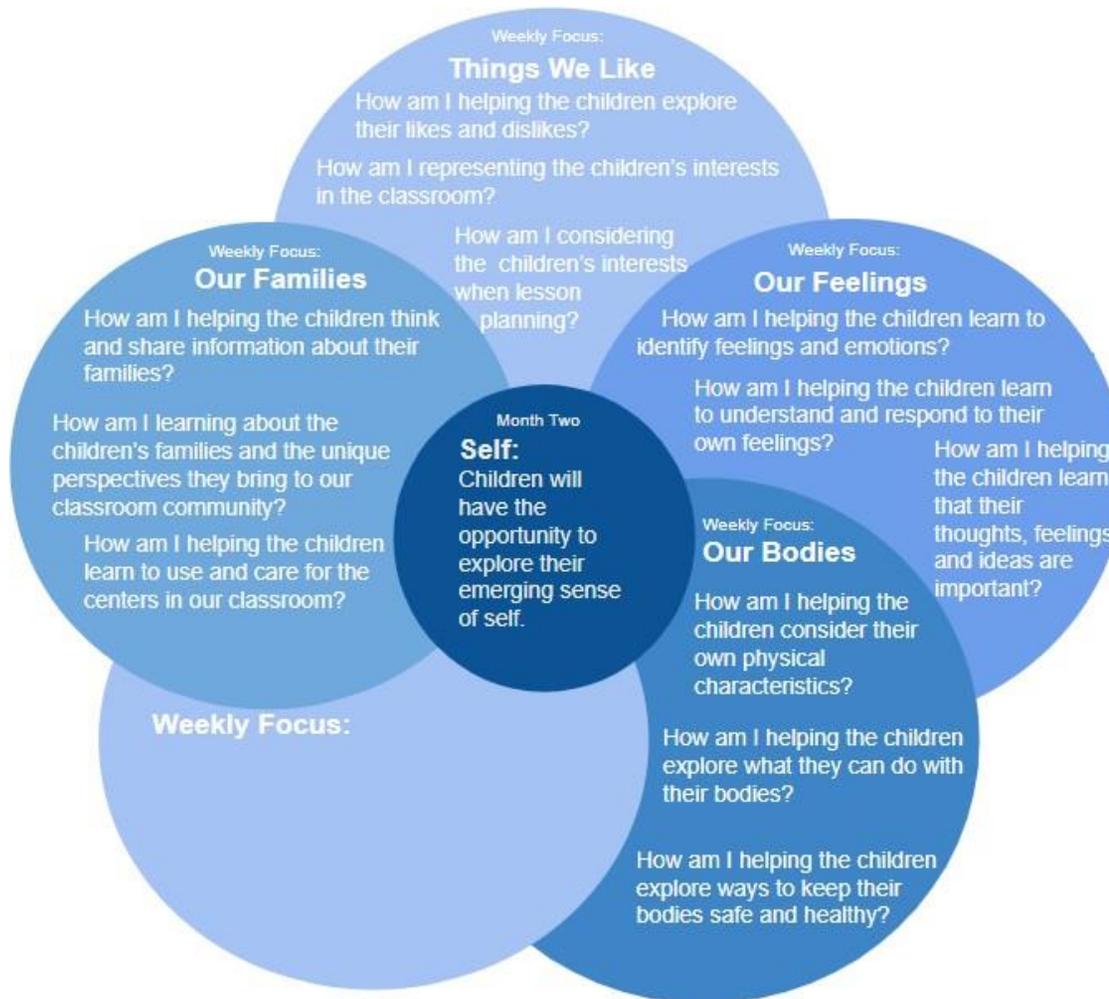
Essential Question:
What is our community?

Month Two:
Self

Key Vocabulary:
absent, apart, away, back, best, body, brave, calm, dislike, enjoy, excited, favorite, feel, frustrated, fun, happy, hug, like, love, mad, me, miss, notice, prefer, present, puzzle, remind, sad, scared, see, upset, worst

Invitations to Explore:
Science
Music and Movement
Sand and Water/Sensory
Writing

Family and Community Engagement Suggestions:
Science
Dramatic Play
Cooking and Mixing
Writing



DECIDING WHICH TOPICS TO EXPLORE



Review the sample weekly Exploration Areas. Listen to the children as they play and engage with materials, their peers, their families, and you. Note common themes and consider selecting focus areas that best match what you see children doing in the classroom, and hear children and their families talking about. Use the questions on this page as a guide to determine how you help children explore the big ideas in this Exploration. Choose one of the suggested topics each week or develop themes that are unique to your environment, and the children's interests and experiences.

EXPLORATION WEEKLY PLAN

| | | | | | |
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| Exploration: Our Community | | | | | |
| Essential Question: What is our community? | | | | Month: Two | |
| Focus Area: Self | | | | Week: One | |
| Weekly Focus Area: Things We Like | | | | Room: | |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Greeting Routine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help children and families feel welcome by greeting everyone by name. • Support children as they engage in arrival routines by using step-by-step directions (e.g. put belongings away, mark themselves as present on the attendance chart, wash hands). • Consider designating one teaching team member to greet children and another to support children as they engage in arrival activities/breakfast. | | | | |
| | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Tape/scissors/paper</i> <i>Magnets</i> <i>Peg boards/pegs</i> <i>Tabletop blocks</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Tape/scissors/paper</i> <i>Magnets</i> <i>Peg boards/pegs</i> <i>Tabletop blocks</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Tape/scissors/paper</i> <i>Magnets</i> <i>Peg boards/pegs</i> <i>Tabletop blocks</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Tape/scissors/paper</i> <i>Magnets</i> <i>Peg boards/pegs</i> <i>Tabletop blocks</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Tape/scissors/paper</i> <i>Magnets</i> <i>Peg boards/pegs</i> <i>Tabletop blocks</i> Breakfast/Activity Support: |
| Large Group Exploration (10 minutes including transitions: 6 minutes for Large Group content, 4 minutes to transition in and out of Large Group) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting song/chant: Select a greeting song/chant to welcome each child and build community. • Daily schedule: Use a picture schedule to briefly review the day. Highlight changes or special events. • Introduce Centers: Show sample materials children may choose to play with in each center • Tell the children where each member of the teaching team will start playing when Center Time begins and what materials s/he will be exploring. Invite children to join if they would like. • Transition to Centers: Use an activity song, rhyme or finger play to keep children engaged, minimize wait time and stagger the transition as they make choices about where to play. | | | | |

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| | <p>Greeting song/chant: Here We Are Together (See Section X Supporting Resources)</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Writing) Which fruit do you like best? Show some of the fruits available at the writing center as well as the graph children will use to show their preferences. Tell children they will be able to explore the fruits and share their preferences.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Select a theme (food, animal, etc.) "If you like ____ you may choose a center and go to play." Consider singing or chanting the words. Repeat until all children have selected a center.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Here We Are Together</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Science) Color paddles- Show children a couple color paddles. Briefly model how they might explore them in the science center. Ask children to consider which colors they like best as they explore.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Select a theme (food, animal, etc.) "If you like ____ you may choose a center and go to play." Consider singing or chanting the words. Repeat until all children have selected a center.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Here We Are Together</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives) Shape blocks- Show children an assortment of shape blocks. Briefly model how they might explore them. Ask children to consider which shapes they like best as they explore.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center Book to transition children by showing a page and saying, "If your favorite center is ____, you may choose a center and go play." Consider singing or chanting the words. Repeat until all children have selected a center.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Here We Are Together</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Sand and Water/Sensory) Toy animals- Show children a couple toy animals that may align to their interests. Invite children to explore the animals and consider which animal they like best and why.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center Book to transition children by showing a page and saying, "If your favorite center is ____, you may choose a center and go play." Consider singing or chanting the words. Repeat until all children have selected a center.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Here We Are Together</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Music and Movement) Rhythm sticks- Show children a set of rhythm sticks, model how to use them to explore various rhythms. Encourage children to explore various rhythms and share what they like about them.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center Book to transition children by showing a page and saying, "If your favorite center is ____, you may choose a center and go play." Consider singing or chanting the words. Repeat until all children have selected a center.</p> |
| <p>Centers (70 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers for materials to consider including in each center. • Select materials that best meet the interests and needs of the children in your class. • Rotate materials regularly. <p>Implement at least one INVITATION TO EXPLORE each week.</p> <p>Center: Writing</p> <p>Materials: Assortment of fruit, knife for cutting, utensils for serving, paper for graphing, writing tool, blocks, and/or picture cards.</p> | | | | |

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| | <p>Invitation: Invite children to explore various fruits with you. Pose the following question: Which fruit do you like best? Be sure to allow children to taste the fruits (if interested). Invite them to record their preferences. They can stack a block next to a picture of the fruit, make tally marks on a simple graph, or use their picture cards to record their preferences.</p> <p>Teacher:</p> | | | | |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| The following centers should be Available during center time: | <p>*Materials to highlight each day:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">*Note, children should also be able to explore other materials in each center per their own interests and needs.</p> | | | | |
| Blocks/Construction (page 33) | Unit blocks and toy animals children's environment | Unit blocks and toy animals typical of children's environment | Unit blocks and toy vehicles and trucks of various sizes | Unit blocks and toy vehicles and trucks of various sizes | Unit blocks and toy vehicles and trucks of various sizes |
| Dramatic Play (page 34) | <p>Set up as a home. Include materials such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assorted fabric pieces children can use to create dress up clothes that match their interests and experiences Various clothing related items such as aprons, scarves, and accessories such as sunglasses, hats, etc. | | | | |
| Art (page 36) | Explore finger paint | Explore finger paint | <p>Explore three dimensional materials such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wood pieces, spools, and cardboard tubes | | |
| Science/Discovery (page 38) | Explore color paddles | Explore color paddles | Explore discovery bottles | Explore toy animals | Explore toy animals |
| Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives (page 40) | Explore floor puzzles | Explore floor puzzles | Explore shape blocks | Explore shape blocks | Explore counters that match children's Interests (e.g., cars) and sorting trays |
| Sand and Water/Sensory (page 42) | <p>Various toys for water exploration such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assorted containers Toy animals that match children's interests. | | | | |
| Library (page 44) | <p>Explore feltboard pieces related to books children especially enjoy. Be sure to include the books that accompany these stories.</p> | | | | |
| Cooking and Mixing (as needed, page 46) | N/A | N/A | Explore flour and water | Explore flour and water | N/A |
| Writing (page 50) | <p>Invitation to Explore (see above)</p> | | | | |
| Music and Movement (page 52) | <p>Explore and dance to music the children enjoy</p> | | <p>Explore various instruments such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tambourines Jingle bells | | <p>Explore rhythm sticks</p> |

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| <p>Clean-Up/Handwashing (10 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help create a smooth transition, give children advance notice before it occurs. Five minutes before the end of Center Time prepare them with an indicator (song, bell, etc.). Use a consistent indicator before each clean up. Some children may need extra support preparing for this transition. Consider designating one teaching team member to support with clean up and another to begin the handwashing process. | | | | |
| <p>Family Style Lunch/Toileting/Handwashing (40 minutes)</p> | <p>While sitting for family style meals, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on the procedures for preparing to eat lunch. Discussing how children clean up their meals and eating area when they are finished. Reminding children of what is coming next, especially toward the end of the meal. Designating one teaching team member, as children are finishing their meals, to support children who are still eating and another to begin the toileting and handwashing procedures. | | | | |
| <p>Nap/Rest Time (60 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the transition to nap/rest time place children’s cots or mats in a consistent location. Remain flexible to children’s individual needs and adjust the locations of cots or mats accordingly. | | | | |
| <p>Story Time (10 minutes <u>including transitions</u>: 6 minutes for Story, 4 minutes to transition in and out of group)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Section VI Texts for suggested Read Aloud Texts. Select texts that meet the interests and needs of your children. Review Section VII Inquiry and Critical Thinking Questions for Texts for questions to enhance the read aloud experience and support the development of critical thinking skills. Introduce Centers: Briefly remind children of the materials available in centers. Tell the children where each member of the teaching team will start playing when Center Time begins and what materials they will be exploring. Invite children to join if they would like. Transition to Centers: Use an activity, song, rhyme or finger play to keep children engaged, minimize waittime, and stagger the transition as they make choices about where to play. | | | | |
| <p>Book: <i>I am Perfectly Designed</i> by Karamo Brown</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children by</p> | <p>Book: <i>I am Perfectly Designed</i> by Karamo Brown</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children by</p> | <p>Book: <i>I am Perfectly Designed</i> by Karamo Brown</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children</p> | <p>Book: <i>I am Perfectly Designed</i> by Karamo Brown</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children</p> | <p>Book: <i>I am Perfectly Designed</i> by Karamo Brown</p> <p>Transition Activity: Use Center book to transition children by</p> | |

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| | asking where they want to play. | asking where they want to play. | by asking where they want to play. | by asking where they want to play. | asking where they want to play. |
| Centers (70 minutes) The following centers should be available during center time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blocks/Construction • Dramatic Play • Art • Science/Discovery • Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives • Sand and Water/Sensory • Library • Cooking and Mixing (as needed) • Writing • Music and Movement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the materials used in the morning and remind children how they interacted with them. • Determine whether changes should be made. • See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers for materials to consider, if necessary. | | | | |
| | Materials to highlight: <small>*Note, children should also be able to explore other materials in each center per their own interests and needs.</small> | | | | |
| | Same as morning | Same as morning | Same as morning | Same as morning | Same as morning |
| Teaching Team Roles: | Teaching Team Roles: | Teaching Team Roles: | Teaching Team Roles: | Teaching Team Roles: | Teaching Team Roles: |
| Clean-up/Handwashing/Snack (20 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See guidance above for tips and suggestions | | | | | |
| Outdoors (60 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers | | | | | |
| Materials: <i>Wheel toys</i> | Materials: <i>Wheel toys</i> | Materials: <i>Wheel toys</i> | Materials: <i>Wheel toys</i> | Materials: <i>Wheel toys</i> | Materials: <i>Wheel toys</i> |
| <i>Cones</i> | <i>Cones</i> | <i>Cones</i> | <i>Cones</i> | <i>Cones</i> | <i>Cones</i> |
| <i>Tumbling mats</i> | <i>Tumbling mats</i> | <i>Tumbling mats</i> | <i>Tumbling mats</i> | <i>Tumbling mats</i> | <i>Tumbling mats</i> |
| Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: |

Closing Meeting/Dismissal

(10 minutes including transitions: 6 minutes for Closing Meeting content, 4 minutes to transition in and out of Closing Meeting)

- End the day with a closing ritual or song.
- Assist children in packing their belongings and preparing to leave.

DECIDING WHICH TOPICS TO EXPLORE



Review the sample weekly Exploration Areas. Listen to the children as they play and engage with materials, their peers, their families, and you. Note common themes and consider selecting focus areas that best match what you see children doing in the classroom, and hear children and their families talking about. Use the questions on this page as a guide to determine how you help children explore the big ideas in this Exploration. Choose one of the suggested topics each week or develop themes that are unique to your environment, and the children's interests and experiences.

EXPLORATION ON OUR COMMUNITY

Essential Question:

What is our community?

Month Three:

Us

Key Vocabulary:

buddy, care, cheer, close comfort, community, encourage, far, gone, help, here, others, pal, support, strangers, thoughtful, us, you

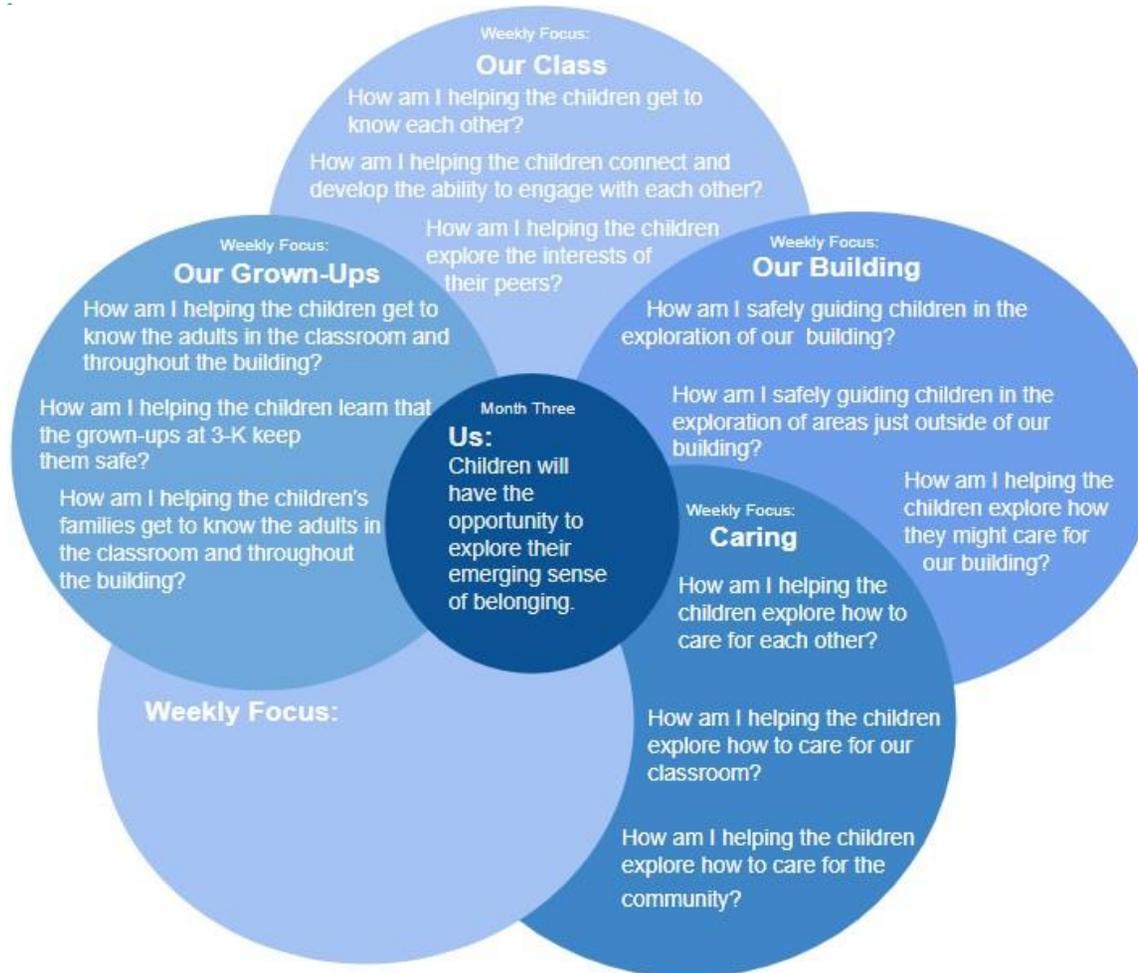
Invitations to Explore:

Cooking and Mixing
 Computers/Technology
 Outdoors/Gross Motor
 Library

Family and Community Engagement

Suggestions:

Blocks/Construction
 Toys and Game/Math
 Manipulatives
 Library
 Music and Movement



EXPLORATION WEEKLY PLAN

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| Exploration: Our Community | | | | | |
| Essential Question: What is our community? | | | Month: Three | | |
| Focus Area: Us | | | Week: One | | |
| Weekly Focus Area: Our Class | | | Room: | | |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Greeting Routine (20 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help children and families feel welcome by greeting everyone by name. • Support children as they engage in arrival routines by using step-by-step directions (i.e. put belongings away, mark themselves as present on the attendance chart, wash hands). • Consider designating one teaching team member to greet children and another to support children as they engage in arrival activities/breakfast. | | | | |
| | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Butcher paper/markers</i> <i>Dot cards/counting objects</i> <i>Tabletop blocks/shells</i> | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Paper/scissors</i> <i>Puzzles</i> <i>Links/ pinecones</i> | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Foam stickers/cardboard pieces</i> <i>Twigs/ribbon</i> <i>Interlocking blocks</i> | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Makers/cardboard tubes</i> <i>Plant/paper/pencil</i> <i>Links/twigs</i> | Greeter: Arrival Activities: <i>Scissors/ribbon</i> <i>Matching game</i> <i>Magnets/counting objects</i> |
| Large Group Exploration (10 minutes including transitions: 6 minutes for Large Group content, 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting song/chant: Select a greeting song/chant to welcome each child and build community. • Daily schedule: Use a picture schedule to briefly review the day. Highlight changes or special events. • Introduce Centers: Show sample materials children may choose to play with in each center • Tell the children where each member of the teaching team will start playing when Center Time begins and what materials s/he will be exploring. Invite children to join if they would like. | | | | |

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| <p>minutes to transition in and out of Large Group)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition to Centers: Use an activity, song, rhyme or finger play to keep children engaged, minimize wait time and stagger the transition as they make choices about where to play. | | | | |
| | <p>Greeting song/chant: Friends (See Section X Supporting Resources)</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Cooking and Mixing) Make a Snack- Share the graph of children's favorite fruit from the Month Two Invitation. Tell children that you will be using their favorite fruits to make a snack together.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Sing Around and Around (See X Supporting Resources). Hold up two children's picture name cards and say their names at the end of the song to invite them to choose a center.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Friends</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Art) Tempera paint and wood pieces- Show children a paint brush and wood piece. Share that you will be exploring paint and different surfaces this week. Invite children to ask each other what they like about their exploration as they paint this week.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Sing Around and Around. Hold up two children's picture name cards and say their names at the end of the song to invite them to choose a center.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Friends</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives) Stacking blocks or cubes- Show children a couple of stacking cubes. Encourage them to explore how to use the blocks to measure each other and items in the classroom.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Sing Around and Around. Hold up two children's picture name cards and say their names at the end of the song to invite them to choose a center.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Friends</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Science) Color paddles- Show children a color paddle. Invite children to explore the paddles, paper, and markers, and ask each other which color they like best.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Sing Around and Around. Hold up two children's picture name cards and say their names at the end of the song to invite them to choose a center.</p> | <p>Greeting song/chant: Friends</p> <p>Materials to introduce: (Writing) Name cards, paper, writing tools- Show a name card. Remind children they have been exploring their name cards and letters this week. Invite them to explore paper and writing tools as they look at the pictures and letters on the cards.</p> <p>Transition Activity: Sing Around and Around. Hold up two children's picture name cards and say their names at the end of the song to invite them to choose a center.</p> |
| <p>Centers (70 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers for materials to consider including in each center. Select materials that best meet the interests and needs of the children in your class. Rotate materials regularly. <p>Implement at least one INVITATION TO EXPLORE each week. Center: Cooking and Mixing</p> | | | | |

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| | <p>Materials: Children’s favorite fruits from Writing Invitation in Month Two, graph from Writing Invitation in Month Two, knife for cutting, bowl</p> <p>Invitation: Invite children to make a snack with you. Refer to the favorite fruits graph from the Writing Invitation in Month Two. Pose the following question: What happens when we mix our favorite fruits together?</p> <p>Teacher:</p> | | | | |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| The following centers should be available during center time: | <p>*Materials to highlight each day:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">*Note, children should also be able to explore other materials in each center per their own interests and needs.</p> | | | | |
| Blocks/Construction (page 33) | Unit blocks and toy people | Unit blocks and toy people | Unit blocks | Unit blocks and toy animals typical of children’s environment | Unit blocks and toy animals typical of children’s environment |
| Dramatic Play (page 34) | <p>Set up as a home. Include materials such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dolls and materials for care such as clothing, blankets and bottles | | | | |
| Art (page 36) | Explore tempera paint | Explore tempera paint and wood pieces | Explore tempera paint and sandpaper | Explore tempera paint and natural materials (i.e. leaves) | Explore tempera paint and your favorite material from this week (wood pieces, sandpaper, natural materials) |
| Science/Discovery (page 38) | Classroom pet/paper and writing tool | Classroom pet/paper and writing tool | Explore rocks and minerals | Explore color paddles, paper and markers | Explore toy animals, sticks, twigs, leaves |
| Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives (page 40) | Explore counting objects that match children’s interests (i.e., bears, cars) and sorting trays | Explore counting objects that match children’s interests (i.e., bears, cars) and sorting trays | Explore blocks or cubes that can stack to various heights | Explore blocks or cubes that can stack to various heights | Explore children’s favorite small building materials |
| Sand and Water/Sensory (page 42) | <p>Various toys for sand exploration such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toy people Various containers Various scoops | | | | |
| Library (page 44) | Explore children’s favorite books | Explore children’s favorite books | Books and stuffed animals | Books and stuffed animals | Explore felt board stories related to |

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| | | | | | children's favorite books |
| Cooking and Mixing (as needed, page 46) | Invitation to Explore (see above) | | | | |
| Writing (page 50) | Explore class name cards | Explore class name cards and plastic or magnetic letters | Explore class name cards, letters stamps, and paper | Explore class name cards, letters stamps, and paper | Explore class name cards, paper and writing tools |
| Music and Movement (page 52) | Explore children's favorite music and scarves | Explore children's favorite music and ribbon rings | Explore children's favorite music and instruments children might use to make this music | Explore children's favorite music and instruments children might use to make this music | Explore children's favorite music and instruments children might use to make this music |
| Clean-Up/Handwashing (10 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help create a smooth transition, give children advance notice before it occurs. Five minutes before the end of Center Time prepare them with an indicator (song, bell, etc.). Use a consistent indicator before each clean up. Some children may need extra support preparing for this transition. Consider designating one teaching team member to support with clean up and another to begin the handwashing process. | | | | |
| Family Style Lunch/Toileting/Handwashing (40 minutes) | <p>While sitting for family style meals, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on the procedures for preparing to eat lunch. Discussing how children clean up their meals and eating area when they are finished. Reminding children of what is coming next, especially toward the end of the meal. Designating one teaching team member, as children are finishing their meals, to support children who are still eating and another to begin the toileting and handwashing procedures. | | | | |
| Nap/Rest Time (60 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the transition to nap/rest time place children's cots or mats in a consistent location. Remain flexible to children's individual needs and adjust the locations of cots or mats accordingly. | | | | |
| Story Time (10 minutes including transitions: 6 minutes for Story, 4 minutes to transition in and out of group) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Section VI Texts for suggested Read Aloud Texts. Select texts that meet the interests and needs of your children. Review Section VI. Inquiry and Critical Thinking Questions for Texts for questions to enhance the read aloud experience and support the development of critical thinking skills. Introduce Centers: Briefly remind children of the materials available in centers. | | | | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell the children where each member of the teaching team will start playing when Center Time begins and what materials s/he will be exploring. Invite children to join if they would like. Transition to Centers: Use an activity song, rhyme or finger play to keep children engaged, minimize wait time, and stagger the transition as they make choices about where to play. | | | | |
| | <p>Book: <i>Just in Case You Want to Fly</i> by Julie Fogliano</p> <p>Transition Activity: If you have a ____ (insert common family trait i.e. sister, cat) you may go make a choice. Consider singing or chanting the words. Using your knowledge of children's diverse families, repeat with other traits until all children have transitioned to centers.</p> | <p>Book: <i>Just in Case You Want to Fly</i> by Julie Fogliano</p> <p>Transition Activity: If you have a ____ (insert common family trait i.e. sister, cat) in your family you may go make a choice. Consider singing or chanting the words. Using your knowledge of children's diverse families, repeat with other traits until all children have transitioned to centers.</p> | <p>Book: <i>Just in Case You Want to Fly</i> by Julie Fogliano</p> <p>Transition Activity: If you have a ____ (insert common family trait i.e. sister, cat) you may go make a choice. Consider singing or chanting the words. Using your knowledge of children's diverse families, repeat with other traits until all children have transitioned to centers.</p> | <p>Book: <i>Just in Case You Want to Fly</i> by Julie Fogliano</p> <p>Transition Activity: If you have a ____ (insert common family trait i.e. sister, cat) you may go make a choice. Consider singing or chanting the words. Using your knowledge of children's diverse families, repeat with other traits until all children have transitioned to centers.</p> | <p>Book: <i>Just in Case You Want to Fly</i> by Julie Fogliano</p> <p>Transition Activity: If you have a ____ (insert common family trait i.e. sister, cat) you may go make a choice. Consider singing or chanting the words. Using your knowledge of children's diverse families, repeat with other traits until all children have transitioned to centers.</p> |
| <p>Centers (70 minutes)</p> <p>The following centers should be available during center time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocks/Construction Dramatic Play Art Science/Discovery Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on the materials used in the morning and remind children how they interacted with them. Determine whether changes should be made. See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers for materials to consider, if necessary. | | | | |
| | <p>*Materials to highlight each day:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*Note, children should also be able to explore other materials in each center per their own interests and needs.</p> | | | | |
| | Same as morning | Same as morning | Same as morning | Same as morning | Same as morning |
| | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand and Water/Sensory • Library • Cooking and Mixing (as needed) • Writing • Music and Movement | | | | | |
| Clean-up/Handwashing/Snack (20 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See guidance above for tips and suggestions. | | | | |
| Outdoors (60 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers | | | | |
| | Materials: <i>Sidewalk chalk</i> <i>Bean bags</i> <i>Various containers</i> Teaching team roles: | Materials: <i>Sidewalk chalk</i> <i>Bean bags</i> <i>Various containers</i> Teaching team roles: | Materials: <i>Sidewalk chalk</i> <i>Bean bags</i> <i>Various containers</i> Teaching team roles: | Materials: <i>Sidewalk chalk</i> <i>Bean bags</i> <i>Various containers</i> Teaching team roles: | Materials: <i>Sidewalk chalk</i> <i>Bean bags</i> <i>Various containers</i> Teaching team roles: |
| Closing Meeting/Dismissal (10 minutes including transitions: 6 minutes for Closing Meeting content, 4 minutes to transition in and out of Closing Meeting) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End the day with a closing ritual or song. • Assist children in packing their belongings and preparing to leave. | | | | |

Culminating Celebration

Culminating Celebrations are an opportunity to reflect on the Exploration with the children, as well as to note and celebrate the growth and learning that has occurred. A Culminating celebration should be implemented at the end of each Exploration. Choose one of the options below, or create a personalized Culminating Celebration that better matches how the Exploration unfolded in your classroom.

| Exploration One Culminating Celebration Suggestions | |
|---|--|
| <p>Option One</p> <p>Family Sing-Along: Invite families into the classroom for an opportunity to sing some of the children’s favorite songs, rhymes and finger plays and share songs that are special to each family. Prepare song charts with lyrics for the songs you will sing at the event so families can engage in singing with the children. Invite families to share the lyrics to their favorite songs (in their home language) in advance and prepare a chart or page with these as well. Be sure to send song lyrics home with families after the event so they can continue to sing these songs together.</p> | <p>Option Two</p> <p>Classroom Tours. Invite families into the classroom for a tour. Children can act as tour guides and show their family members/caregivers around the room. Consider providing some prompts for adults to encourage conversation such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show me your favorite center. What do you like to do here? • How do you take care of this center? Where do you put the toys/materials when you are finished playing with them? • Show me some of the other centers. • What do can you do in the ____ center? |

V. Ideas for Learning Centers

Learning Centers advance the Exploration Essential and Focus Questions as well as the Exploration Outcomes. As you plan your daily schedule and learning centers, remember that children should engage in play for one-third of the program day. The suggestions below help develop rich play-based learning centers that provide opportunities for children to interact with teaching staff, each other and the materials. Your classroom should include the centers in this section and each center should be set up so children can be easily supervised and access the materials they need for their play. The suggested materials are relatable and fun! This is not an exhaustive list of materials and should be supplemented by other materials that pique the interest of the class.

Prior to the start of the year, think carefully about centers and how children will learn to use them successfully. When centers are well supplied, well organized and carefully introduced, children are more likely to use them appropriately and evenly distribute themselves across the classroom rather than clustering in one or two centers. Consider how you will introduce each center every day. What do the children need to know in order to use the center productively? How will children know what materials are available and what to do with them? How can you display materials so they are inviting and encourage children to explore them thoughtfully? What strategies or tools will you use to help children clean-up? Label containers and shelves with pictures of the materials to assist all children in being independent in finding and putting away materials. Keep the attention span of three-year-olds in mind and remember that particularly at the beginning of the year, although you will have clearly defined centers children will likely move from one center to another rather quickly and may explore many materials across several centers in a short period.

Remember that while adding materials to an area inspires children's play, the learning is richer when adults are available to scaffold and engage with children in the centers. This is an essential component of an Exploration. It is through these observations and conversations that adults connect with and learn about each child. For each center, you will find examples of open-ended questions and statements that can provide entry points to conversations and support children's learning as they play. These interactions deepen engagement and inquiry while

developing problem solving and critical thinking skills. Centers also provide opportunities for rich and meaningful learning across all *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework* (ELOF) Domains. In addition to suggested materials for each center, there is also an area to note how children are exploring materials (observe) and ELOF standards that relate to what the children may be learning as they use the suggested materials (connect). This tool also includes space to plan for supporting children in further developing their knowledge and understandings (inform practice). It supports your work with your Authentic Assessment System. An additional copy of this form can be found in Appendix C.

During the first weeks of school, offer basic center supplies and allow children to acquaint themselves with the materials. Guide children as they explore and model how to clean up when finished. Show them where each material is stored and encourage their clean-up attempts. Consider the egocentric nature of three-year-olds and remember that they should not be expected to share materials. Provide multiples of items that will likely be very interesting to children: enough for several children to play in the center and each have their own. Rotate materials as children lose interest and according to Exploration content.

Consider the egocentric nature of three year olds and remember that they should not be expected to share materials. Provide multiples of items that will likely be very interesting to the children: enough for several children to play in the center and each have their own.

INVITATIONS TO EXPLORE

Invitations to Explore are included in each center. These are opportunities to connect with your children and help them use the materials in each center to dig deeper into the big ideas of the Exploration. Implement these activities in the center during Center Time. In this Exploration, most of the Invitations to Explore provide an opportunity for children to become familiar with foundational classroom materials. In many cases, these are high-interest materials that can be challenging for children to clean-up. As children finish exploring materials, support them in putting the materials away properly. As you lead children through these initial experiences with centers and materials be sure to include guidance and support around how to use the materials safely. Prior to the

beginning of Center Time every day, inform children of the activity basics as well as the teaching team member who will be supporting learning in the center.

When previewing the Invitation to the class:

- Use exciting language and affect to describe the activity.
- Briefly show one or two of the hands-on materials that children will explore.
- Link the activity to children's previous experiences.
- Invite children to participate if they would like.
- Assure children that they will have multiple opportunities to engage in the center throughout the week.

In this Exploration, most of the Invitations to Explore provide an opportunity for children to become familiar with foundational classroom materials. In many cases, these are high-interest materials that can be challenging for children to clean-up. As children finish exploring materials support them in putting the materials away properly.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

There is a Family and Community Engagement suggestion in each center. These activities connect classrooms and families by inviting families to share their experience and knowledge with the class, as well as extending learning outside of the classroom. Share these activities with families as indicated in this section. Note the alignment to the Program Quality Standards.

Blocks/Construction

“Play is the highest form of research.”

Albert Einstein

INTHISCENTER, children will likely move from exploring the properties of blocks to laying them side by side. Three-year-olds may play alone or near other children. They may begin to create enclosures and start to explore concepts of sorting, ordering, counting, one to one correspondence, size and shape. Later, children begin to combine structures and build vertically. Additionally, their block play may become more social in nature.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- I notice that you _____.
- This reminds me of _____.
- You put this _____ here and this _____ here.
- You are _____. Last time you played here you _____. I wonder _____.

SUGGESTED TEXT: *Ninoshom and his Bus* by Penny M Thomas (author) and Karen Hibbard (illustrator)

MATERIALS: UNIT BLOCKS

- Wood or plastic in a variety of shapes such as rectangles, squares, triangles and cylinders.

MATERIALS: ACCESSORIES

- Toy people
- Toy animals typical of children’s environment (i.e. common pets)
- Toy vehicles and trucks of various sizes

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month One: Invite children to explore unit blocks with you. Pose the following question: What can we do with these blocks?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month Three: Invite families to take or draw a picture of a building near where they live. Ask families to hang these pictures (at children’s eye level) in the Blocks/Construction area for children to reference as they build.

PQS 3.1 Capacity Building: Primary Teacher

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What are children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with ELOF goals?*

Goal P-ATL 12. Child expresses creativity in thinking and communication.

Goal P-ATL.3 Child appropriately handles and takes care of classroom materials.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children’s skills and interests?*

Dramatic Play

“Whenever children say, ‘let’s pretend,’ a new landscape of possibilities for learning is revealed. When children pretend, they try on new feelings, roles and ideas. They stretch their minds along with their imaginations.”

Curtis and Carter

IN THIS CENTER, children will likely experiment with simple imitation, which will increase in complexity as they further develop the capacity to observe and recreate details. They will then explore role-playing and enjoy the opportunity to express their understanding of the world and recreate their experiences. Young children typically engage in independent pretend play, move to playing alongside others before engaging in increasingly social cooperative play (Epstein, 2014).

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

You are _____ and _____ is _____.

You are _____. I remember when we saw _____.

It looks like you are pretending you are a _____. Do you know any _____?

SUGGESTED TEXT: *My Friends* by Taro Gomi (author and illustrator)

PROPS AND MATERIALS

- Child-sized furniture
- Pretend food
- Dolls and materials for care such as clothing, blankets and bottles
- Kitchen utensils (i.e. plates, cups, silverware, pots and pans)
- Writing utensils and various types of paper
- Pictures of children’s family members at home and work
- Children’s transitional items from home
- Open-ended materials such as inch cubes or other materials children could use as pretend food or other household items
- Mirror

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What are children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-SE 1. Child engages in and maintains positive relationships and interactions with adults.

Goal P-ATL 13. Child uses imagination in play and interactions with others.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children’s skills and interests?*

DRESS UP

- Various clothing related items such as dresses, dress shirts, suit coats, aprons, scarves, ties, necklaces, brief case, purses, glasses frames, sun glasses
- Costumes and costume related items that connect to children's lives such as train conductor costume, train schedule, walkie-talkie, medical jackets and equipment such as stethoscope, blood-pressure cuff, Band-Aids, etc.
- Assorted pieces of fabric children can use to dress up according to their interests and needs

FANTASY

- Various items related to fantasy play that connect to children's lives such as animal costumes, stuffed animals, crowns, capes and fancy gowns

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month One: Invite children to explore dishes, inch cubes and/or pretend play food with you. Pose the following question: What can we do with these materials?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month Two: Ask families to share a little bit of information about their favorite food or meal. What do they like to eat? Why? When do they eat it? With whom do they eat? Families can draw, write (or a combination of both) about this meal and send it back to school. Teaching staff can use this information to create a display or book for the dramatic play center.

PQS 1: Strong Relationships

Art

"It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child."
Pablo Picasso

IN THIS CENTER, children will likely be interested in exploring materials. They may work quickly, focusing solely on exploration. As they gain physical dexterity, children will work for longer periods and become more intentional about their work. As intentionality unfolds, children often decide what they are making after completion. Children's art builds in complexity as they are able to hold an increasing number of characteristics in mind. When children explore a new medium, the marks they make may appear random as they prioritize possibility over effect but will become increasingly deliberate as they gain mastery over materials. As this mastery develops, children will also shift from producing seemingly unrelated components to more connected elements (Epstein, 2014).

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- Tell me about your art.
- You are using _____.
- When you _____, _____ happened.
- I notice that you _____.
- What does this remind you of?

SUGGESTED TEXT: *My Colors, My World/Mis colores, mi mundo* by Maya Christina Gonzalez (author and illustrator)

DRAWING MATERIALS

- Crayons (variety of sizes and colors)
- Washable markers (variety of sizes and colors)
- Large sheets of paper
- Butcher paper
- Construction paper

PAINTS

- Finger paints
- Tempera paints
- Water-color paint

THREE-DIMENSIONAL MATERIALS

- Paper towel tubes
- Wood pieces
- Large spools
- Pipe cleaners

Note:

Children have varying levels of sensitivity to sensory experiences. Do not force children to touch materials. Invite children to participate and observe their behavior carefully. Respond to the cues they give you about their readiness to participate.

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What are children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-ATL 12. Child expresses creativity in thinking and communication.

Goal P-PMP 3. Child demonstrates increasing control, strength and coordination of small muscles.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children's skills and interests?*

COLLAGE MATERIALS

- Popsicle sticks
- Ribbon
- Paper scraps
- Paint samples
- Thin cardboard pieces
- Wallpaper samples
- Foam stickers
- Sandpaper
- Fabric scraps
- Natural materials (i.e. leaves)
- Clean Styrofoam trays

TOOLS

- Child-safe scissors
- Masking, washi or colored tape
- Easy to grip paint brushes
- Spill proof paint containers
- Glue sticks or all-purpose glue
- Drying rack or other place for artwork to dry
- Easel
- Smocks
- Sponges
- Rollers

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month One: Cover the art table with paper. Invite children to explore paint (finger paints or paints and brushes) with you. Pose the following question: What can we do with these paints?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month One: Over the course of the program year children will likely bring home a variety of projects and materials they created. Share ideas with families about how they might display or show their children they value this work. For example, consider encouraging families to have a conversation with their child about the piece, taking a picture of the art, placing the work in a binder or album or box or hanging work on a wall or refrigerator.

PQS 3.1 Capacity Building: Primary Teacher

Science/Discovery

“Science is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge.”
Carl Sagan

IN THIS CENTER, children will likely play with, observe, describe and categorize materials. As they become comfortable with materials, they will begin to experiment with new ways to use them and make hypotheses. Initially these hypotheses may be inaccurate. As children develop, they are increasingly able to recognize their misconceptions and begin to adjust their thinking but may still be satisfied with other misconceptions so long as they support their own experiences (Epstein, 2014).

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- What do you notice about ____?
- How do you know?
- Have you noticed ____ before? When? Where?
- Look at what happens when you _____.
- Why do you think _____?
- What else does _____?

SUGGESTED TEXT: *Mama, Look!* By Patricia Murphey (author) and David Diaz (illustrator)

COLLECTIONS OF NATURAL OBJECTS

- Sticks and twigs
- Leaves
- Shells
- Pinecones
- Rocks and minerals

LIVING THINGS

- Plants
- Classroom pet
- Gardens
- Window bird feeder

*Note: Place all living things where children can access and investigate them or include a plan that allows children to engage with them.

NATURE/SCIENCE BOOKS, GAMES OR TOYS

- Toy animals of varying types that are relevant to children’s lives
- Magnets and magnetic surface
- Discovery bottles that are carefully sealed (plastic bottles filled with various items such as water, glitter, beads, shells, sand, oil, etc.)

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What are children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-SCI 1. Child observes and describes observable phenomena (objects, materials, organisms and events).

Goal P-SE 9. Child recognizes self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions and interests.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children’s skills and interests?*

NATURE/SCIENCE TOOLS

- Magnifying glasses
- Prisms
- Blank paper and writing utensils
- Color paddles
- Plastic mirrors
- Sorting trays
- Clipboards

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month Two: Invite children to explore toy animals or a collection of natural objects with you. Pose the following question: Which do you like best? Why?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month Two: If children and families create collections of outdoor items together (see Outdoors/Playground/Gross Motor) and bring them back to the classroom, place these collections in the Science Center for children to explore.
PQS 3.1 Capacity Building: Primary Teacher

Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives

"Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve."

Roger Lewin

IN THIS CENTER, children will likely be exploring mathematical concepts and using their imagination as they play with various connectors and manipulatives. Children may count with separate words, but not necessarily in the right order and will likely be able to count with some correspondence to 10 before being able to accurately count up to five objects and answer, "how many?" Children may also be able to identify typical shapes such as circle, triangle and square and be exploring the orientation and size of these shapes. They will likely be engaging in pretend play as they build structures with tabletop blocks and toy animals or vehicles. Through their work with these materials, they will also be developing fine motor skills.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- You are _____.
- Let's count these together.
- Are these the same or different? How do you know?
- You put _____ here and _____ here.
- I noticed this is _____ and this is _____.
- How do you know?
- Look at this pattern.

SUGGESTED TEXT: *Counting on Community* by Innosanto Nagara (author and illustrator)

COUNTING

- Objects to count such as counting bears, other animals, cars or trucks
- Peg boards and pegs

MEASURING AND COMPARING QUANTITY

- Stacking cups
- Dot cards
- Blocks or cubes that can stack to various heights
- Sorting trays

RECOGNIZING SHAPES

- Shape puzzles
- Attribute blocks
- Shape blocks
- Magnetic blocks

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What do I notice children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-PMP 3. Child demonstrates increasing control, strength and coordination of small muscles.

Goal P-MATH 1. Child knows number names and the count sequence.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children's skills and interests?*

WRITTEN NUMBER

- Plastic or magnetic numbers
- Number puzzles
- Cash register
- Blank paper and drawing/writing tools

SMALL BUILDING TOYS AND MANIPULATIVES

- Interlocking blocks
- Tabletop blocks
- Sticks and connectors
- Links

PUZZLES (Note the difficulty and recommended age listed on each puzzle. Use your observations of your children to select an assortment of puzzles that appropriately challenge the children in your class.)

- Individual piece puzzles with and without knobs
- Framed puzzles with interlocking pieces
- Floor puzzles

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month One: Invite children to explore puzzles with you. Pose the following question: What do we do with these puzzles?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month Three: Take a class picture. Print a copy for each child in the class. Cut the picture apart to create a puzzle and send one home with each child in the class. Invite families to make the puzzle together and talk about their class and things they do together.

... PQS 1: *Strong Relationships*

Sand and Water / Sensory

“The senses, being explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge.”

Maria Montessori

INTHISCENTER, children will likely engage in exploring the properties of the pourable materials in the table as well as the materials for scooping and pouring such as cups, scoops and shovels. Some children may fill containers and dump them out repeatedly as they explore. Other children may be starting to engage in pretend play with the materials in the table by using them for cooking or using smaller toys to develop a play scenario. Some children may find the Sand and Water/Sensory table materials calming.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- How does the ____ feel?
- Can you fill ____ with ____?
- What would happen if ____?
- What happens when you pour sand/water in ____? Why?

SUGGESTED TEXT: *It’s Bath Time Baby* by Tasha Fuller (author) and Christina Sandoval

Notes

- *Children have varying levels of sensitivity to sensory experiences. Do not force children to touch materials. Invite children to participate and observe their behavior carefully. Respond to the cues they give you about their readiness to participate.*
- *Children should have an experience with sand and water over each two-week period.*
- *Make sure there is enough sand/water for children to use purposefully.*
- *Be mindful of materials. Provide multiples of high-interest tools and toys so children are not required to share but do not supply so many toys that the table is too full and children are unable to engage in high-quality play.*

POURABLE MATERIALS

- Sand
- Water

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What do I notice children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-ATL8. Child holds information in mind and manipulates it to perform tasks.

Goal P-SCI 1. Child observes and describes observable phenomena (objects, materials, organisms and events).

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children’s skills and interests?*

TOOLS AND TOYS

- Various containers (i.e. buckets, recycled food containers or water bottles)
- Various scoops such as shovels, measuring scoops, measuring spoons and spoons
- Toy animals, people or counters

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month Two: Invite children to explore water with you. Pose the following questions: Have you ever played with water before? Where? What did you do?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month One: Encourage families to play with water at home with their children. They could fill a container with water, use a sink or bathtub and various cups, scoops such as spoons or toys that encourage dramatic play (i.e. toy boats) and engage in water play together.

PQS 3.1 Capacity Building: Primary Teacher

Library

“You can find magic wherever you look. Sit back and relax, all you need is a book.”
Dr. Seuss

IN THIS CENTER, children will likely explore the connection between images, symbols and words and spoken language. They may be interested in exploring books and story-telling materials independently, with an adult or a peer. Children are most likely to enjoy books and stories that match their interests, are active, engaging and include interesting illustrations. At this age, children may prefer books with simple texts and clear rhythms. Children may also enjoy reading and rereading the same book multiple times.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- Tell me about this book. • This reminds me of _____.
- Have you read this book before? When? Where?
- This book makes me feel _____. How does it make you feel?
- What do you notice in this picture?
- What book would you like to read? Why?

BOOKS

- See Section VI Texts for Exploration-related text suggestions.
- See Family and Community Engagement Suggestions in Section III. Exploration Framework for guidance around creating a class *All About Me* book.

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE MATERIALS

- Puppets
- Stuffed animals
- Felt board pieces related to books children especially enjoy or can easily retell.

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month Three: Invite children to explore the class *All About Me* book with you. Pose the following question: Who are the children in this book? What do you know about them?

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What do I notice children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-LIT 2. Child demonstrates an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print).

Goal P-SE 11. Child has sense of belonging to family, community and other groups.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children's skills and interests?*

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month Three: Send home the class *All About Me* book with a class member each weekend. Invite families to look at the book together and encourage children to show what they know about their classmates.

PQS 3.1: Primary Teacher

Cooking and Mixing

(as needed)

“Children have a real understanding only of that which they invent themselves.”
Jean Piaget

IN THIS CENTER, children will likely explore different foods and mixing materials. Children will develop fine motor skills as they pour, scoop, and mix, math skills as they measure ingredients and literacy skills as they follow a recipe and explore the language of cooking. Cooking and mixing provides an opportunity for children to use multiple senses and experience ownership as they make food or materials for the classroom. Additionally, children may be interested in trying new foods when they engage in the preparation process.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- Let’s look at the recipe.
- How does it smell?
- What does this look like?
- How does it feel?
- What happened when we added the ____?
- Have you ever tried/made ____ before? When? Where?
- What do you think will happen when we stir this?

Notes

- *Be mindful of children’s food intolerances and allergies by connecting with families before you do cooking activities and explicitly teaching children how being aware of allergies keeps us safe.*
- *Children must always wash hands before and after cooking experiences.*
- *Snacks and meals must be of adequate nutritional value. When providing snacks and meals, supplement with other components of a healthy meal/snack according to appropriate meal guidelines in order to meet children’s nutritional needs.*

MIX, MASH AND MAKE

- Flour and Water
- Oil and Water
- Playdough (See Appendices for sample recipe)

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What do I notice children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-SCI 1. Child observes and describes observable phenomena (objects, materials, organisms and events).

Goal P-PMP 3. Child demonstrates increasing control, strength and coordination of small muscles.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children’s skills and interests?*

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month Three: Invite children to create a fruit salad with you. Use the children's favorite fruits from the Writing Center Exploration. Pose the following question: What happens when we mix our favorite fruits together?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month Two: Encourage families to engage in a pretend restaurant, tea party or picnic together. Consider including suggestions as to how families might set up this play scenario, how they might find or make materials to support their play and some possible critical thinking questions or conversation starters they could use as they play together.

PQS 3.1 Capacity Building: Primary Teacher

Outdoors / Playground /Gross Motor

“Children were not born to walk. They were born to run-barefoot, over rocks, through the water, through the mud. We need to give greater appreciation to the energy and joy of children.”

Bev Boss

CHILDREN MIGHT practice developing control over their movements as they play outdoors, on the playground or engage in gross motor play. At the beginning of this process, children are unable to control or intentionally repeat movements and require many opportunities for safe exploration and discovery. As they develop, they are increasingly able to control their movements in response to their intentions but still need opportunities to practice. Only when the movements themselves become increasingly routine and eventually automatic are children ready to engage in formal game play (Epstein, 2014).

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

- You're _____.
- How does it feel outside today?
- I noticed you _____. Where did you learn that?
- What do you see?

SUGGESTED TEXT: *Quinto's Neighborhood* by Ina Cumpiano (author) and Jose Ramirez (illustrator)

PORTABLE MATERIALS

- Bubbles
- Cones
- Various scoops such as shovels, spoons and measuring spoons
- Containers such as buckets, empty clean food containers
- Sidewalk chalk
- Ring toss

PORTABLE LARGE MOTOR EQUIPMENT

- Balls
- Tumbling mats
- Tunnels
- Wheel toys
- Bean bags

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month Three: Invite children to explore the book, *Swing!* by Rufus Butler Seder with you. Pose the following question: Can you do the movements you saw in this book? Let's try!

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What do I notice children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-PMP 1. Child demonstrates control, strength and coordination of large muscles.

Goal P-PMP 6. Child demonstrates knowledge of personal safety practices and routines.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children's skills and interests?*

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month One: Send home a brown paper bag and invite families to create their own collection of outdoor materials that are **safe for small children to handle**. Families can collect materials near where they live, on a walk, from a park or anywhere they go together. They can return the collections to the classroom or keep at home.

PQS 3.1: Primary Teacher

Writing

“The fire of literacy is created by the emotional sparks between a child, a book and the person reading.”

Mem Fox

INTHISCENTER, children will likely use a variety of materials to explore writing and communication. Let children experiment with making marks on paper to express ideas as they are ready. Accept all marks children make. Children typically begin to prewrite using pictures and scribbles. As they develop they may begin to make horizontal lines, then letter-like forms and later make some letters, especially those in their own name.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- I see you are _____.
- Tell me about your work.
- You are making (curvy, zigzag, straight, etc.) lines.
- I see other (curvy, zigzag, straight, etc.) in our classroom (indicate).

SUGGESTED TEXT: *Puddle* by Hyewon Yum (author and illustrator)

WRITING AND DRAWING MATERIALS

- Crayons
- Thick pencils
- Markers
- Blank paper

MATERIALS TO EXPLORE LETTERS

- Letter stamps and ink pad
- Name card for each child with first name and picture
- Plastic or magnetic letters

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month Two: Select three or four fruits and invite children to explore them with you. Be sure to allow children to taste each fruit (if interested). Pose the following question: Which fruit do you like best? After children sample the fruits invite them to record their preferences. Children can stack a block next to a picture of the fruit, make tally marks on a simple graph, use their picture cards or teachers can write children’s names to record their preferences.

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What do I notice children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-SE 9. Child recognizes self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions and interests.

Goal P-PMP 3. Child demonstrates increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscles.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children’s skills and interests?*

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month Two: Place paper and writing utensils in a place where families and caregivers can easily access them at pick up/drop off. Ask them to write and/or draw one thing they love about their child. Post their responses in the Writing Center or use them to create a class book to add to the library.

PQS 1: Strong Relationships

Music and Movement

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.”

Plato

CHILDREN MIGHT enjoy exploring sounds and the qualities and capabilities of their own voices as well as simple instruments. They enjoy experimenting with pitch, volume and the possibility of using their voices to convey emotion. Children may also be developing the dexterity to use simple instruments and enjoy using them for the simple purpose of making musical sounds. Children may also enjoy engaging in creative movements with one or two components. This type of movement provides an opportunity to use their bodies to represent their observations and experiences (Epstein, 2014).

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- I see you moving like this.
- I heard/saw you _____.
- How does this music make you feel?
- Have you heard music like this before? Where?
- Do you want to try _____?

SUGGESTED TEXT: *Sing With Me: Action Songs Every Child Should Know* by Naoko Stoop (author and illustrator)

Notes

- *There should always be at least enough instruments available for at least half the children in the class.*
- *Three-year-olds do not need independent access to the classroom listening device.*

INSTRUMENTS

- Shakers
- Tambourines
- Jingle bells
- Rhythm sticks
- Hand bells

LISTENING

- Device for playing music such as stereo/boom box

DANCE PROPS

- Scarves
- Ribbon rings

PLANNING

OBSERVE: *What do I notice children doing/saying in this center?*

CONNECT: *How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?*

Goal P-ATL 6. Child maintains focus and sustains attention with minimal adult support.

Goal P-ATL 11. Child shows interest in and curiosity about the world around them.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

INFORM PRACTICE: *What are my next steps in response to children's skills and interests?*

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month Two: Invite children to explore instruments with you. As you explore pose the following question: What instrument do you like best? Why?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In Month Three: Send home a few of the children's favorite songs (with lyrics). Invite families to sing/chant the songs together at home.

PQS 3.1 Capacity Building: Primary Teacher

VI. Texts

Books are essential to a well-planned unit and ground the learning experiences for children. Books can be incorporated throughout the room and enhance children’s learning through play. Use a variety of methods to engage children with books throughout the day. Engage children in small and large group read alouds and make connections to children’s classroom and home experiences.

Support children in referencing books to gather information and explore new ideas. Keep children’s attention spans in mind when selecting books to use with three-year-olds and remember they may only be able to engage with books for short periods. If children lose interest in a book or read aloud, move on to another activity.

The books suggested in this section compliment the Essential and Focus Questions and help children develop a deeper understanding of the Exploration. Not only can these books be read aloud both formally and informally, but children should also be able to access and read these books on their own. Allowing children access to classroom books encourages children to display emergent reading behaviors.

The following list is not exhaustive and can be supplemented by similar books or other books that are relevant to the classroom needs and interests. In addition to the books on this list, children should have access to other books such as books from the Exploration Master Book List. Be sure to include a variety of book types (fantasy, factual information,

stories about people, animals, and nature/science as well as books that reflect different cultures and abilities). Rotate classroom books as you move through each part of the Exploration as well according to children’s interests and needs.

Multiple Reads

When you have a text that draws the interest of the children in your class, consider one or more of the following techniques for reading the book multiple times to extend children’s thinking:

- Take a "picture walk" through the book the first time you read it by just showing the pictures and asking the children what they see and what they think the book is about.
- Consider reading the book once without pausing so that children hear the cadence of the words and hear the story in its entirety.
- Preview or review texts or parts of texts (particularly vocabulary) for children who need additional language or learning support.
- Model skills readers use to gain greater understanding of content by thinking aloud about the meaning of a word in context or drawing a conclusion based on prior knowledge.
- Ask children to make predictions based on what they know so far and ask them to explain their thinking.

- Write down and post children’s responses to questions with more than one possible answer.
- Pause throughout the book and ask children to share a new word or idea they heard and explain it using familiar words or contexts.
- Invite children to make connections between the book and their own life experiences as well as classroom experiences.
- Brainstorm potential solutions to a problem a character might be facing.
- Ask children what the character could do differently or ask them what they might do if they were in the place of the main character.
- As children become more familiar with the story or information, use this as the beginning of extension activities such as acting out a story, painting or drawing something inspired by the text, or creating puppet shows.

Extensions

As children are ready (likely later in the year) consider the following:

- Compare and contrast books with similar content, themes or structures.
- As the book becomes familiar to the children, ask for volunteers to "read" it to you or small groups of children, letting them describe the pictures and the story in their own words.

Suggested Texts for Read Alouds

These books help children develop a deeper understanding of Exploration content. They are a combination of literary and informational texts that can be read many times and work well for read alouds. Keep these books in the classroom library, or in a specific center, throughout the Exploration so children can access them independently if desired. Supplement as needed with other books from the Explorations Master Booklist, a Handmade Book (see Appendix H) or another library, based on children’s interests and needs.

| Classroom | Self | Us |
|--|------|----|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="317 548 1814 607">• Blocks by Irene Dickson (author and illustrator): Benji takes one of Ruby’s blocks and in the tussle that follows they learn to share. <li data-bbox="317 630 1780 688">• *Counting on Community by Innosanto Nagara (author and illustrator): Counting up from one stuffed piñata to ten hefty hens while always counting on each other. <li data-bbox="317 711 1808 769">• Hands Say Love by George Shannon (author) and Taeun Yoo (illustrator): Every day our hands show the most important people in our lives how we care about them. <li data-bbox="317 792 1808 850">• I am Perfectly Designed by Karamo Brown (author), Jason “Rachel” Brown (author) and Anoosha Syed (illustrator): A boy and his father discover all the ways they are perfectly designed for each other. <li data-bbox="317 873 1822 932">• Just in Case You Want to Fly by Julie Fogliano (author) and Christian Robinson (illustrator): A celebration of heading off on new adventures and knowing your loved ones will always be there when you need them. <li data-bbox="317 954 1793 1013">• Peeny Butter Fudge by Toni Morrison (author), Slade Morrison (author) and Joe Cepeda (illustrator): Nana knows how to take an ordinary afternoon and make it extra special! <li data-bbox="317 1036 1814 1094">• Please, Baby, Please by Spike Lee (author), Tonya Lewis Lee (author), and Kadir Nelson (illustrator): A behind-the-scenes look at the adventures of the baby. <li data-bbox="317 1117 1814 1175">• *Quinito Day and Night/Quinito, dia y noche by Ina Cumpiano (author) and José Ramirez (author): So much to do before the sun sets! <li data-bbox="317 1198 1829 1256">• *Rita and Ralph’s Rotten Day by Carmen Agra Deedy (author) and Pete Oswald (illustrator): Everyday Rita and Ralph meet to play. It’s always fun and games until one rotten day when a new game means someone ends up crying. <li data-bbox="317 1279 1696 1338">• *You Hold Me Up by Monique Gray Smith (author) and Danielle Daniel (illustrator): A celebration of relationships. | | |

Suggested Texts for Learning Centers

These books align with Exploration content and match themes or ideas children may explore in Learning Centers. They are a combination of literary and informational texts that children may enjoy using independently, with a teacher or a small group of children. Display these books in the Learning Center listed here and allow children to use these books in their play. Note, some of these books are also suggested as classroom read alouds.

| | |
|--|--|
| Blocks/Construction | <i>Ninoshom and His Bus</i> by Penny M. Thomas (author) and Karen Hibbard (illustrator) |
| Dramatic Play | * <i>My Friends</i> by Taro Gomi (author and illustrator) |
| Art | <i>My Colors, My World/Mis colores, mi mundo</i> by Maya Christina Gonzalez (author and illustrator) |
| Science/Discovery | <i>Mama, Look!</i> by Patricia Murphy (author) and David Diaz (illustrator) |
| Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives | * <i>Counting on Community</i> by Innosanto Nagara (author and illustrator) |
| Sand and Water/Sensory | <i>It's Bath Time Baby</i> by Tasha Fuller (author) and Christina Sandoval (illustrator) |
| Outdoors/Playground/Gross Motor | <i>Quinto's Neighborhood</i> by Ina Cumpiano (author) and Jose Ramirez (illustrator) |
| Writing | <i>Puddle by</i> Hyewon Yum (author and illustrator) |
| Music and Movement | <i>Sing With Me: Action Songs Every Child Should Know</i> by Naoko Stoop (author and illustrator) |

*Books with an asterisk are also available in languages other than English

VII. Inquiry and Critical Thinking Questions for Texts

Critical thinking skills are foundational to learning and educational success.

These questions are based around Webb's Depth of Knowledge Wheel, which provides a vocabulary and critical thinking frame of reference when thinking about our children and how they engage with unit content.

Re-read suggested texts throughout the unit, starting with questions at the beginning of the list, and adding more complex questions as children are ready.

Blocks by Irene Dickson

Goal P-ATL.1 Child manages emotions with increasing independence.

What color blocks did Ruby have? What color blocks did Benji have?

What happened when Benji took one of Ruby's blocks?

How do you think Ruby felt when Benji took one of her blocks?

What did Ruby and Benji do when all of their blocks crashed to the floor?

***Counting on Community** by Innosanto Nagara (author and illustrator)

Goal P-SE 11. Child has sense of belonging to family, community and other groups.

What are some of the things they counted in this book?

What are some of the things we can count in our classroom?

What are some things you can do to take care of our classroom?

What are some ways you and on can *count on* (or help) each other?

Hands Say Love by George Shannong (author) and Tae Eun Yoo (illustrator)

Goal P-SE. 3 Child engages in and maintains positive interactions and relationships with other children.

In this book, what are some of the ways people used their hands?

In this book people used their hands to help other people. What are some things you can do with your hands to help other people?

We can use our hands to show people we love them. What are some other ways we can show people we love them?

Handscan say many things. Some people use sign language to use their hands to talk.

In sign language,

you can say love like this:  Try using your hands to say love.

I am Perfectly Designed by Karamo Brown (author), Jason "Rachel" Brown (author) and Anoosha Syed (illustrator)

Goal P-SE 9. Child recognizes self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions and interests.

What are some of the things the boy and his dad like to do together?

What are some things you like to do?

What do you like to do in our classroom?

What does it mean to be *perfectly designed*?

Just in Case You Want to Fly by Julie Fogliano (author) and Christian Robinson (illustrator):

Goal P-LIT 5. Child asks and answers questions about a book that was read aloud.

We can show someone we care for them by doing helpful things for them. What are some helpful things the people in this book did?

What are some helpful things you can do in our classroom?

How do you feel when you are helpful?

Peeny Butter Fudge by Toni Morrison (author), Slade Morrison (author) and Joe Cepeda (illustrator)

Goal LC-2. Child understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language from others.

What are some of the things the kids and their nana did together?

What are some of the things we do together? What are the best things we do in our classroom? Tell me more about that.

Some of the things we do here are _____, _____, and _____. What else do you think we might do together this year?

Please, Baby, Please by Spike Lee (author), Tonya Lewis Lee (author), and Kadir Nelson (illustrator)

Goal P-SE 6. Child expresses a broad range of emotions and recognizes these emotions in self and others.

How do you think the mama felt when the baby colored on the walls? Why?

The mama asked the baby to stop splashing the water. Why do you think she wanted the baby to stop?

Why is it important to listen to your grown-ups (such as your teachers or people your family)?

The baby in this book isn't very helpful. It seemed like the mama got a little frustrated with the baby. Even though the mama got frustrated, what did she do at the end of the book? Why?

****Quinito Day and Night/Quinito, dia y noche*** by Ina Cumpiano (author) and José Ramirez (author)

Goal P-LC 6. Child understands and uses a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes.

What are some of the things Quinito does during the day?

What are some of the things we do in our classroom?

Quinito says his brother is very messy. He says he leaves his toys everywhere. When do we make messes?

Quinito says his papi is very neat. He puts everything away where it belongs. When do we clean up our things and put them where they belong?

****Rita and Ralph's Rotten Day*** by Carmen Agra Deedy (author) and Pete Oswald (illustrator)

Goal P-SE 5. Child uses basic problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts with other children.

What are some of the things that Rita and Ralph like to do together?

Why did Rita and Ralph get mad at each other?

How did Rita and Ralph fix their problem?

What are some things you can do when you have a problem with a friend?

****You Hold Me Up*** by Monique Gray Smith (author) and Danielle Daniel (illustrator)

Goal P-SE 11. Child has sense of belonging to family, community and other groups.

What are some of the things the people in this book do together?

What things in this book do we do together?

In this book they share that holding someone up means taking care of them. What are some of the ways the people in this book care for each other or *hold each other up*?

What are some ways we can care for each other or *hold each other up*? Tell me more about that.

VIII. Weekly Planning Template

On the following pages, you will find a Weekly Planning Template. Young children thrive on consistent routine and a daily schedule should be implemented. Use the additional information included in the Exploration to create detailed weekly plans for each focus topic. Plans will reflect individual schedules, the children’s interests as well as children and families’ needs, program context, etc. Additional Weekly Planning Templates can be found on the NYC DOE InfoHub.

| EXPLORATION WEEKLY PLAN | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Exploration: | | | | | |
| Essential Question: | | | Month: | | |
| Focus Area: | | | Week: | | |
| Weekly Focus Area: | | | Room: | | |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Greeting Routine (20 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help children and families feel welcome by greeting everyone by name. • Support children as they engage in arrival routines by using step-by-step directions (i.e. put belongings away, mark themselves as present on the attendance chart, wash hands). • Consider designating one teaching team member to greet children and another to support children as they engage in arrival activities/breakfast. | | | | |
| | Greeter: | Greeter: | Greeter: | Greeter: | Greeter: |
| | Arrival Activities: | Arrival Activities: | Arrival Activities: | Arrival Activities: | Arrival Activities: |
| | Breakfast/Activity Support: | Breakfast/Activity Support: | Breakfast/Activity Support: | Breakfast/Activity Support: | Breakfast/Activity Support: |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| <p>Large Group Exploration (10 minutes <u>including transitions</u>: 6 minutes for Large Group content, 4 minutes to transition in and out of Large Group)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting song/chant: Select a greeting song/chant to welcome each child and build community. • Daily schedule: Use a picture schedule to briefly review the day. Highlight changes or special events. • Introduce Centers: Show sample materials children may choose to play with in each center. • Tell the children where each member of the teaching team will start playing when Center Time begins and what materials s/he will be exploring. Invite children to join if they would like. • Transition to Centers: Use an activity, song, rhyme or finger play to keep children engaged, minimize wait time and stagger the transition as they make choices about where to play. | | | | |
| | Greeting song/chant: | Greeting song/chant: | Greeting song/chant: | Greeting song/chant: | Greeting song/chant: |
| | Materials to introduce: | Materials to introduce: | Materials to introduce: | Materials to introduce: | Materials to introduce: |
| | Transition Activity: | Transition Activity: | Transition Activity: | Transition Activity: | Transition Activity: |
| <p>Centers (70 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers for materials to consider including in each center. • Select materials that best meet the interests and needs of the children in your class. • Rotate materials regularly. <p>Implement at least one INVITATION TO EXPLORE each week.</p> <p>Center: Materials: Invitation: Teacher:</p> | | | | |

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--|--|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| The following centers should be available during center time: | *Materials to highlight each day: <p style="text-align: right;">*Note, children should also be able to explore other materials in each center per their own interests and needs.</p> | | | | |
| Blocks/Construction (page 33) | | | | | |
| Dramatic Play (page 34) | | | | | |
| Art (page 36) | | | | | |
| Science/Discovery (page 38) | | | | | |
| Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives (page 40) | | | | | |
| Sand and Water/Sensory (page 42) | | | | | |
| Library (page 44) | | | | | |
| Cooking and Mixing (as needed, page 46) | | | | | |
| Writing (page 50) | | | | | |
| Music and Movement (page 52) | | | | | |
| Clean-Up/Handwashing (10 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help create a smooth transition, give children advance notice before it occurs. • Five minutes before the end of Center Time prepare them with an indicator (song, bell, etc.). • Use a consistent indicator before each clean up. • Some children may need extra support preparing for this transition. • Consider designating one teaching team member to support with clean up and another to begin the handwashing process. | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| Family Style Lunch/Toileting/Handwashing (40 minutes) | <p>While sitting for family style meals, you may consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the procedures for preparing to eat lunch. • Discussing how children clean up their meals and eating area when they are finished. • Reminding children of what is coming next toward the end of the meal. • Designating one teaching team member, as children are finishing their meals, to support children who are still eating and another to begin the toileting and handwashing procedures. | | | | |
| Nap/Rest Time (60 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the transition to nap/rest time place children’s cots or mats in a consistent location. • Remain flexible to adjusting according to individual children’s needs. | | | | |
| Story Time (10 minutes including transitions: 6 minutes for Story, 4 minutes to transition in and out of group) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Section VI Texts for suggested Read Aloud Texts. • Select texts that meet the interests and needs of your children. • Review Section VII Inquiry and Critical Thinking Questions for Texts for questions to enhance the read aloud experience and support the development of critical thinking skills. • Introduce Centers: Briefly remind children of the materials available in centers. • Tell the children where each member of the teaching team will start playing when Center Time begins and what materials s/he will be exploring. Invite children to join if they would like. • Transition to Centers: Use a song, rhyme or finger play to keep children engaged, minimize wait time and stagger the transition as they make choices about where to play. | | | | |
| | Book: Transition Activity: | Book: Transition Activity: | Book: Transition Activity: | Book: Transition Activity: | Book: Transition Activity: |
| Centers (70 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the materials used in the morning and remind children how they interacted with them. • Determine whether changes should be made. • See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers for materials to consider, if necessary. | | | | |
| | <p>*Materials to highlight each day:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">*Note, children should also be able to explore other materials in each center per their own interests and needs.</p> | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <p>The following centers should be available during center time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blocks/Construction • Dramatic Play • Art • Science/Discovery • Toys and Games/Math Manipulatives • Sand and Water/Sensory • Library • Cooking and Mixing (as needed) • Writing • Music and Movement | Materials: | Materials: | Materials: | Materials: | Materials: |
| <p>Clean-up/Handwashing/Snack (20 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See guidance above for tips and suggestions. | | | | |
| <p>Outdoors (60 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Section V Ideas for Learning Centers | | | | |
| <p>Closing Meeting/Dismissal (10 minutes <u>including transitions</u>: 6 minutes for Closing Meeting content, 4 minutes to transition in and out of Closing Meeting)</p> | Materials: | Materials: | Materials: | Materials: | Materials: |
| | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: | Teaching team roles: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End the day with a closing ritual or song. • Assist children in packing their belongings and preparing to leave. | | | | |

IX. Documenting Learning

Capturing the learning that occurs every day in an early childhood classroom is an important piece of authentic assessment and high quality instruction. Documenting this learning and making it visible can be a helpful way to share and connect with children, families, and other program stakeholders. Documenting provides an opportunity to highlight what children are saying and doing, what they do well, as well as their specific feelings, interests, and insights. Looking at a collection of documentation over time demonstrates how children have practiced skills, and highlights how learning has developed. Additionally, when documentation is displayed at children's eye level, children can review and reflect on their learning themselves which can be motivating and spark further learning.

When learning is displayed in the classroom all displays should:

- Be posted at children's eye level
- Depict authentic learning experiences
- Include evidence of children's learning
- Align to children's interests and current classroom studies
- Vary according to children's abilities

Determining how to capture and display evidence of active, play-based learning can be challenging. In Explorations, teaching teams are encouraged to use **photos, observation notes, learning stories** (see Exploration Three: Our Impact), and the **Explorations Documentation Template** below (see Section XI Appendices for a blank copy) to document learning. This template can be completed by teaching staff and displayed in classrooms to document authentic learning experiences. Examples of how this template has been used to document learning can be found on the following pages.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Explorations Documentation Template</p> | <p>Picture (optional)</p> |
| <p>Child: Vihaan</p> | |
| <p>Date: 9/8</p> | |
| <p>When and Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centers (Art) Exploring open-ended materials | |
| <p>ELOF Standard(s):</p> <p>Goal P-SCI 1. Child observes and describes observable phenomena (objects, materials, organisms, and events).</p> | |
| <p>Observation Notes:</p> <p>(What the child did and said)</p> <p>Vihaan explored various materials in the Art Center. He selected large poms, small sponges and cotton balls and brought them to the table. He placed the items on the table, pushed them from side to side, then picked up the large poms and said, "These are really soft. Hey! All these things I picked are soft!"</p> |  |

| Explorations Documentation Template | Picture (optional) |
|--|--|
| Child: Khmari |  |
| Date: 9/9 | |
| When and Where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centers (Blocks/Construction) • Exploring Unit Blocks | |
| ELOF Standard(s): Goal P-ATL.3 Child appropriately handles and takes care of classroom materials. | |
| Observation Notes: (What the child did and said) Khmari was building in the Blocks/Construction Center. When he heard the five minute warning he said, "Soon it is going to be time to clean up. I'll put these blocks back on the shelf." | |

| Explorations Documentation Template | Picture (optional) |
|---|---|
| Child: Isidora |  |
| Date: 9/12 | |
| When and Where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centers (Art) • Exploring watercolor paint and brushes | |
| ELOF Standard(s): Goal P-MATH 1. Child knows number names and the count sequence. | |
| Observation Notes: (What the child did and said) Isidora accepted the invitation to explore paint in the Art Center. She dipped a paintbrush into the paint then removed it and made circular motions on the paper. As she painted she said, "Round and round. Round and round." She proceeded to make three circular shapes on the table, then pointed to each one and counted them accurately, "One, two, three." | |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Explorations Documentation Template</p> | <p>Picture (optional)</p> |
| <p>Child: Lane</p> | |
| <p>Date: 9/13</p> | |
| <p>When and Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centers (Science) |  |
| <p>ELOF Standard(s):</p> <p>Goal P-ATL 1. Child manages emotions with increasing independence</p> | |
| <p>Observation Notes:</p> <p>(What the child did and said)</p> <p>Lane was exploring the science area. He explored materials on the shelves in the center for several minutes then Ms. Y invited him to meet Puff. He moved over to Puff's cage, looked at Ms Y. and said, "I'm a little nervous about this."</p> | |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Explorations Documentation Template</p> | <p>Picture (optional)</p> |
| <p>Child: Malcom</p> | |
| <p>Date: 10/3</p> | |
| <p>When and Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centers (Library) |  |
| <p>ELOF Standard(s):</p> <p>Goal P-LIT 2. Child demonstrates an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print).</p> | |
| <p>Observation Notes:</p> <p>(What the child did and said)</p> <p>Malcolm and Montrell were looking at a book in the library during centers. Malcolm turned the page and said, "hmmmm, what does this one say?"</p> | |

X. Supporting Resources

Teacher Texts

The Power of Guidance: Teaching Social-Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Classrooms by Dan Gartrell

The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children’s Learning by Ann S. Epstein

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8 by Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp

Teacher Websites

National Association for the Education of Young Children: <http://www.naeyc.org/>

Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center: Daily Separation and Reunions: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions/article/daily-separations-reunions>

Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center: Fostering Connections: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/fostering-connections>

Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center: Creating a Caring Community: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/creating-caring-community>

Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center: Help Me Calm Down! Teaching Children to Cope with Their Big Emotions: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/help-me-calm->

[down-teaching-children-how-cope-their-big-emotions](#)

NYC DOE Program Assessments: <https://infohub.nyced.org/partners-and-providers/early-childhood/early-childhood-educators/supporting-quality-care-and-instruction/program-assessment>

Music: Songs, Rhymes and Finger Plays with Lyrics

These are common preschool songs sung by teachers throughout New York City and the world. Where possible, tunes and lyrics are included. If you don’t know the tune, you can make one up that works for you or chant the words to a beat. Disclaimer: the lyrics provided are only for use by classroom teachers and are provided for the specific non-profit educational purpose of supporting interdisciplinary learning in your classroom.

Here We Are Together

Here we are together, together, together,
Oh here we are together, all sitting on the rug.
With (name), and (name), and (name), and (name),
Here we are together, all sitting on the rug.

To the tune of The More We Get Together

Good Morning, Merry Sunshine

Good morning, merry sunshine, sunshine, sunshine,
Good morning merry sunshine,

And who are you?

Pat your legs as you sing. Each child says his/her name, then you sing to the next child.

Friends

Friends, friends, 1, 2, 3
All my friends are here with me.
You’re my friend, you’re my friend,
You’re my friend, you’re my friend,
Friends, friends, 1, 2, 3

Around and Around

Around and around is the name of the game
Around and around and what’s your name?

Repeat until all children and adults are named. When you sing, “Around and around,” roll your hands in a circular motion.

Jambo

Jambo
Jambo bwana
Habari gani?
Nzuri sana
Wageni
Mwakaribishwa
Kenya yetu
Hakuna matata

This is a Swahili welcome song

May There Always Be Sunshine

May there always be sunshine,
May there always be blue skies,
May there always be mommy*,
May there always be me.

**Repeat/replace with other family members. Include words in other languages.*

Hello

Hello, how are you?
Hello, how are you?
Hello, how are you?
Welcome to 3-K!

**Repeat/saying hello in children's home language(s).*

Open Shut Them

Open shut them, open, shut them,
Give a little clap, clap, clap,
Open shut them, open shut them,
Place them in your lap, lap, lap,
Creep them, crawl them, creep them, crawl them,
Right up to your chin, chin, chin,
Open wide...
Your little mouth...
But do not let them in!

(Motions done with hands)

I Had a Little Wiggle

I had a little wiggle, deep inside of me.
I tried to make it stop,
But it wouldn't let me be.
I pulled out that wiggle and threw it like a ball.
Now my wiggle's gone,
And it's bouncing down the hall!

Sing (or chant) this to help children settle down after a transition.

I Looked at the Clock

I looked at the clock
And what did it say?
Five more minutes left to play.

Sing (or chant) this before transitions to prepare children for the transition. You can adapt for different parts of the day.

Clean Up

Clean up, clean up,
Everybody, everywhere,
Clean up, clean up,
Everybody do your share.

XI. Appendices

Appendix A: Toilet Learning

Teaching young children to use the bathroom is an important and intimate skill. As teaching staff, it is important to respect the privacy of children, while also encouraging their self-esteem and independence. Allow students who have shown the capability to use the bathroom independently and those who request privacy when using the bathroom permission to do so. Working together, families, teaching staff and program leaders encourage children to be fully independent in toileting. The following guidance supports and encourages toilet learning in a safe and appropriate manner and includes visual aids, sample vocabulary words and routines.

When preparing to work with a child who is ready for toilet training consider the following:

- Keep training directions simple.
- Establish a consistent routine.
- Practice dressing and undressing when not using the bathroom. For example, during play using dolls.
- Identify vocabulary words with families to provide continuity at home and at school.
- Praise students for their accomplishments, even if an accident happens.
- Narrate actions to convey messages and meaning that encourage and affirm child progress through this toileting process (i.e. “First, you pull down your pants and then, you sit down on the toilet.” Or “You pulled up your pants when you finished using the bathroom”).
- Empower children through this process by promoting success at each step, being patient, and positive about the process.

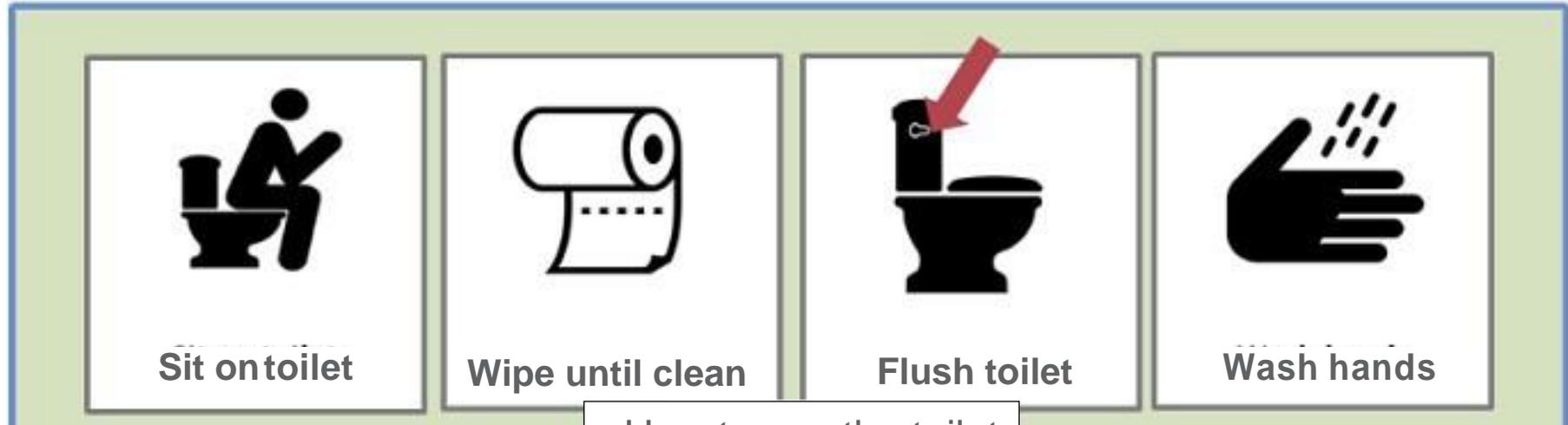
Strategies for toileting young children:

- Read books about toilet training.
- Visit the bathroom and introduce it the same way you would introduce a classroom center.
- Name the items involved with toileting and discuss their use. For example, “I sit on the toilet when I have to _____”.
- Model flushing the toilet and narrate actions as you or the child do them.
- Allow children who are beginning to use the toilet to practice flushing the toilet.
- Provide a verbal warning such as 1, 2, 3 flush for children who are fearful of flushing the toilet.
- Establish a bathroom schedule.
- Regularly ask children who are training if they need to use the bathroom.
- Use visuals and verbal directions to prompt students as needed.
- Practice wiping using a doll and wipes or cloth.

Encourage children to communicate the needs to go to the bathroom using a simple word or signal.

- Consider the child’s perspective when providing guidance and support. For example, what does the child like or dislike about the process? Use this information to create plans to meet each child’s needs.
- Make it FUN!

Sample Toileting Visual



Additional NYC Department of Education Office of Early Childhood Education toileting guidelines and resources can be found in the policy handbook addendums which can be accessed [here](#).

Appendix B: Handwashing

Handwashing is required throughout the program day. Children must wash their hands:

- Upon arrival into the classroom
- Before handling food
- After playing outdoors
- After messy play or sand play
- Before and after playing in a water table
- After dealing with body fluids
- After touching contaminated objects

Handwashing procedures should be a routine part of every day. Handwashing procedures should be explicitly taught. Children should implement the following steps when washing their hands:

1. Wet hands
2. Get soap
3. Wash hands for 20 seconds
4. Rinse hands with water
5. Dry hands
6. Turn off the water with a paper towel

Use visuals to teach children proper handwashing procedures. Visuals should be accessible to children and placed at their eye level.



Strategies for teaching children to wash hands

- Reinforce handwashing and celebrate children's successes.
- Model handwashing throughout the day.
- Make handwashing fun by singing songs throughout the process. Also, sing songs about hand washing throughout the day. Share these songs with families so they can sing them together.
- Create student books about handwashing using student photos and classroom experiences.
- Display a handwashing visual schedule for students to reference as they wash their hands. Hand washing visuals should be accessible to children and placed at their eye level.
- Narrate your actions and those of children as they wash their hands to teach handwashing procedures.

Appendix C: Center Planning Form

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| PLANNING | |
| EXPLORATION: | LEARNING CENTER: |
| <i>OBSERVE: What are children doing/saying in this center?</i> | |
| <i>CONNECT: How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?</i> | |
| <i>INFORM PRACTICE: What are my next steps in response to children's skills and interests?</i> | |

Appendix D: Documentation Template

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Explorations Documentation Template | Picture (optional) |
| Child: | |
| Date: | |
| When and Where: | |
| ELOF Standard(s): | |
| Observation Notes: (What the child did and said) | |

Appendix E: Playdough Recipe

Playdough

Ingredients:

2 cups flour

1 cup salt

1 tablespoon oil

1 cup cold water

2 drops of liquid food coloring

Directions:

Combine flour and salt.

Add water, food coloring and oil.

Knead well.

Add more flour if necessary.

Appendix F: Tips for Transitions

Transitions occur at the beginning and throughout the program year as well as throughout the day. In the beginning of the year, some families may be bringing their child to school for the first time. While transitions may be easy for some children, others may experience challenges.

Transition Tips for Teaching Staff:

- Give children opportunities to express their feelings and acknowledge them.
- Encourage families to bring in a family photo to display in the child's cubby so s/he can visit periodically throughout the day.
- Create a welcome bulletin board with pictures of classroom staff, students, and their families.
- Use a visual schedule to let children know what will happen next.
- Read books with the children about going to school and making friends.
- Practice transitions that will take place during the day.
- Plan for transitions.
- Sing transition songs.
- Practice transition routines and set clear expectations. For example, "When you hear the bell ring once freeze your body. When the bell rings a second time, clean-up your centers."
- Connect with families to share classroom songs so they can sing them together.
- Be patient as children learn new routines!

Transition Tips for Families:

- Talk with your child about going to school.
- Comfort him/her with a reminder that you (or _____) will be back at pick-up.
- Visit the program and/or classroom before the year starts.
- Share your schedule with your child.
- Bring in a family photo to display in your child's cubby for him/her to visit periodically throughout the day.
- Read books about going to school before the year starts and as needed during the transition period.
- Ask your child about his/her day.
- Give your child jobs such as, helping to pick up toys and cleaning up after eating.
- Connect with the teaching staff to become familiar with classroom songs and sing these songs at home.
- Say goodbye every day. It can be tempting to leave when your child is engaged, but establishing a quick goodbye routine such as a hug or a high-five will help your child know what to expect and become more comfortable in the classroom.

Appendix G: Validating Children’s Emotions

When children are upset, it can be hard to know how to respond. While a quick, “You’re okay!” and a smile may be reassuring, it doesn’t give them a chance to learn and practice important self-regulation skills. Much of children’s work in early childhood is learning about emotions-what causes them, how they feel, and how to appropriately respond. Taking the time to use naturally occurring expressions of emotions as learning opportunities is an important tool for teachers of young children.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Strategies to use during separation:</p> <p>If children are missing their loved ones you might say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your (loved one) will come back. I will keep you safe and help you until [loved one] comes back. Do you want to look at the schedule with me so that you know when you are going to see (loved one) again? Do you want to make something to give to (loved one) when you see them again? I know you are missing your (loved one), here is what we can do... Do you want to look at your family pictures with me? Let’s get your (transitional object). <p>If children are missing their loved ones you might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize their feelings. Try to engage them in play. Invite the child to sit close to you. Play quietly together. Show them where they can find their family photos, notes from home and/or transitional objects. Offer to read a book together. | <p>Strategies to use when children get hurt:</p> <p>If children are feeling hurt you might say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ouch! That looked like it really hurt. I bet that hurt! It will probably hurt for a little while and then it will start to feel better. I’m sorry that happened. I wonder what we can do to make it better. I’m sorry that happened. Do you want to do (choice) or (choice) to help you feel better? I think that you feel (emotion) because (cause). <p>If children are feeling hurt you might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize their feelings and address what hurts in an appropriate way. Explore if they want to be close to you and/or if they need a hug. Give them something they can hug or squeeze. Sit with them until they feel better (maybe invite another peer, too!) Get their family picture, letter from home or transitional object. Help them reengage in play. |
| <p>Strategies to help children identify and manage big emotions:</p> <p>If children are displaying big emotions you might say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes we might feel (emotion) when (cause) happens. It looks like you feel (emotion). Do you feel (emotion)? I’m sorry you’re feeling (emotion). Let’s see what we can do to make it better. I will help you if you need help with something. <p>If child are displaying big emotions you might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to engage them in a different activity. Sing a calming song to help sooth them. Bring them to a quiet area of the room. Give them something to squeeze or push. Read a book together. Give them a job to do with or without you. | <p>Feelings and emotions children might experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angry Brave Calm Comfortable Confused Confident Disappointed Disgusted Embarrassed Excited Exhausted Frustrated Happy Hungry Joyful Lonely Nervous Overwhelmed Patient Proud Sad Scared Shy Surprised Thirsty Tired Uncomfortable Worried |

Koplow, L. (2002). *Creating Schools That Heal: Real-Life Solutions*. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.
 O’Byron, E., Rivers, S. E., Shapses, S., Tominey, S. L., (2017). Teaching Emotional Intelligence in Early Childhood. *National Association of the Education of Young Children*.
 Zero to Three. (2018) *Developing Social Emotional Skills*. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/developing-social-emotional-skills>.

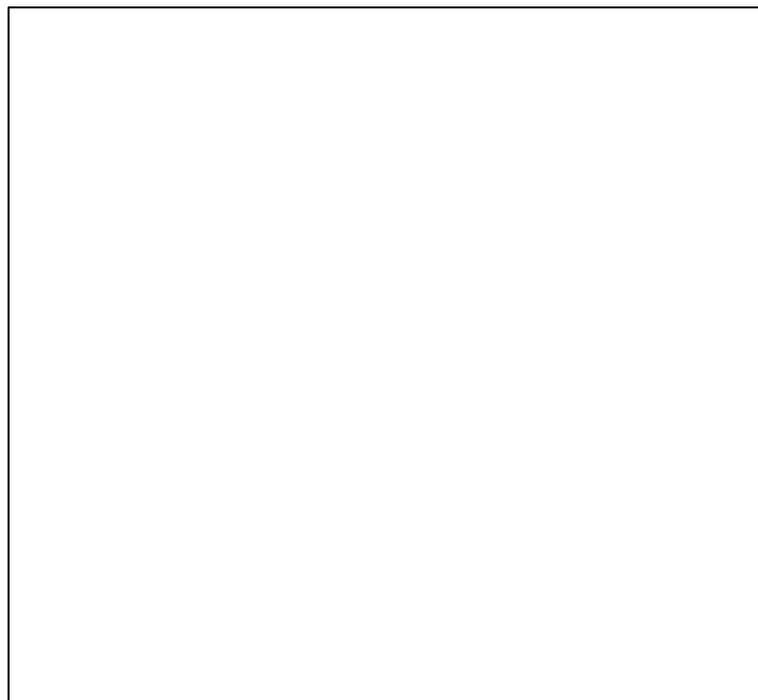
Appendix H: Handmade Books

Having trouble finding just the right book? Consider creating your own! A powerful way to engage children in exploring books is to select engaging books that match their interests and needs. Sometimes teachers are unable to access books that align to content their class is studying, or that meet the specific needs of children. When published books are unavailable, or to create materials that reflect the classroom context, teachers can create their own books. These books are powerful teaching tools. They can generate excitement about books and reading, build classroom community, extend learning on specific topics, individualize learning, and offer a way to document or acknowledge children's learning about specific areas/topics.

Tips:

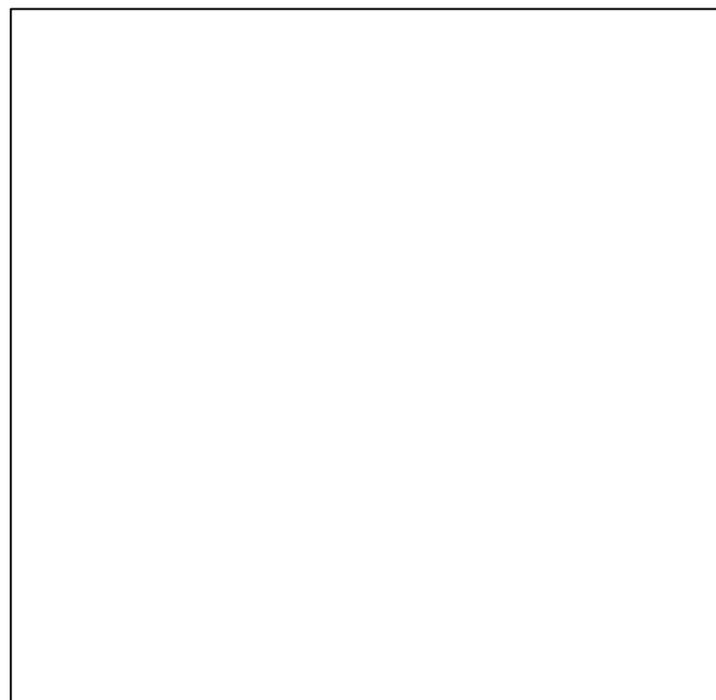
- Keep it simple, a few words and photos is all it takes to engage children.
- Use photos of the children and familiar environments, if possible. Children love seeing themselves and their surroundings in books. When photos of the children and the environment are not available, simple drawings or photos from the internet work well too.
- Print text in English as well as other languages the children and families in the classroom speak.
- Laminate, use page protectors, or cardstock to create pages that are more durable. Use folders or binders to create covers that are sturdy as it can be challenging for children to handle books carefully.
- Read the books aloud to the children and keep them in an area where children can access them independently. Giving children access to handmade books and revisiting them often inspires further inquiry and new learning.

Use the sample handmade book on the following pages as a template to create a book about your classroom. This book can help children learn about each center in the classroom. It can be used throughout the day-in transitions (See Section IV Framework), as a read aloud, and for independent reading in the classroom library. Print the pages and add pictures from your classroom as well as language specific to the activities in your centers.



Our Classroom

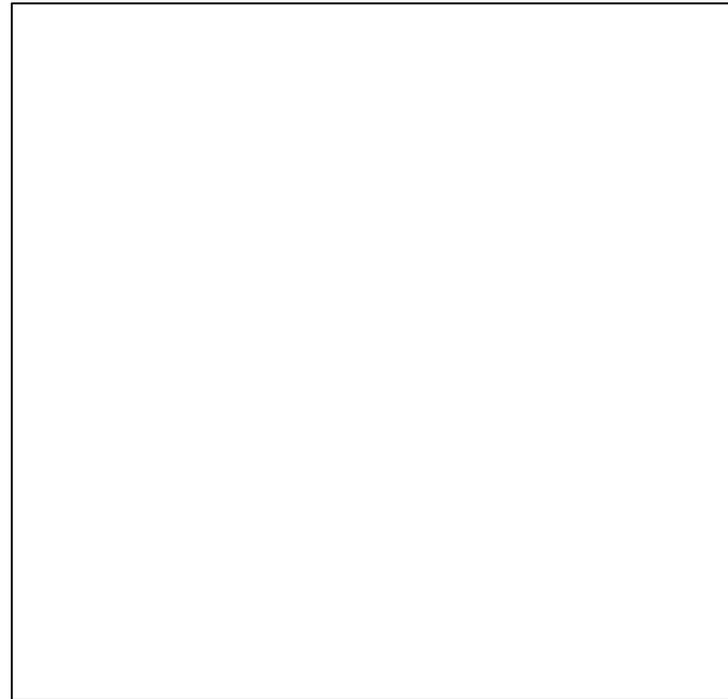
By _____



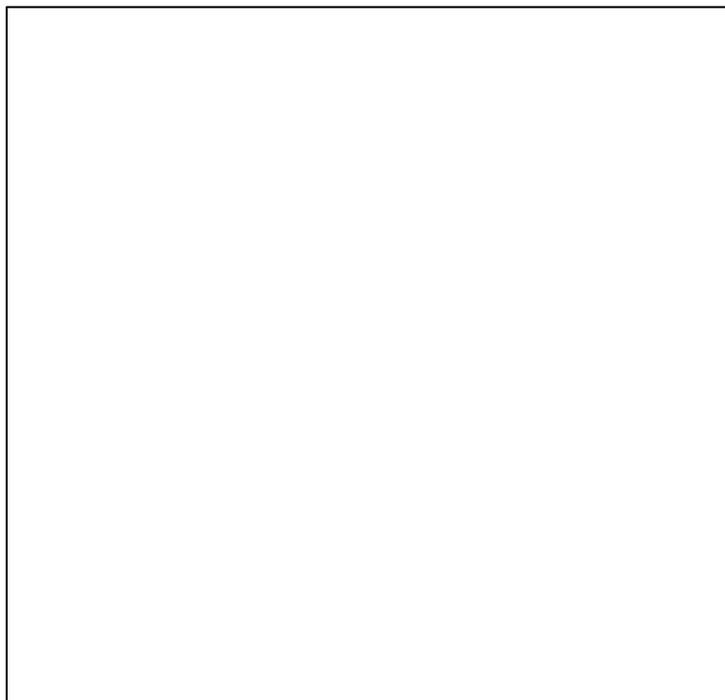
This is the Blocks/Construction Center.
In Blocks/Construction I can



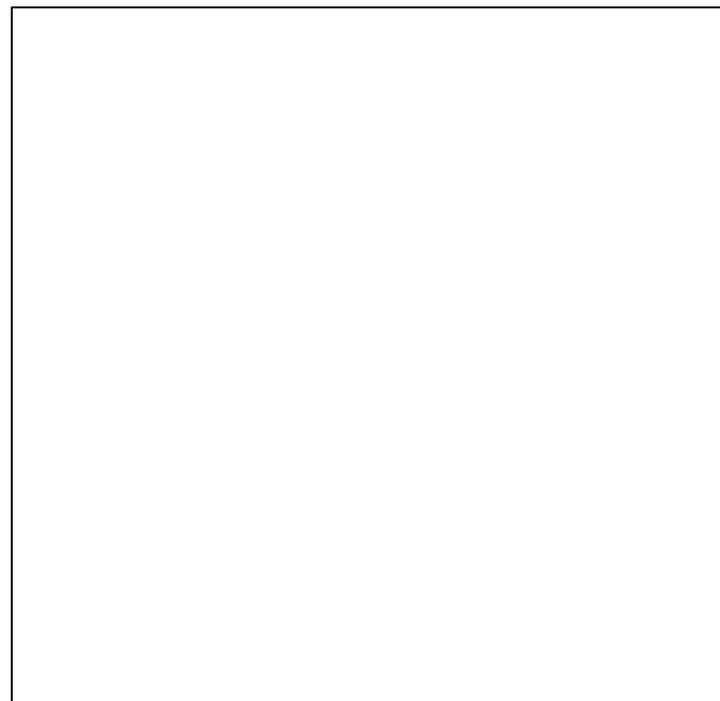
This is the Dramatic Play Center. In
Dramatic Play I can _____



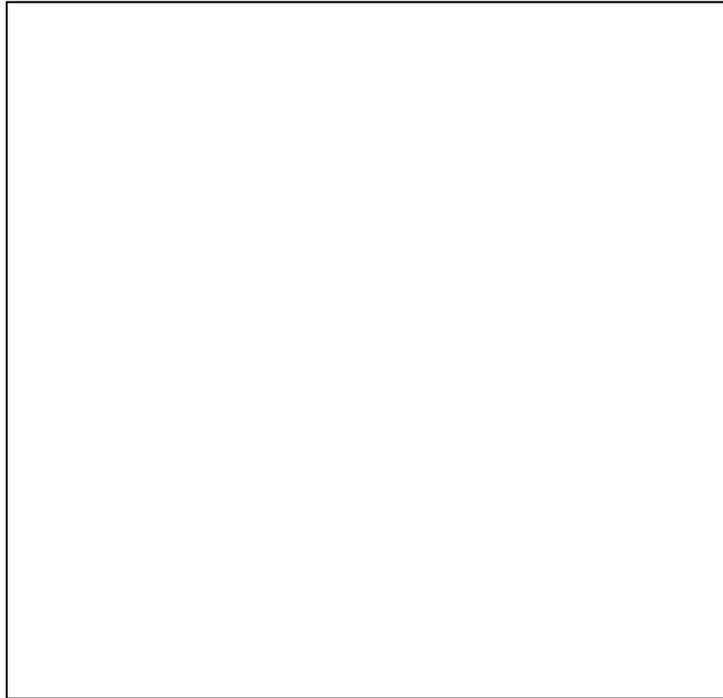
This is the Art Center. In Art I can



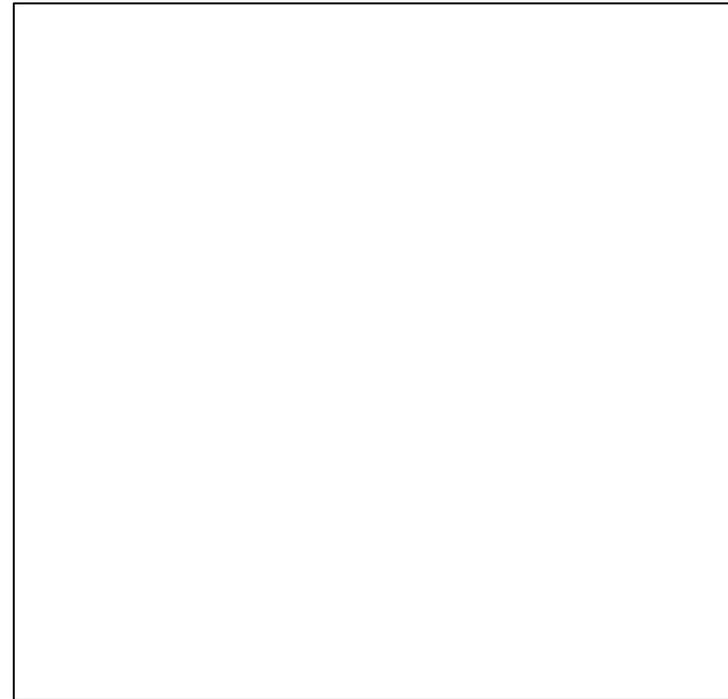
This is the Science/Discovery Center.
In Science I can _____



This is the Toys and Games/Math
Manipulatives Center. In Math I can



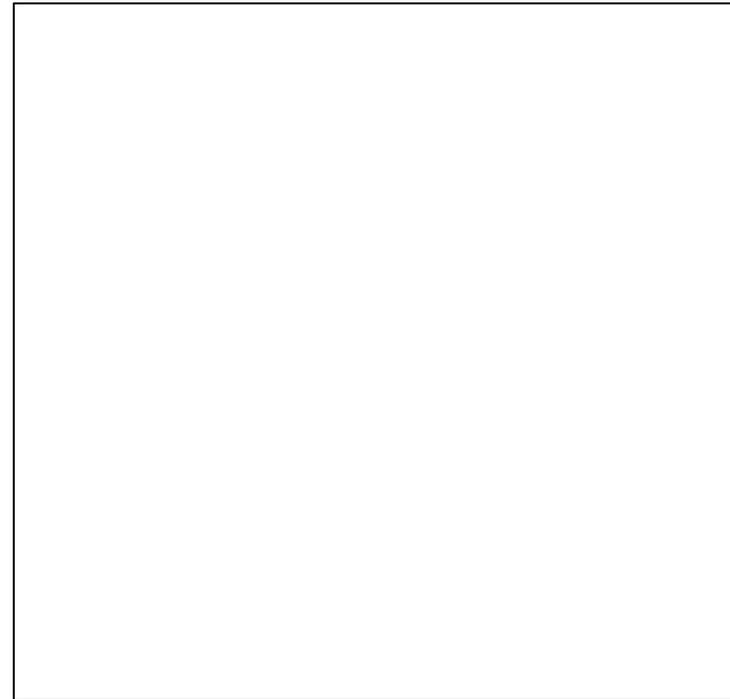
This is the Sand and Water/Sensory
Table. At the Sensory Table I can



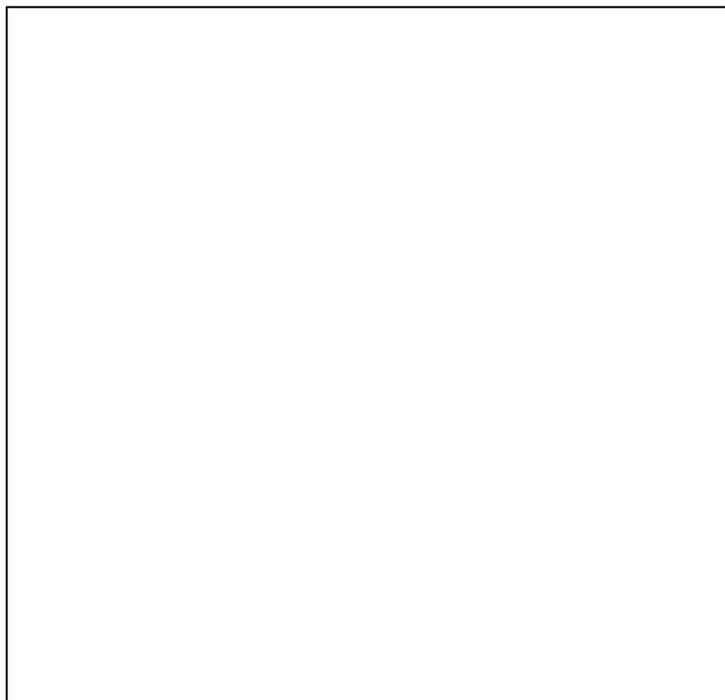
This is the Library. In the Library I
can _____



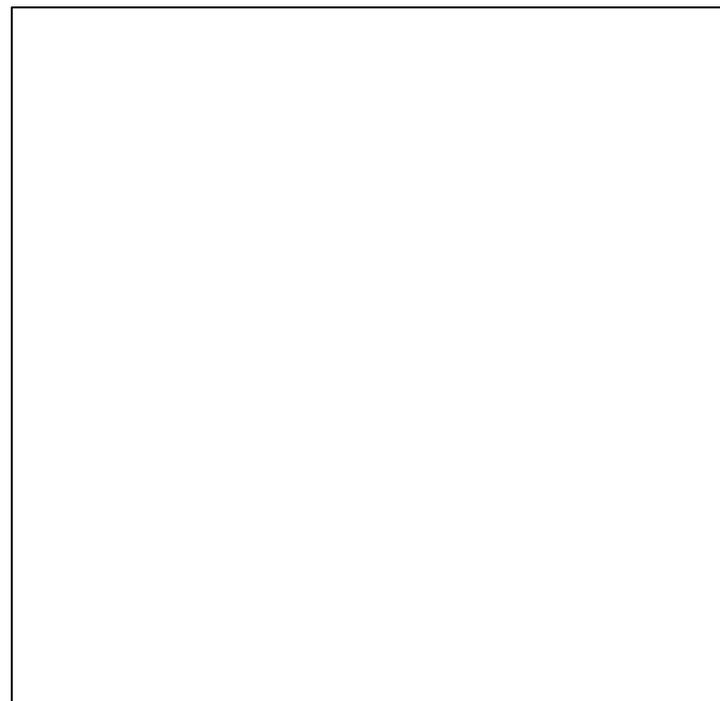
This is the Cooking and Mixing Center.
In Cooking and Mixing I can



This is the Writing Center. In Writing
I can _____



This is the Music and Movement Center. In Music I can _____



There are many fun things to do in the classroom. What is your favorite?

Appendix I: Spanish Vocabulary Translations

| Month One Focus Area: Our Classroom | | Month Two Focus Area: Self | | Month Three Focus Area: Us | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| build | construir | absent | ausente | buddy | compañero(a) |
| centers | centros de juego | apart | separados | care | cuidar |
| children | niños | away | lejos | cheer | alentar |
| classroom | clase/ aula | best | mejor | close | cerca |
| collage | collage | body | cuerpo | comfort | comodidad |
| dress up | disfrazarse | brave | valiente | community | comunidad |
| equipment | equipo | calm | calmado(a) | encourage | animar/ alentar |
| explore | explorar | come back | regresar | far | lejos |
| family | familia | dislike | disgusto | gone | desaparecido(a) |
| friends | amigos(as) | enjoy | disfrutar | help | ayuda |
| invite | invitar | excited | emocionado(a) | here | aquí |
| manipulatives | manipulables | favorite | favorito | others | otros |
| materials | materiales | feel | sentir | pal | amigo(a)/ compadre/compañero(a) |
| paint | pintura | frustrated | frustrado(a) | support | apoyo |
| play | jugar | fun | divertido | strangers | extraños |
| schedule | horario | happy | feliz | thoughtful | juicioso/reflexivo/ cuidadoso/considerado |
| sensory | sensorial | hug | abrazo | us | nosotros |
| share | compartir | like | gustar | you | tú |
| students | estudiantes | love | amar | | |
| taking turns | turnarse | mad | enojado(a) | | |
| teacher | profesor(a)/ maestro(a) | me | yo | | |
| together | juntos | miss | extrañar | | |
| tools | herramientas | notice | darse cuenta/notar | | |
| work | trabajo | prefer | preferir | | |
| | | present | estar presente | | |
| | | puzzle | rompecabezas | | |
| | | remind | recordar/ refrescar la memoria | | |
| | | sad | triste | | |
| | | scared | asustado(a)/ con miedo | | |
| | | see | ver | | |
| | | upset | disgustado(a) | | |
| | | worst | peor | | |

Appendix J: Master Book List

The full Explorations book list can be found [here](#). This list includes books that will likely be interesting and appropriate for children throughout the entire 3-K for All program year. It is comprised of both fiction and non-fiction texts and includes a variety of topics including fantasy, factual information, stories about people, animals and nature/science as well as books that reflect different cultures and abilities. The list is not exhaustive and may be supplemented by other texts that meet the interests and needs of your children.

To assist in planning and meeting the needs of all children, this list is organized by the Head Start *Early Learning Outcomes Framework* domains but most books align with multiple domains and topics. Select books to match the interests of your children and those that will likely help them grow across learning areas.

DO NOT place all of these books in your classroom library at once. Use a selection of these books to supplement the Suggested Texts for Read Aloud (Section V. Texts) in the classroom library. Display the books on shelves so children can easily identify and explore them independently. The classroom library should include approximately two books per child. Books should relate to current Exploration topic and be rotated periodically. This keeps the library organized and children engaged in the center over the year, with new as well as favorite books to access.

Appendix K: Tools of Autonomy for Three-Year-Old Classes

Teachers promote children’s independence by providing meaningful roles for them within the classroom, encouraging them to talk, listening to their ideas and allowing them to make decisions for themselves. **Tools of Autonomy** support children in developing independence, self-regulation and self-confidence. Tools of Autonomy are interactive visuals through which children can begin to develop autonomy in their three classroom. This document provides general guidelines and best practices. Please reach out to your DECE field office to assist with specific questions around tailoring Tools of Autonomy for the needs of the children in your classroom. The tools in this document are aligned with the proactive measures, positive reinforcement strategies and responsive strategies outlined in the [Statement of Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC Programs](#) which is also applicable to 3-K for All.

Criteria for Effective Tools of Autonomy:

- **Relevant:** They reflect and have impact on children’s experiences and learning in the classroom.
- **Strengths-based:** They build on children’s strengths, convey positive messages and are used in a respectful way.
- **Flexible:** They can change during the day (for example, if there is an unexpected shift in the daily schedule) or throughout the year. This supports children in coping with change in a concrete manner.
- **Visually well-organized:** They are uncluttered to support children in understanding expectations and interacting with the environment.
- **Accessible:** They are at children’s eye-level, within children’s reach and available daily for independent use. *Keep in mind that only a few children will be able to directly interact with a tool at a time. Have children interact with the tool in small groups to limit wait time.*
- **Labeled:** They are labeled with clear pictures and words (where appropriate). Words are printed or typed clearly. Proper names have an initial capital letter in a different color; other words are lowercase.
- **Durable:** They are in good working condition and will last throughout the year or be repaired as needed.

Recommended types of Tools of Autonomy:

- Attendance Chart
- Daily Schedule
- Community Expectations Tool
- Feelings Tool

Attendance Chart

Children monitor their attendance and the attendance of their peers with a chart showing if they are present or absent. The Attendance Chart provides an opportunity for teachers to build a positive classroom culture by modeling phrases such as, “I’m so glad you are here today,” or, “I wonder why [name] is not here today. I hope we can see him/her soon.” This supports children in knowing that they, and their peers, are important members of the classroom community. Attendance Charts with pictures also assist children in recognizing their printed names and those of their peers.

Best Practices

- Each day as children arrive, they place their name cards in the “present” area of the chart.
- At the end of each day children place their name in the “absent” area. Note that “home” and “school” are sometimes used instead of “present” and “absent.”
- Children can use these charts to discuss who is present/absent and how many children are present and/or absent each day.

Attendance Chart Examples



ELOF Alignment

Goal P-ATL 2. Child follows classroom rules and routines with increasing independence.

Goal P-SE 11. Child has a sense of belonging to family, community and other groups.

Goal P-LIT 2. Child demonstrates an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print).

Daily Schedule

Classrooms with consistent schedules and routines facilitate children’s understanding of the learning environment expectations. The Daily Schedule or Flow of the Day helps children learn classroom routines and concepts of time, predict a sequence of events and develop self-regulation skills, all in a developmentally appropriate manner. Children feel more secure and in control when they are able to predict what will happen next. Changes to the routine can be reflected in the schedule, which helps children understand and adapt to these changes.

Best Practices

- In the beginning of the year, create the Daily Schedule so that children know what to expect throughout the day.
- Include pictures and words, with events in the order that they will occur (an additional written schedule including times should be posted in the room for visitors to view).
- Ensure flexibility (for example, on a rainy day you may have gross motor inside instead of outside).
- Organize from left to right (horizontal) when possible to promote pre-reading skills.
- Include interactive aspects, for example an arrow that children can move on the schedule as the day progresses (you may choose to include this as a job in the job chart).
- Think about children’s attention spans as you break down the day into steps.
- Take children’s home languages into consideration as appropriate.
- The Daily Schedule should be reviewed and discussed daily. It could be reviewed during arrival, large group, when an event changes and throughout the day as necessary.
- Post the chart at eye level so that children can independently refer to it.

Daily Schedule Examples



ELOF Alignment:

Goal P-ATL 1. Child manages emotions with increasing independence.

Goal P-ATL 2. Child follows classroom rules and routines with increasing independence.

Goal P-LIT 2. Child demonstrates an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print).

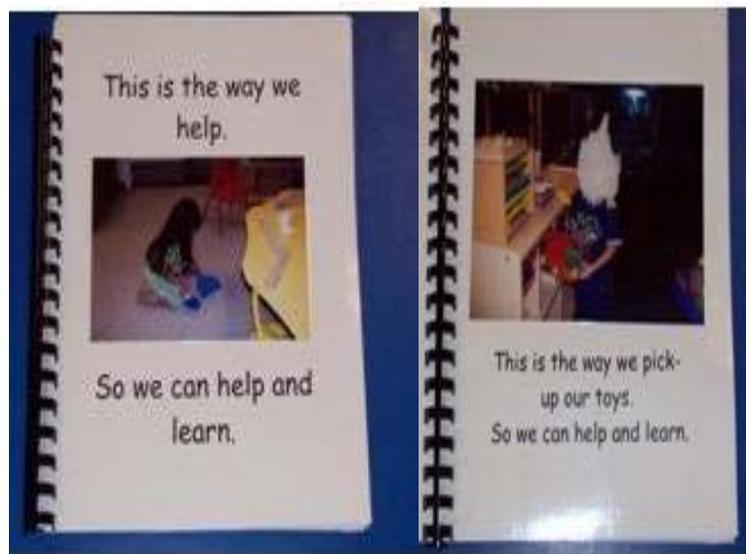
Community Expectations Tool

Clearly communicated developmentally appropriate expectations for children help them develop independence and self-regulation skills and engage in respectful interactions with peers and adults. Children can contribute to creating, re-visiting or re-wording expectations. Include visuals on the Community Expectations Tool and use it to highlight expected behaviors. It is important that all adults also model the expectations and remind children of the expectations in a positive way.

Best Practices

- At the beginning of the year, encourage children to participate in creating a set of expectations for behavior in the classroom.
- Briefly highlight why each expectation is important. This helps children learn about being part of the classroom community.
- Expectations should be strengths-based: use positive language to clearly define the desired behavior.
- Children will need positive reminders throughout the day and year in order to follow the expectations. Use positive feedback to point out when children are following the expectations and why it is important. For example, "I see children keeping their hands to themselves. This helps keep everyone safe when we are playing."

Community Expectations Tool Examples



ELOF Alignment

Goal P-ATL 3. Child appropriately handles and takes care of classroom materials.

Goal P-ATL 4. Child manages actions, words and behaviors with increasing independence.

Goal P-SE 11. Child has a sense of belonging to family, community and other groups.

Feelings Tools

At three, children are learning how to identify, label and explain their feelings as well as respond to the feelings and actions of others. With adult guidance and support, Feelings Tools support children in understanding and managing their own feelings and recognize the feelings of others. Feelings Tools include labeled pictures of a wide variety of feelings that children might experience. They allow children to practice identifying and expressing their feelings.

Best Practices

- Children can use this tool to help identify their feelings at arrival and throughout the day.
- Teachers use this tool to discuss what caused emotions and how children can react. For example, “Helen, I notice that you made a face when you saw all the seats at the art table were full. Let’s look at the feelings chart-how did that make you feel?”
- Feelings Tools can be placed in the cozy area for children to reference as they seek emotional comfort.
- Pictures of responses to challenging feelings can also be placed in the cozy area.
- Keep in mind that as children are still learning about their feelings, they may not always accurately label their feelings and the feelings of others.

Feelings Tool Example



ELOF Alignment:

Goal P-ATL 1. Child manages own emotions with increasing independence.

Goal P-ATL 4. Child manages actions, words and behaviors with increasing independence.

Goal P-SE6. Child expresses a broad range of emotions and recognizes these emotions in self and others.

Goal P-SE9. Child recognizes self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions and interests.

Center Time

Most three-year-olds are egocentric and impulsive, they are learning to understand their place in space and have very short attention spans. It is important to respect these characteristics when setting your own expectations for Center Time. It is also important to remember that for most children, this will be their first introduction to center-based learning environments. Children need the opportunity to explore and move freely between centers and learn to negotiate the classroom space as well as the position of their own bodies in relation to others. For these reasons, as well as the fact that they will likely not have the required math skills, the use of a centralized Center Time tool is not recommended for three-year-old classrooms.

Best Practices

- Prior to the start of the year, think carefully about how children will learn to use centers successfully.
- During the first weeks of school, offer basic center supplies and allow children to acquaint themselves with the materials. Guide them as they explore and model how to clean up when finished.
- Support children in understanding when there are too many children in a center for the play to be successful. Help them find a different center to try while they wait for other children to leave the area.
- Keep centers well supplied and well organized. When all centers are appealing, children are more likely to engage a wide variety rather than clustering in the one or two that are most familiar or easy to use.
- Introduce centers to the children prior to the start of Center Time. Highlight one or two of the hands-on materials available for exploration in each center.
- Consider various ways to display materials in each center so the center is visually appealing, inviting, and easy for children to use.
- Consider the developmental characteristics of three year olds and remember that they should not be expected to share materials. Provide multiples of items that will likely be very interesting to children: enough for several children to play in the center and each have their own.
- Rotate materials as children lose interest and according to topic.
- Consider using concrete strategies to help children understand how many children can safely fit in a center such as teaching children there is space to play at a table if there is a chair available.
- Be strategic about where you will be when Center Time begins. Consider starting in a Center that is less popular than the others are and highlighting new or unfamiliar materials. Invite children to join you in this Center.
- Label containers and shelves to assist children in the clean-up process and encourage all clean up attempts.

Appendix L: Printable Daily Schedules

Classrooms with consistent schedules and routines facilitate children’s understanding of the learning environment expectations. The Daily Schedule or Flow of the Day helps children learn classroom routines and concepts of time, predict a sequence of events and develop self-regulation skills, all in a developmentally appropriate manner. Children feel more secure and in control when they are able to predict what will happen next. Changes to the routine can be reflected in the schedule, which helps children understand and adapt to these changes. For more information about daily schedules, see Appendix K: Tools of Autonomy.

Printable schedule cards are available [here](#) on the NYC DOE InfoHub.

Multiple formats and languages are available:

- English, vertical orientation, with pictures
- English, horizontal orientation, with pictures
- English, vertical orientation, without pictures
- English, horizontal orientation, without pictures
- Spanish/English, vertical orientation, with pictures
- Spanish/English, horizontal orientation, with pictures
- Spanish/English, vertical orientation, without pictures
- Spanish/English, horizontal orientation, without pictures

XII. Bibliography

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