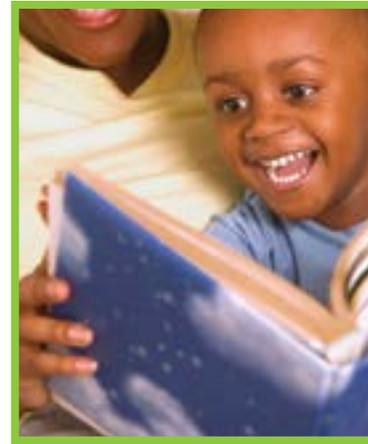


Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines:



In the Preschool Classroom Second Edition





Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines: In the Preschool Classroom

Second Edition

**Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Idaho Head Start Collaboration**

Carolyn F. Kiefer, M.S.

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Acknowledgements

The research updates and revisions to the Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines (ELeGs) prompted a second edition of this book as we expanded and clarified many of the Developmental Growth Statements, Child Indicators and Caregiver Strategies. We hope it is now a stronger resource for your preschool teaching practices with three and four year olds (36-60 months). The Idaho ELeGs describe children's development in five age groups: 6-18 months, 16-38 months, 36-60 months, 60 months through Kindergarten, and in Domains 1 and 3, primary grades. There is also a book specifically for those who work with babies and toddlers, *Caring for Idaho's Infants and Toddlers*.

While the ELeGs organize information by developmental domain and age, this book explores how the eGuidelines look in preschool classroom practice. Focused on curriculum spaces, such as Art and Blocks, this publication gives some examples of what children are actively learning in the 5 Domains and 64 Goals of the Idaho eGuidelines. We hope this will be an inviting and practical way to see the ELeGs "in action!"

This publication is rooted in research and best practices about how young children learn and how quality early childhood environments look. This book's first edition was enhanced with the ideas and insights of generous early childhood colleagues! The second edition is built upon that work and we continue to honor and respect their ongoing work in the field of early childhood. Our gratitude to the following contributors:

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This book is dedicated to the many wonderful early childhood teachers who enrich Idaho children's lives!

Carolyn Kiefer, M.S.

Idaho Head Start Collaboration Director

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Introduction to Idaho's Early Learning eGuidelines

Each child has unique characteristics embedded in the context of family, culture, and community. Idaho's Early Learning eGuidelines acknowledge and embrace the diversity and variation that exists among young children. Diversity includes socioeconomic, cultural, racial, linguistic, ethnic, gender, ability, family composition, and regional variations.

The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines are not grounded in any single theoretical perspective or in any single cultural context. They are based on research from various theoretical perspectives and are specifically intended to acknowledge and accommodate cultural differences. The eGuidelines include goals for young children's development that reflect the perspectives, values, and recommended practices of a diverse range of people, institutions, and communities throughout Idaho.

The eGuidelines emphasize that young children's learning is individual, interconnected, and multidimensional. Young children develop at individual rates physically, socially, emotionally, linguistically, and cognitively. All of these dimensions of development are critical to healthy development.

Parents, Child Care Givers and Early Childhood Educators all have important uses for Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines.

Parents are part of a child's cultural fabric. Effective teachers are familiar with the different cultures of the children they serve, especially those cultures that differ from their own.

Recognizing that development and learning are influenced by social and cultural contexts helps sensitize teachers to acknowledge how their own cultural experience shapes their perspective. Early childhood teachers can understand the influence of sociocultural contexts on learning, recognize children's

developing competence, and accept a variety of ways for children to express their developmental achievements.

Children are capable of learning to function in more than one cultural context simultaneously. The goal is that all children learn to function well in the society as a whole and move comfortably among groups of people who come from both similar and dissimilar backgrounds.

The eGuidelines are specifically intended to accommodate, support, and build upon individual family characteristics and cultural heritage. Efforts were made to acknowledge the learning needs of children with developmental delays and disabilities, and children who have a home language other than English.

Embracing the right of every child to learn, grow, and play with children their own age in community settings, these eGuidelines endorse natural and least restrictive environments for all young children. The definition of "children with special needs" includes those who are medically fragile, delayed in one or more developmental domains, have a known medical condition that may lead to a delay, and/or a disability. Concerns about a child's development may warrant a screening by a physician or early childhood educator. If the screening shows concern, the child must be referred for a developmental evaluation/assessment.

Culture is defined as the customary beliefs and patterns of and for behavior, both explicit and implicit, which are passed on to future generations by the society they live in and /or by a social, religious or ethnic group within it. Because culture is often discussed in the context of diversity or multiculturalism, people fail to recognize the powerful role that culture plays in influencing the development of all children.

Scope

Families, early childhood educators and programs, the community, and policy makers share responsibility for all children's development. The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines underscore shared responsibility and shared accountability for development in terms of both learning opportunities and outcomes for children.

The eGuidelines are arranged by "domains" that organize the broad sweep of child development theory, research, and practice. The five developmental and learning domains include:

Domain 1	Approaches to Learning and Cognitive Development*
Domain 2	Motor Development, Physical Well-Being, and Health
Domain 3	Social and Emotional Development
Domain 4	General Knowledge
Domain 5	Communication, Language, and Literacy

*Domain 1 addresses aspects of development that permeate all domains. All five domains are interdependent.

Purpose and Use

Idaho's Early Learning eGuidelines are grouped by Domains that are divided by ages and then described by Goals, Developmental Growth, Child Indicators and Caregiver Strategies.

This foundational document is designed as a resource to support the growth and development of young children from birth through third grade. The information in the document applies regardless of the setting: children's own homes, others' homes, child care programs, early intervention programs, Head Start programs, or in schools (private, faith-based, or public).

Some people will work from the resource document itself, while others will use collateral products to inform their specific inquiry and interest. The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines are intended to:

- **Inform** and **Guide** adult practices in working with young children.
- **Describe** typical milestones about the child's development process.
- **Develop** a common, research-based guide that describes the development of young children from birth to five.
- **Provide** social and emotional developmental characteristics and approaches to learning materials that supplement Idaho Content Standards for children K-3.

- **Integrate** early learning guidelines as a component to the larger system of services including quality initiatives, professional development, personnel preparation; and curriculum for higher education, professional development, vocational education, and pre-service training.
- **Empower** Idaho's families to enrich childhood.
- **Help** adults understand, nurture, support, and teach young children during the critical years of birth to five.

Within each domain, the Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines present a set of goals, developmental growth, and child indicators that reflect how young children develop at different stages in their lives.

Age divisions are intended only as a means to capture the discussion about development, and are not intended to be absolute. The overlap in ages, as indicated in the table below, is a deliberate acknowledgement of variations in child development.

Domains	Age Ranges					
1. Approaches to Learning	0-8 months	6-18 months	16-38 months	36-60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grade
2. Motor Development, Physical Well-Being, and Health	0-8 months	6-18 months	16-38 months	36-60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	K-12 Standards Apply
3. Social and Emotional Development	0-8 months	6-18 months	16-38 months	36-60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grade
4. General Knowledge	0-8 months	6-18 months	16-38 months	36-60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	K-12 Standards Apply
5. Communication, Language, and Literacy	0-8 months	6-18 months	16-38 months	36-60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	K-12 Standards Apply

The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines provide links to educational standards for children in Idaho’s Head Start, kindergarten, and elementary school programs. Two domains, Approaches to Learning and Cognitive Development, and Social and Emotional Development, carry through first, second, and third grades.

The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines include an update and revision of existing standards (The Idaho Early Learning Standards: Resource Guide (2004)) and align with Head Start Standards and K-12 Standards.

Organization

Each domain is categorized by age range. Each domain may be further divided by sub-domain. For each domain or sub-domain, the Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines provide the following:

- **Goal statement**
- **Age range**
- **Developmental growth**
- **Child indicators** that describe what parents and others might observe about the child’s development respective to that task
- **Caregiver strategies** to stimulate development related to that goal

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Sub-Domain: Learning Approaches

CURIOSITY, MOTIVATION, EXPLORATION, AND EXPERIMENTATION

Goal 1: Children show curiosity and interest in learning and experimenting.

Age Range	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Birth through 8 Months	Seeks, initiates, and responds to interactions with people and objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reacts to new voices or sounds by turning in the direction of sound, becoming more quiet or active, or changing facial expressions. • Looks and follows slow moving objects. • Shows interest in people by kicking legs, smiling, reaching, and looking at the person. • Shows interest in patterns and shapes. • Responds to familiar things or sounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the baby facing you to encourage exploration of the human face, emotions, communication, and interactions. • Create a safe, secure, and attractive environment for children to explore toys, books, and people. • Use both facial expressions and words to initiate play with the child during the course of everyday routines (diaper changing, bathing). • Observe child to understand unique temperament, learning styles, and ways of showing curiosity. • Introduce child to new people, places, objects, and experiences. • Offer a variety of positions from which a child can explore (e.g. tummy, back, sitting upright, propped on side, or laying on the floor, sitting on a lap, or sitting in a baby chair).

Essential Practices

The following strategies are helpful to value learning styles and to embrace children's rich diversity of predispositions, attitudes, habits, and cultural patterns for all children from birth to school entry. These examples of strategies reflect learning opportunities and experiences to support children's individual needs:

Health and Safety

- Ensure that children are provided with caregivers who interact in consistent and caring ways.
- Provide adult supervision and guidance for children's health and safety.
- Promote trust, security, and exploration through nurturing relationships and safe, consistent, and stimulating environments.
- Seek medical or developmental expertise if concerned about a child's learning and development.
- Gain access to comprehensive health care (Medical Home) including preventive medical and dental check-ups, mental health, immunizations, and care for acute and chronic health problems.
- Be aware of risk factors and signs of child abuse and neglect, and the responsibilities for reporting incidences.
- Have access to nutritious foods and feeding strategies that promote children's optimal health and development.

Interaction and Activities

- Engage and play with children, supporting and encouraging their exploration.
- Provide multiple strategies to include the senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste).
- Engage children in open-ended activities for learning, including play around dramatic themes, artistic creations, and sensory play. Encourage children to expand and elaborate their experiences.
- Use supportive verbal, visual, and physical cues in interactions and activities.
- Immerse children in environments rich in language and print.

- If the child needs extra support, simplify complicated tasks by breaking them into smaller parts or reducing the number of steps.
- Encourage child to play and form relationships with other children.

Cultural Context

- Observe, recognize, and support children's unique ways of approaching new information and expressing themselves, taking into consideration their temperaments, inclinations, and attitudes.
- Provide a range of experiences to all children, even though their responses may differ and some children may need adaptations.
- Strive for an environment that respects all people and is free of biases.
- Individualize experiences, activities, interactions, and instructions to meet the needs of each child.
- Take time to learn about children's everyday experiences at home and in their community. Incorporate traditional (or long-standing) effective strategies used by children's home cultures to support learning and development.
- Provide continued acknowledgements in ways that reflect children's cultural beliefs and traditions so that all children feel valued. Support a sense of competence.
- Incorporate teaching and learning strategies from children's cultural background (e.g., use culturally and linguistically appropriate song games, stories, changes, music, dance, and movement) and culturally specific knowledge in coordination with cognitive development.

Problem-Solving Skills

- Help children learn to accept, understand, and manage their emotions.
- Model and teach conflict resolution and problem-solving skills.

Family Support

- Build strong relationships with and among families, teachers, caregivers, and community programs.

Guiding Principles

Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines are developed according to the following guiding principles:

Children are active learners who learn through play.

Play is fundamental to a child's learning. Children learn through experiences and relationships with the people and objects in their world. Experience through play, shared knowledge, curiosity, and sense of wonder are foundations for children's learning.

Each child learns in unique ways.

Children have unique characteristics that influence learning. The rate of development and learning varies for individuals, and is not the same for every child of the same age. Learning may be uneven or occur in spurts. An individual's learning is impacted by genetics, culture, environment, experiences, interests, motivation, and approaches to learning.

Children receive learning opportunities that support their unique needs in inclusive environments.

All children, who are developing both typically and atypically, are supported with opportunities to grow and learn in inclusive settings in child care, school, and community activities.

Learning is most meaningful when it is integrated across all areas of development.

Children construct knowledge and integrate new ideas and concepts into their existing understanding. Their achievements in language and learning are influenced by the social and emotional aspects of their development. Communication influences mathematical and scientific understanding. There are no clear lines between the domains of development or areas of learning.

Learning is continuous and sequential.

Children's understanding grows from simple to complex, and from concrete to abstract. New knowledge is built on previous experience and understanding. Young children learn best in safe, content-rich environments with supportive adults. Successful programs, teachers, and caregivers base their decisions and plans on accepted child development principles, research, and best practices to support and enhance children's growth.

Development and learning are rooted in culture and supported by the family.

A child's language, knowledge, traditions, and family expectations are the primary influences on development. Learning is enriched by stable, nurturing relationships within the family and community.

Parents want their children to be happy and part of their community.

Early learning is the groundwork for learning from age five through the high school years and into adult, life-long education. Early learning opportunities are best when children are healthy, well nourished, and safe. Engaged, healthy, and happy children are ready to explore through listening, watching, smelling, touching, and tasting.

Children are supported by the greater community.

Children are regarded and respected as unique, competent individuals who have individual temperaments, learning styles, home environments, cultures, and ways of understanding. The health and well-being of families and children is a community priority. The community supports children's growth with high-quality, early-learning, and development opportunities.

Introduction to this Book

Preschool teachers have asked for information that “translates” the many pages of goals, indicators and strategies of the Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines into “how they work in my classroom.” This book works to capture the ELeGs in action and practice!

Research and best practice informs us that three to five-year-olds learn best in enriched, well-organized classrooms that recognize the importance of play and process for children’s understanding. We know that children develop understanding and thinking skills when encouraged to actively explore while building a deep sense of themselves as curious, competent learners. An important addition to this second edition is the inclusion of the current brain and application research on Executive Function.

Executive Function is considered an essential element of school readiness and success. It is divided into three key areas: working memory, inhibitory control and attention shifting/cognitive flexibility. Working memory is a child’s ability to track what is going on currently and recently. It includes being able to know what is the “plot of play,” who is doing what, rules, and expectations. Inhibitory control is being able to slow down or stop, impulse control, self-regulation—having “inner brakes.” Attention shifting also called cognitive flexibility is being able to track what is going on and change directions, or shift focus without “losing track” of thinking and doing. Children’s imaginative play is a great opportunity to develop and practice executive function. Knowing or negotiating the “script” and roles, being a character and still knowing what roles others are playing, and being able to let other players fulfill and act out their roles develops a child’s executive functions and lays a solid brain foundation for on-going learning.

The instruction, exploration, and discovery that take place in an experience-based classroom mean much more than many people realize. With a focus on nurturing the whole child—socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually—the classroom provides a safe, stimulating environment that supports brain development and school readiness. All five Domains and 64 Goals of the Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines are critical elements in readiness for school and life!

This book is based on the important areas of an early childhood learning environment. We offer some basics, lists, stories and ideas for eleven areas of a classroom. Each chapter then gives examples of Goals from each Domain of the ELeGs (you can find many more applicable Goals in the web-based eGuidelines!). The Goals, Indicators, and Strategies in this book are focused on only one age group (36-60 months) of the six age groups found in the Idaho ELeGs. Hopefully, this book will give you a starting point and pique your curiosity to delve deeper into the eGuidelines.

Early childhood classrooms and playgrounds are planned and physically arranged to meet the developmental needs of all children. Routines and schedules can thoughtfully accommodate children with disabilities and other special needs. Curriculum modifications can be integrated into the areas of the classroom with the addition of specific toys and equipment to provide embedded learning opportunities.

The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines are a foundational document that encompasses typical child development from birth to school age. The critical Domains of Approaches to Learning and Cognitive Development, and Social and Emotional Development include first through third grade, as these aspects of development are not addressed in the K-12 Standards. As the Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines encompass the ages of birth through 60 months in all Domains, a teacher can easily move to an earlier age range to find goals and indicators to support a child who functions at an earlier developmental level. The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines are carefully aligned with the Idaho Core Standards.

The Idaho ELeGs are web-based so that they can grow and evolve with new research and information. The second edition of this book is posted on our website (<http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Children/EarlyChildhoodInfo/tabid/80/Default.aspx>) with other resources, Caring for Idaho’s Infants and Toddlers, and the Developmental Growth Matrix, which is an overview of the eGuidelines. We hope this book and the ELeGs become important, functional “tools” in your teaching practice. Best wishes as you and the children you teach grow and both reach your full potential!

Art Area

Working with art materials benefits all aspects of a child's development. As they draw, paint, and make collages, children experiment with color, line, shape, and size. By mixing colors, they learn about change and cause-effect relationships. In making lines and shapes with markers and crayons, they develop the fine motor control needed for writing. While cutting and tearing paper, shaping play dough, and squeezing clay, they strengthen their hand muscles and refine small muscle movements. When making sculptures and mobiles, they explore dimensions and spatial relationships.

Drawing and painting are important forerunners to writing, as well as unique expressions of self. Making lines and shapes and assigning meaning to them is the

In the Art Area, children learn...

- Color, shape, texture, and dimensions by seeing and feeling art materials
- Experimentation and experience with a variety of art materials
- Beginning grasping and manipulation skills while simultaneously strengthening their hands and neurological system
- To use their senses to gain information about the environment
- About representation and expressing experiences and emotions through art materials such as paint, clay, pencils, and crayons
- How to express themselves creatively
 - To make choices and decisions
 - To develop independence

first step in writing. Creating invented letters that the child can "read," or ascribe meaning to, is indeed writing—just not conventional writing. Knowing that information or a name can be conveyed with a drawn line is an amazing human skill—the leap into literacy! The Art Area is an important part of the classroom that supports literacy development.

Artistic expression is all about the process and experience for the young child. It is truly the child's own expression, and the child is in control! It helps to build self-esteem and confidence in a safe, comfortable, and stimulating environment while allowing children to explore new ways to express their emotions and ideas.

- About sequencing and organizational skills
- To look at and talk about artwork
- About experimenting with art materials while exploring physical properties and cause-effect relationships
- Early eye-hand coordination
- To respond to storytelling by drawing or painting



Getting organized

Plan strategically for art activities! It is preferable to work in an uncarpeted area with a sink for easy clean-up. Think about creating zones for different kinds of artistic and social experiences. Start with a protected space with a “paint friendly” floor for easels, which can be either wall-mounted or free standing with 2 sides to paint on. Aprons must be close by, along with a source of paper and a drying rack.

Basic equipment

- Easels, work tables, and low shelves
- Storage bins for individual materials (such as baskets or clear plastic boxes) with picture and word labels
- Collage materials: colored and/or textured papers, wallpaper, ribbons, and items from nature (or a collection of collage materials from the “teacher’s closet”)
- Child-sized scissors (sharp! with rounded tips) and hole punches
- Play dough and potter’s clay in airtight tubs
- Tools for play dough: small rolling pins, plastic knives, and tools from the kitchen
- Crayons, markers, and chalk
- Various kinds, colors, and sizes of paper
- Easel paper—large and heavy (60-80 lb.)
- Paint (tempera and watercolor), good brushes, and reusable containers for water and paint
- A drying rack or clips for paintings and glued artwork
- Glue, paste, and tape
- Aprons or smocks
- A recycle box for reusable scraps

A big table is essential to provide enough room for several children to participate in art activities while supporting social interaction. If space is available, another table (maybe smaller) makes a great center for play dough, potter’s clay, and other tactile materials. Child-accessible shelves with labeled spaces for markers, crayons, glue, tape, scissors, and a variety of paper and collage materials are important so children can easily find the materials they need, and return them to their space during “pick- up” time.



The Artist's Statement

"Chicka chicka, boom, boom ..." sang the swaying four-year-old at the easel. Big, bold lines flowed from the paint brush as a narrative evolved in color and self-talk. More colors appeared as the "coconut tree" erupted into a volcano, and dinosaurs and witches battled... Soon a pie pan was employed as a palette to mix the muddied colors into new tones. Fragments of a story emerged with exclamations of sound as paint documented the plot. The classroom had all but disappeared in the intensity of the process.

Finally, gooey brushes plopped in the water bucket and the artist asked for help moving the painting to the drying rack. The paper was saturated in shades of khaki, not a trace of white left on the surface. When asked about

putting a name on the back of the painting, the artist didn't care — "done now" was the reply.

Mom needed a "translation" from the teacher when she pulled the painting from the art file. I couldn't recount the whole story or the creative process that was the essence of the painting. The "real painting," the best part, was hidden in the layers of caked, mud-colored tempera. Neither the artist nor the mom wanted the paper—the wonderful experience was "done now." The product didn't matter, but the artist was ready for the next creative explosion!

High Praise

Although praising children's artwork or talent may always seem called for, the way in which adults give praise is key to supporting artistic development and expression. Blanket statements like, "Oh, that's so pretty!" or "I like that—you are so talented!" may in fact discourage a child who wasn't thinking about "pretty," but was trying to line up the edges of collage pieces or express a feeling. Recent

research shows that children are more likely to persist and to value their work when given credit for their efforts rather than for talent.

Encourage an explanation: "Tell me how you made the paint colors change," or "I see that you used three red pieces of paper—was it hard to get them in just the right places?" Give the artist the opportunity to explain or comment on their work.

Think About...

- Easels need to have enough space around them to allow children to move a bit—gross motor movement encourages creativity!
- High-quality brushes are worth the investment. They last longer and rinse cleaner. Teach children to rinse the brushes between colors.
- A recycled pie pan makes a good palette for mixing colors when children are ready to move past “the basics.”
- Heavy paper makes a huge difference in satisfaction, and it is able to hold more paint.
- Collage projects need to be thoughtfully arranged by the teacher. Too many materials can overwhelm young artists. Start with a few colors of paper and encourage tearing, dabbing paste or glue on the pieces, and placing them on the “base.” A small plate with a small “single serving” cup of paste makes a good setup—add a damp piece of sponge for wiping fingers.
- At the play dough and clay table, children explore changes in shape and mass while building fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. Potter’s clay provides more resistance, strengthening hands and arms and releasing tension as it is pounded, pinched, and molded.
- Learning to cut with scissors is a crucial school readiness skill for three- to five-year-olds. Blunt-tipped, sharp scissors that easily cut paper are critical for success. Watch for correct hand and finger placement and progression to opening and closing the hand. You might see little mouths opening and closing, or both hands making the cutting motion as growing brains figure out this new complex coordination.
- Portfolios, or a large narrow box with sections for each child, are a great way to store children’s art work (names and dates are essential!). Let the child choose which pieces to save, or to scan for a portfolio copy if the original needs to go home. Try to collect art pieces frequently throughout the year. Portfolios provide strong visual examples of thinking and sensory development over time. Consider including photos of the child creating the artwork in their portfolio.
- Display children’s art in the classroom at their eye level. Let the artists choose which of their art pieces to display. Mats or contrasting background paper send an important message to children about the value of their artwork! The visual character of a room indicates to children that the teacher values their work.
- As expressive language skills grow, art materials play an important role in exploring feelings and observations, and integrating thinking and motor skills. For the dual language learner, artistic forms of expression can be especially critical to establish a common ground with other children. Art is a universal form of communication!



How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in Art Area

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT			
Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 2: CHILDREN GENERATE/CREATE NEW IDEAS, APPROACHES, AND ACTIVITIES IN DAILY ROUTINES.</p>	<p>Expands personal expression through language, play, and creative exploration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses imagination to create experiments, art projects, constructions, physical challenges, dances, structures, stories, and solutions. • Makes up words, songs, or stories. • Engages in open-ended exploration of raw materials (messy play). • Uses materials in novel ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask open-ended questions to encourage creative thinking. • Offer various media for creating projects that extend over time (clay, collage, paint, music, dance, chalk, box construction). • To document and extend learning, take many pictures of children in creative activities. Encourage children to tell about the pictures, and to label and dictate stories about the pictures. • Provide opportunities for child to create and complete projects in their own way. • Offer places and times for children to display their products, if they desire. • Provide child with access to artists and artwork from their own and other cultures. • Maintain files of a child’s creations for the child to revisit and comment on.
<p>Goal 16: CHILDREN REPRESENT EXPERIENCES AND THOUGHT THROUGH SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION INCLUDING PLAY, MOVEMENT, ARTS, NUMERACY, AND LITERACY.</p>	<p>Use symbols in arts, communication, and numeracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses symbols or pictures as a representation of oral language. • May use shapes and letters to “write messages.” • May use movement and drama to recreate experiences or express emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for child to draw pictures of people, feelings, family, animals, and objects. • Identify and point out symbols during daily activities; demonstrating and explaining what they mean.

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 18: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH AND COORDINATION OF SMALL MOTOR MUSCLES.</p>	<p>Use fingers and hands for purposeful tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses various drawing and art materials (crayons, brushes, finger paints). • Copies shapes and geometric designs. • Opens and closes scissors with one hand. • Cuts a piece of paper on a straight line, then on a curve. • Uses stapler or hole-punch. • Writes recognizable letters and numerals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage child in activities that strengthen hand grasp (molding play dough, using a hand-held hole punch). • Encourage child to strengthen grasp of thumb/forefinger (e.g. gluing small pieces of paper, peeling/sticking stickers, picking up small objects with fingers). • Provide a variety of tools to encourage use of precision grasps (e.g. writing utensils such as crayons, pencils, markers, paints, spoons, forks, table knives, glue sticks, scissors). • Offer a variety of scissors, including hand over hand scissors, lefty scissors, adaptive scissors, blunt scissors, and sharp safety scissors. Demonstrate how to use them safely. • Modify activities to ensure participation of each child (e.g. attach rubber grips to pencils and pens, offer handwriting frame).



DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 28: CHILDREN DEVELOP FRIENDSHIPS WITH PEERS.</p>	<p>Engages in mutual social play that involves cooperation and shared purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plays beside peers, though not engaging in common roles or sharing materials. Interacts with peers in play, playing common themes and taking turns using the same materials and activities. Interacts with peers in play, sometimes with cooperative play themes where materials and activities are shared. Smiles, gives eye contact, and communicates verbally and non-verbally while playing with other children. Tries a variety of strategies to engage a peer. Initiates conversations with other children. Asks questions and responds when children approach or seek conversation. Briefly waits for a turn when playing with other children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for child to engage in a variety of play activities with other children (e.g. dramatic play, art projects, block building, free active physical play inside and outside, or dance class). Teach children strategies that children can use when they want to join others in play (e.g. watching other children to see what they are playing and how they are playing; offering a prop that would add something to the play; playing beside the children they want to join; or making a comment about the play). If a child is just learning how to join play, support that child as they learn new strategies. Help that child accept and move on to another play setting if rejected for that particular activity. Support the child who is nonverbal by teaching other children to use basic signs, body language, and other visual supports for communication. In school or child care settings, provide opportunities as appropriate for a child and family members to explain to the other children, what that child with special learning.
<p>Goal 37: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE BELIEF IN THEIR ABILITIES.</p>	<p>Shows confidence and competence in managing simple, everyday skills for daily living, with and without assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses delight with mastery of a skill (e.g. "I did it myself!"). Asks others to view own creations (e.g. "Look at my picture!"). Expresses own ideas and opinions. Practices a skill repeatedly until achieved. Shows pride and pleasure when someone reacts to the child's action or creation. May exaggerate own strength and abilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide plenty of time and opportunities for child to play, explore, experiment, and accomplish tasks and develop a sense of competence. Invite child to share ideas, skills, or ways to solve a problem. Offer opportunities for children to watch each other trying new skills. Assist children as they are learning a skill by figuring out where they are starting with their learning, then provide encouragement for each little bit of the skill they achieve. (e.g. talk with child about all the things she can do on her own). Provide materials and time for exploration with art materials, sand and water, blocks, and construction toys.

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 46: CHILDREN USE CREATIVE ARTS TO EXPRESS AND REPRESENT WHAT THEY KNOW, THINK, BELIEVE, OR FEEL.</p>	<p>Uses artistic expression and language to communicate emotions and make meaning of experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests out one type of art repeatedly before moving on to another (e.g. painting at easel several days in a row, using different colors, or covering the whole paper with paint). • Uses a variety of media and tools to create original works of art. • Creates art work with details representing ideas, experiences, and feelings. May tell a story about the artwork or when asked, suggest narration for the artwork. • Uses clay and other medium to create three-dimensional sculptures or to pound or pull apart to express strong emotion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each day, plan for creative art activities. • Provide structured and unstructured creative art activities. • Offer a variety of materials for free form creations (e.g. watercolors, collage materials, paints, paper, scissors, glue, crayons). • Provide space, time, materials, and a place for storing incomplete artistic products. • Provide a variety of supplies, time, and space for artistic exploration and expression. • Seek children’s permission and suggestions for displaying their creative art efforts. • Have a digital camera always ready to document children’s creative efforts. Make a file that includes a sequence showing beginning to final products.
<p>Goal 47: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF CREATIVE ARTS.</p>	<p>Responds to and create symbolic and representation art, music, dance, and dramatic themes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores and participates in various expressions of art (e.g. music, drama, visual art, sculpture). • Uses art materials such as paint, markers, clay, glue, scissors, and paper for process and artistic expression. • Notices various forms of art found in own environment. • Wonders about or asks questions about works of art, paintings, songs, dance, and theatre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily, provide a range of art materials, times, and places and spaces for visual arts. • Engage child in the observation and expression of what was seen when watching people from a variety of cultures creating art. • Invite artists to the classroom to create their particular type of art. • Talk with children about creating pictures, songs, or drama, and give them time, props, and encouragement, rather than making a model for them to copy. • Arrange for long-term art projects (e.g. mural, beading, music, dance, weaving, carving, and mask-making) with guest artists from child’s own and other cultural backgrounds.

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 61: WRITING - CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF LETTERS AND SYMBOLS.</p>	<p>Represents ideas and spoken language using drawing, scribbles, symbols, and letters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses horizontal scribbling with breaks or separate marks to represent writing. • Creates representational drawings. • Uses pictures, symbols, and letters to convey meaning. • Knows that alphabet letters are a special category of graphics that can be individually named and written. • Uses different marks for writing and drawing. • Uses scribbling and letter-like symbols to represent their name. • Labels pictures using letter-like marks. • Shows awareness of two or more different writing systems (especially appropriate for ELL and bilingual/multilingual children). • Uses letters to represent sounds in words. • Recognizes the difference between letters and numbers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of writing and drawing tools with different kinds of paper (tablets, shopping lists, loose paper, sandpaper, etc.). • Offer to write the child’s dictated words to label a drawing or tell a story. • Encourage the use of creative spelling to label pictures, write name, and write notes to family and community members. • Use the letters of the alphabet as they come up in real life situations. • Guide the child in writing his or her own name. • Offer multiple tools for writing, including markers, chalk, paint brushes, finger paints, crayons, pencils and pens, and shaving cream or play dough. • Give child a personal journal to write their name and draw pictures. • Serve as the “scribe” (writer) for a child’s dictated story, and then have child draw the illustrations to go with text. • Encourage children to describe their artwork and label it with child’s dictation.

Block Area

Unit blocks* are an essential part of an early childhood classroom. All domains of development are encouraged in a thoughtful Unit Block Area! The “virtual world” of computers and games cannot surpass good block play in richness of real experiences, creativity and imagination, socialization, and the physical development of children. From a 2½-year-old lining up rectangular blocks to make a “road” or “fence for the cows” to the group of 5-year-olds building a city with streets, houses, skyscrapers, and airports complete with land use disputes that rival any city council meeting—blocks are where real learning happens!

In our “wordy” culture, children need many opportunities to express themselves visually as they make sense of their world. Block play gives children a means of expressing their experiences and ideas in a hands-on way while becoming abstract thinkers. Recent research emphasizes the importance of the brain developing Executive Functions in the preschool years. This critical combination of working memory (who plays what role, what materials are available...) inhibitory control (being able to stop and think), and attention shifting (how high is the tower, who

is coming close, what’s happening...) are embedded in block play. While playing with blocks, children acquire a concrete understanding of the concepts crucial to logical thinking. As they choose, build with and pick up blocks, they learn about sizes, shapes, numbers, order, area, length, and weight. Blocks invite play with others and they promote social interaction with meaningful conversations. Children who are English Language Learners can build their experiences and ideas while developing new language skills with peers in block play.

Unit blocks are not like Lego bricks and other plastic toys that snap together to make shapes. Plastic blocks often limit angles to “straight” (180 degrees) or “corners” (90 degrees), and the emphasis is on small-muscle and eye-hand coordination. These are important skills and they play a valuable role in the early childhood classroom. By contrast, unit blocks encourage a whole range of angles and spatial relationships that challenge stability, architectural expression, and imagination. Whole body motion and strength are developed in the Unit Block Area.

*Unit Blocks are hardwood blocks in a variety of shapes that are all relational in size.

In the Block Area, children learn...

- Length, width, height, and depth
- Social language skills in a variety of situations
- Social skills to cooperate, share, negotiate, and plan
- To match objects to each other (one-to-one correspondence)
- To demonstrate concepts of parts/whole and same/different
- To form groups by sorting and matching sizes and shapes
- Addition and subtraction, and the concepts of more and less, higher and lower
- The names of shapes
- To create three-dimensional structures and spatial relationships
- Understanding gravity, stability, balance, and cause and effect
- Coordination of large and small muscles, eye-hand coordination, and balance
- To create and build their ideas and stories in an expressive, tangible way
- To develop a deep sense of self-confidence and motivation
- To create and negotiate real-world problems of roles, territory, and situations
- To develop the basic concept of physical science and engineering

Getting organized

The Unit Block Area encompasses so much essential learning that it needs to be given as much room as possible. The space should be large enough for at least four to six children to build at once—allowing room for the builders' bodies as well as the buildings.

- Low, smooth carpeting makes the area inviting and comfortable without being unstable for big buildings, and it helps soften the noise of falling blocks.
- Low shelves for storing blocks can help define the area and prevent disruptive "traffic" through the area.

Basic equipment

- 500-750 wooden unit blocks in a variety of shapes and sizes (check equipment catalogues for sets). Blocks are a long-term investment and can last more than a generation with proper care.
- At least three shelves at children's eye level for blocks and props.
- Baskets/bins to hold toys and props.
- Cars, trucks, and other vehicles of sizes that fit the blocks or serve to transport blocks.
- Sets of people scaled for blocks (families and community helpers representing various ethnic groups).
- Sets of farm and zoo animals.
- Pieces of colored paper and cloth for furnishings and landscaping.
- Paper, pencils, markers, crayons for making signs.
- A camera to document the building.

- Shelves labeled with block outlines make clean-up easier. The sorting, organizing, and matching of the blocks when they are returned to the shelves provides important learning, as well as the completion of the block building.
- A "No Building Zone" 8-10 inches in front of the shelves (this can be marked with tape on the rug) prevents conflicts of access to the shelves of blocks. Children need to build on the floor or at a table away from the shelves so others can get the blocks.

When children clearly see the shapes and organization of the blocks marked neatly on the shelves, it is easier to choose specific blocks and stimulate building. A jumbled pile or haphazard stack is neither inviting nor supportive of learning opportunities.



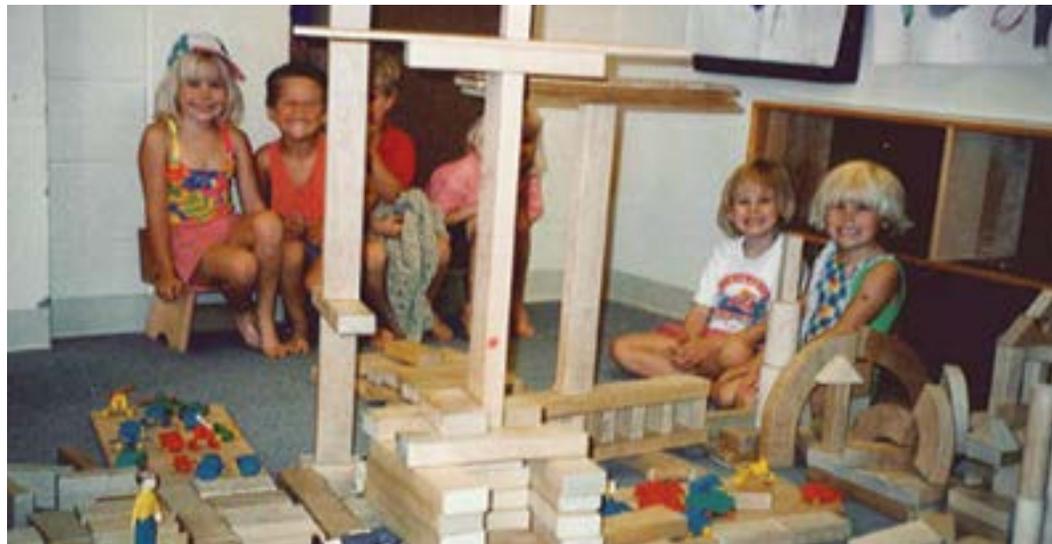
Thinking INSIDE the Blocks

"A castle built by Sam, Will, Allen, and Jim and we are inside of it. And these are special buildings, yeah! And if we knock it down we have to build it up. And we are GOOD builders!"

The castle building engaged these four-year-old boys for about 45 minutes. There was intense negotiation with each other (and with gravity) as they worked and spun an elaborate story. The narrative was a rich combination of building instructions, needed blocks, warnings of what might fall down, territory, good guys, bad guys, battles, and monsters. They were fully engaged—the rest of the classroom had vanished (except when they

needed something like paper, string, or hard hats). They were motivated learners! No need for stars or rewards—the job of solving real problems with blocks and words was powerful. By setting up a learning environment with enough space, materials, and time, we saw many "great ideas" take shape. Pick-up time required some careful deconstruction, but also allowed for talk about what happened in the story—building, balance and shapes, and plans for the next building. The builders became "delivery guys" as blocks were sorted by shape and carried to their marked place on the shelf.

"Yeah! And tomorrow we can build..."



Think About...

- Conflict and problem solving are an important part of the social skills learned with blocks, but a well-organized area can head off many frustrating problems. Some teachers (especially those with 3-year-olds) start the school year with a limited number of blocks and shapes. More blocks can be gradually added when children:
 - Become familiar with three to five shapes (halves, units, doubles, triangles, ramps).
 - Have satisfied initial building, and want more blocks.
 - Learn the basic rules of the block area (safety, putting away, etc.).
- Observing the children's block play and noting their readiness for more can help the teacher figure out when to expand.
- Children value their structures whether or not they represent specific things.
 - Asking questions such as "Tell me about what you made" encourages dialogue and offers new opportunities to explore.
 - Ask if the child needs something else for their building/story by adding props such as cars, trucks, animals, community helpers, and families.
- The Unit Block Area is another great place to encourage literacy! Roads, stores, and buildings need signs. If your space and program schedule allow for structures to be built over more than one building time, children can make "SAVE" signs. Narratives and stories can be dictated to willing adults and illustrated with drawings or photographs.
- For a child who has difficulty entering social play (either by barging in and knocking down buildings or watching wistfully), the Unit Block Area provides a teacher an opportunity to support social skills. An arm around the shoulders and a soft voice allows child and teacher to look at what is happening. Many children benefit from some support when learning to "read" social cues and join in existing play. The teacher says...
 - "What do you think they are building?," "What do you want to build?"
 - "What is happening in this game?"
 - "Do you want to build with James and Rosalie?"
 - "Is there a space for you right now?"
 - "Do you want some help asking them if you can play too?"
- The open-ended quality of block play allows children of different developmental levels to play next to each other and eventually enjoy building together. Play in the Unit Block Area will become more elaborate as children become skilled "players" and mature in their building.

How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in Block Area

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT			
Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 3: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT TO INITIATE AND COMPLETE ACTIVITIES USING A VARIETY OF APPROACHES.</p>	<p>Initiates and sustains interactions and activities with increasing independence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks a peer to join in play. Joins a play activity already in progress, with assistance. Finds and uses materials to follow through on an idea (e.g. blocks for building a tower, blank paper and crayons for drawing about a story or experience). Makes decisions about activities and materials to work with from the selection offered. Plans time for completing activities. Shows completed projects to others, and explains what they did. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate play in groups. Offer props to extend play. Protect children's projects and activities from other children's interruptions and interference. Teach children about finding enough space to do their activity or project (e.g. build with the blocks away from the shelves, so others will not be stepping to get blocks where you are building). Modify group activities to ensure participation of each child, including those with special needs. Provide environments that create opportunities for child to initiate activities where failure is acceptable. Create opportunities to "save" art, blocks, or process activities so child can return to them later. Offer opportunities to display work, including three-dimensional structures. Structure classroom environment so children select materials, work with them, and return materials to designated place.
<p>Goal 11: CHILDREN FIND MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS TO QUESTIONS, TASKS, PROBLEMS, AND CHALLENGES, INCLUDING TRIAL AND ERROR.</p>	<p>Tries multiple ways to solve problems and create play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explores various ways to solve a problem and tries out options until satisfied. Seeks assistance from another child or adult to solve problems. Modifies actions based on new information and experiences (e.g. changes block structure when the tower continues to fall). Uses emerging perspective taking to think of multiple situations for problem solving. Shows surprise and sometimes frustration when previously successful solutions do not work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be available and watchful to know when a child needs an assist with challenges, questions, and tasks to solve. Avoid interrupting children as they try varying ways to solve problems and created play. Intervene when the challenge becomes too great and the child begins to be frustrated or lose interest, and when the child asks for help. Offer the least amount of assistance needed by the child. This may be a full physical assist, a partial physical assist, words, or just a gesture. Demonstrate several alternatives to solving a problem if a child gets stuck and asks for help

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 15: CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN PRETEND OR SYMBOLIC PLAY.</p>	<p>Develops plots, scripts, and takes on roles, with a mixture of reality and fantasy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes on pretend roles and situations. Uses appropriate language, tone, and movements. • Uses primarily solitary, parallel, or associative play styles, with cooperative play sometimes occurring. • Explores experience by taking on familiar roles in the home and community (firefighters, restaurant, doctor's office). • Engages in complex make-believe play with others, uses theme-oriented play that involves multiple characters and settings. • May need help with conflict that arises when child does not take on roles or play within the expectations of another child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the child in activities and interactions that develop fantasy characters while helping them differentiate between make-believe and reality. • Provide props that can be adapted to various themes (e.g. hospital, firefighters, restaurant, airport, cooking). • Scaffold entrance into dramatic play for child who needs support to join play. • Clarify scripts and roles as part of conflict resolution. • Know the difference between styles of play, and provide protection for those children who are not yet proficient in playing cooperatively for a common goal.

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 21: CHILDREN ENGAGE IN A VARIETY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES.	Engage in complex physical movements embedded in play activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiates structured and unstructured physical activities throughout the day.• Incorporates various physical activities while transitioning from one place to another (e.g. marches between the kitchen and the bathroom, dodges pretend objects walking down a hallway, or walks backwards into the bathroom).• Participates in simple cooperative games with peers.• Uses a variety of complex movements to help with physical chores (e.g. putting away toys, independently dressing, setting the table, and picking up toys).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide child the opportunity to play in a variety of physically challenging settings (e.g. physically negotiating space for playing around and among other children).



DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 29: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE POSITIVE NEGOTIATION SKILLS.</p>	<p>Solves problems and communicates ideas with a peer, with adult supervision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the concept of “mine,” “yours,” and “ours.” • Initiates play and other activities with children using positive approaches. • Uses simple strategies to solve problems, either individually or in a group (with assistance from an adult). • Uses several turn-taking strategies (e.g. bartering, trading, and beginning to share). • Without using physical aggression negotiates with other children to solve a problem, with some adult assistance. • Seeks out adult help when conflict solutions are not working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide activities that allow child to negotiate social conflicts. • Give child ample time to solve own problems before intervening. • Model appropriate strategies for conflict resolution and use questions to stimulate thinking, (e.g. “What’s happening here?” or “What are you going to try next?”). • Build problem solving skills by engaging children in multi-faceted decisions and model increasingly sophisticated vocabulary for negotiations and communicating ideas (e.g. trade, solve, plan, options, choices). • Remind and help children follow through on solutions they come up with to negotiate with peers. • Model and provide child with words to use when in a conflict (e.g. “Tell him he can have it when you’re done.” or “May I have that when you’re done?”).
<p>Goal 38: CHILDREN REGULATE THEIR FEELINGS AND IMPULSES.</p>	<p>With adult assistance and guidance, controls aggressive actions, words, and emotions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses strong emotions constructively, with assistance. • Frequently waits a brief time for a turn. • With assistance, sticks with difficult tasks without becoming frustrated to the point of quitting or aggressive behavior. • Follows simple rules without reminders (e.g. puts toys back on a shelf, puts lids back on markers). • Uses pretend play to understand and respond to emotions. • Associates emotions with words, and facial and body expressions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate and provide guidance when child needs assistance regulating emotions. • Prepare child for changes in daily schedule by providing advance warning, talking with, and listening to child. • Provide opportunities for child to understand and discuss own and others’ feelings. • Engage child in pretend play with other children using realistic props that encourage children to act out roles and feelings in response to situations. • Acknowledge child for expressing and regulating feelings.

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 40: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING OF MEASURABLE ATTRIBUTES OF OBJECTS AND THE UNITS, SYSTEMS, AND PROCESSES OF MEASUREMENT (INCLUDING SIZE, VOLUME, HEIGHT, WEIGHT, LENGTH, AREA, AND TIME).</p>	<p>Use geometric modeling and spatial reasoning according to different dimensions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matches, sorts, groups, and classifies objects based on one or more attributes or related characteristics. Compares several objects based on one or more attributes (length, size, weight) using words such as “shorter,” and “shortest,” “bigger,” and “lighter.” Uses positional terms such as “between,” “inside,” “over,” “under,” and “behind.” Uses descriptive words for measurable properties such as length and weight, or capacity. Uses measuring tools in play activities (e.g. measuring tape, measuring cups, and scales and balances). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in activities that use nonstandard measurement. Model language and use body and objects using positional terms (behind, inside, on top, under). Provide materials that support classifying and ordering objects by size, shape, color, and volume. Provide a variety of measuring tools (tape measures, rulers, balance scales, measuring cups) for child to use in purposeful ways (e.g. cooking experiences). Continue to model language involving comparisons for size, volume, weight, and height (length) of people, toys, and objects.
<p>Goal 43: CHILDREN ENGAGE IN EXPLORING AND MAKING SENSE OF THE NATURAL WORLD BY ASKING QUESTIONS AND MAKING PREDICTIONS ABOUT CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONS THAT CAN LEAD TO GENERALIZATIONS.</p>	<p>Investigates unfamiliar phenomena using both trial and error and systematic trials, with assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes simple predictions and inferences about cause and effect relations based on observations, explorations, and experimentations with objects and events in the natural world. Compares predictions with actual observations (e.g. predicts what will happen as different sized toy cars roll down a ramp, and then shows interest and perhaps surprise at what happens). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an environment that inspires child to have ideas and figure out how to do something. Encourage child to try out ideas, make mistakes, and develop contradictions and ask, “What do you think will happen if ...?” Provide wheel toys and slopes and ramps to observe and question how they might move. Encourage children to act on their own observations of patterns and make predictions.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 44: CHILDREN DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES, AND EVENTS IN THE PAST AND PRESENT THAT RELATE TO SELF, GROUP IDENTITY, AND A SENSE OF THEIR COMMUNITY.</p>	<p>Shows awareness of personal membership of self and others in family, community, program, and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observes, describes, and predicts events around them as they connect new experiences to past. • Recognizes and identifies familiar community helpers and their association with activities, routines, and locations (e.g. firefighters/fire truck/fire station; doctor/nurse/clinic/injections; policeman/police car/siren). • Recalls information about the immediate past. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use digital photography of events at school that represent groups of children playing and doing routines together. • Assure that children know each other's names. • Talk to and listen respectfully to each child. • Provide a variety of materials and toys for pretend role play. • Provide community worker props and costumes for children to explore and pretend play.

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 49: CHILDREN COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY.	Uses a variety of communication forms with purpose to convey a message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> States opinions and preferences using simple sentences, signs, or picture boards. Describes objects and events using simple details. Initiates conversation by making statements or asking questions using why, how, when, what, where, and who, though not always choosing the correct interrogatives. Responds meaningfully in conversation with adults and peers. Dictates words, simple stories, and messages for adult to write. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak clearly to child. Encourage child to express opinions, feelings, and ideas. Provide opportunities for children to state their choices and to tell their plans. Ask open-ended questions that can be answered by child in own way, to eliminate the need for right or wrong answers. Provide opportunities for self-expression, creative representation, and oral expression (drawing materials, blocks, etc.). Provide opportunities for verbal expression in home language.
Goal 51: CHILDREN USE RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY.	Demonstrates increased comprehension of spoken language, vocabulary, and gestures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies objects by name and category. Follows three-step directions. Identifies objects by attributes (e.g. shapes, size, color, and other attributes.) Responds to yes or no, who, what, where, when, how, and why questions. Responds to basic number concepts of one, all, sets. Responds to directions in sentences with mean lengths of 5 to 7 words. Responds to opposites, comparatives, and superlatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use adult-like language when conversing. Always use correct pronunciation and grammar. Help the child gain vocabulary and better understand objects and experiences through descriptive words. Converse naturally about what the child is doing, hearing, or watching. Facilitate and encourage peer language interactions in activities, pretend play, and outings. Expand a child's vocabulary for comparison and contrasting objects and actions.
Goal 52: CHILDREN USE EXPRESSIVE VOCABULARY.	Use phrases and sentences with functional and descriptive vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answers why, what, and where questions. Uses words to further describe actions or adjectives (running fast, playing well). Uses words to express emotions (happy, sad, tired, or scared). Uses complex vocabulary to describe events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When talking with a child in conversation, make ample wait time for the child's response. Support meaningful use of language for dual language learners (DLL) by avoiding translating everything for child and by using props, gestures, role-plays, pictures, physical movements, and demonstrations. Engage child in play for using a varied vocabulary to describe emotions (frustrated, discouraged, thrilled, confused).

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 61: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF LETTERS AND SYMBOLS.</p>	<p>Represents ideas and spoken language using drawing, scribbles, symbols, and letters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses pictures, symbols, and letters to convey meaning. • Uses different marks for writing and drawing. • Uses scribbling and letter-like symbols to represent their name. • Shows awareness of two or more different writing systems (especially appropriate for ELL and bilingual/multilingual children). • Uses letters to represent sounds in words. • Recognizes the difference between letters and numbers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of writing and drawing tools with different kinds of paper (tablets, shopping lists, loose paper, sandpaper, etc.). • Offer to write the child’s dictated words to label a drawing or tell a story. • Encourage the use of creative spelling to label pictures, write name, and write notes to family and community members. • Use the letters of the alphabet as they come up in real life situations. • Guide the child in writing his or her own name.
<p>Goal 64: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY IN HOME LANGUAGE WHILE ACQUIRING BEGINNING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH.</p>	<p>Demonstrates varying competency in learning English depending on age, onset, and amount of language exposure. Communicates with purpose to convey information, and uses phrases and sentences with more complex vocabulary in home language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasionally inserts words from home language while speaking English. • Relies on non-verbal cues to communicate in English, but does not rely on non-verbal cues to communicate in home language. • Follows linguistic rules of home language and constructs own rules for English. • Uses sentences in home language and begins to use single word or telegraphic speech in English to communicate. • A bilingual child adjusts language and communication form used according to person with whom he/she is speaking or place where he/she is at. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label shelves and toy containers with pictures and both written languages, each language consistently color coded (red: English; blue: Spanish; green: Bosnian). • Encourage the use of English in school by providing a safe, responsive audience. • Wait for child “to find” English word when asking a question or needing a response. • Help child develop reasoning skills through use of home language. • Help native, English-speaking children understand the English Language Learner’s speech and vocabulary.

Books and Reading Area

“Read me a story!”

“Once upon a time...”

“Every living creature needs...”

“Brown bear, brown bear what do you see?...”

We all have favorite opening lines or stories that instantly transport us to a special place or time.

Reading and literacy are essential elements of school readiness and success in life. The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines' Domain 5 specifically addresses communication,

In the Reading Area, Children Learn...

- The delight of favorite stories
- Recognition of the sounds and rhythms of language
- To follow story lines from simple to complex
- About joining familiar repetitive phrases
- About “reading” pictures
- Verbal and listening skills
- To expand their vocabularies
- New words to express feelings and ideas
- Interpretation of what is read or heard
- About new ideas, people, and places
- To recognize and retell familiar stories

language, and literacy development. The Books and Reading Area promotes these kinds of learning through looking at books, listening to and retelling stories, and enjoying the expanding world of books. Learning “how books work” is an important part of literacy: from front to back, from the top of the page to the bottom, the continuity of information from page to page, the fact that the same book can be read again with the same words and pictures. It is a big learning “A-ha!” when a child realizes that the spoken word has a written counterpart. It takes lots of time, experience, expanding vocabulary, stages, and maturation to become a reader!

The life experiences and expressive vocabulary that a child brings to text are important links to the growth of understanding contained in print and stories. The delight of reading and learning can enrich a childhood and a lifetime!

- To distinguish between real and make-believe stories
- That printed words have meaning and can be read again and again
- The names of the parts of books
- How books work
- About authors and illustrators as the unique creators of a story



Getting organized

Set up an inviting and relatively quiet space dedicated to reading. While print and writing materials saturate the early childhood classroom, a special reading area invites children to immerse themselves in the world of books, favorite stories, and discovery of information. If the space is large, it can serve for daily group reading and writing. Many early childhood classrooms use the group meeting space as a place for the teacher to read to all of the children, and a smaller space for their “library.” Carpet, cushions, and a visually inviting display of books and pictures at children’s eye level contribute to a welcoming environment.

When stocking the shelves, consider the interests of the children in your class, your curriculum, and the range of different kinds of books. Big books make it

easier for children to see pictures and words during group reading, and they give teachers the opportunity to point to letters, sounds, and story details. Rotate books and refresh the choices frequently. Utilize your center’s and school’s collections, as well as public libraries!

The Computer Area could be near the Reading Area or incorporated into it to build the connection between various forms of literacy and finding resources for learning. Some classrooms integrate the Writing Area into the Book and Reading Area: this is a classroom/school-specific decision dependent on the curriculum framework, teacher preference, classroom space, and the ages and skills of the children.

Basic equipment

- A display shelf or bookcase where children can see the covers of books for easy selection
- A variety of books, refreshed regularly
- Books of fiction, non-fiction, picture books, and cultural books
- Books in the languages of children in the class
- A child’s CD player (maybe headphones) and stories on CD
- Puppets that match the stories
- Flannel board/magnetic board and story characters
- A big book stand and access to big books
- Comfortable places to sit
- Your public library and children’s librarian!



Think About...

Reading aloud to a group of children creates the opportunity to build vocabularies, topic understanding and relationships. Think about someone you have heard who was a mesmerizing reader—the different voices, the intensity, and the way they drew you into the story. Think about your group of children: their attention spans, current interests, and languages they speak. Daily group book reading enriches and expands all parts of a child’s development, the group experience and the learning environment.

- Pause to ask: “What do you think will happen next?” “Do you think he feels happy?” “Is this story real or pretend?” or “Do bears really wear hats?” This engages children and extends their thinking and language skills.
- Invite participation: “Chicka-chicka-boom-boom,” or “...and he was still hungry.” Young children usually delight in books with rhymes or word patterns. A pause by the teacher with a prompting look invites the class to join in the rhyme or response.
- Repeated phrases are helpful to dual language learners as they use the pictures to understand and join “the chorus.” Children learning a second language need books that support their “home language,” as well as books in English for their full language development and learning!
- Picture books with photographs and clear pictures appeal to younger children who are building their understanding of people, animals, and life situations. As children mature, they are ready for more abstract or imaginative drawings. Photographs are great for non-fiction books about science, places, and how things work. Look for both good text and well-matched illustrations.
- Books (fiction and non-fiction) can address social and emotional issues for children: books can be funny, they can address families, culture, disabilities, and new situations.
- Alphabet books help make the connections between letters and their sounds and shapes.
- Poems and rhymes use sound and rhythm to convey meaning or nonsense.

An extension of reading books is the re-telling of stories and folk tales—a rich oral tradition. For children, the re-telling of stories becomes a window into their understanding and feelings as well as their thinking. Telling or acting *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* gives a child the chance to be big, small, or the scary Troll, while also repeating the key phrases (“Trip, trop, trip, trop came...”). Puppets and flannel/velcro boards support this kind of dramatization and re-telling.

The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines are carefully aligned with the Idaho Kindergarten Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy. Using the ELEGs in your classroom builds the foundational skills for school readiness in language, reading and writing.

Teachers need to tell parents about the power and pleasure of reading to their children. Reading together is about much more than building school skills of speaking, listening, hearing sounds, and comprehending ideas. Mister Rogers said, “Attitudes are caught, not taught.” Taking delight in reading is a contagious attitude! Reading together can build family closeness, create a bedtime routine, and build thinking skills.

Sweet Moments

Two 3-year-old “bestest friends” sit in a cozy nest of pillows and dolls they have built in the Book Area. Each has her own favorite storybook. Today they are reading to each other. They snuggle and giggle, then “read” with great expression all the pages of the story they have memorized. Occasionally they correct one another about turning the page.

This is a favorite and often repeated activity. Sometimes there are variations, such as reading “just like the teacher” with gestures, inflections, and smiles. Such wonderful moments are the tender beginnings of what might be a long friendship, and these moments certainly build their view of themselves as happy successful readers!

How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in Reading Area

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 10: CHILDREN SHOW EMERGING ABILITY TO IMITATE BEHAVIORS THAT THEY HAVE OBSERVED.	Use imitation as a foundation for symbolic play and sequencing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imitates sequences of action (songs with gestures, movement games). Uses phrases or plays out plots from favorite books or movies. Sings and gestures to songs with both actions and words (Wheels on the Bus, folk songs with gestures). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage child to participate in everyday tasks (stirring, pouring, and wiping up). Use longer action songs with sequences of motions (use a slow pace as children first learn to do both words and actions). Use picture cards to help child see actions they can imitate.

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 19: CHILDREN USE THEIR SENSES (SIGHT, HEARING, SMELL, TASTE, AND TOUCH) TO GUIDE AND INTEGRATE THEIR INTERACTIONS.	Coordinate motor activities based on sensory input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates motor activity based on visual input. Physically reacts appropriately to the environment. Demonstrates concepts through movement (e.g. imitates an animal through movement, sounds, dress, dramatization, dance). Refines eye-hand coordination for precise movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play word games, read books, and sing songs that include the senses. Provide opportunities for the child to integrate rhythm, sounds, and music with motor activity (e.g. striking a drum to the beat or marching with the rhythm). Provide opportunities to use touch, pressure, and texture to learn to push, pull, or lift an object effectively.

DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 27: CHILDREN TRUST, INTERACT WITH, AND SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM ADULTS.</p>	<p>Show confidence in seeking assistance from familiar adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches adults for assistance and offers to assist adults. • Carries out actions to please adults. • Asks questions of adults to obtain information. • Follows caregiver’s guidance for appropriate behavior in different environments. • Brings simple problem situations to adult’s attention. • Works alone at a task, but asks for help when needed. • Works cooperatively with an adult to plan and organize activities and solve problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model, explain, and provide opportunities for child to interact appropriately with and show respect to adults. • Communicate expectations clearly by modeling and showing the child ways to respond. • Show respect for child’s choices and attempts at solving problems (e.g. when children are both wanting a toy, help them work out a way to each get a turn). • Offer support and social cues for child who is working to establish peer relationships. • Daily, provide one-on-one time when a child can confide in a parent, child care provider, or school staff.
<p>Goal 33: CHILDREN DEVELOP A SENSE OF HUMOR.</p>	<p>Use novel language, sounds, and meanings to initiate interaction with adults and peers. Use physical humor for social purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laughs with others. • Mimics others actions and expressions, sometimes impersonating favorite amusing characters. • Laughs for the delight of laughing. • Makes up sounds and rhymes without meaning. • Combines nonsense syllables and real words. • Uses distortions of familiar attributes/ concepts (e.g. man’s head/dog’s body, oversized changes in size, shape). • Laughs at gender reversals and incongruous actions (e.g. a cow on skates, a cat in a costume). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect jokes and group silliness and respond with smiles. Intervene if the silliness becomes physically hazardous to the children. • Read amusing books and sing funny songs that include absurdities, taking turns with the child to make up verses or create absurd stories. • Use humor as a tool for language development. Offer children opportunities to use reversals of ideas and knowledge that result in absurdities. • Clarify social humor between children. • Use joint attention, social referencing, and reciprocation with child when humor is tentative. • Clarify and support joking/humor between peers.

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 44: CHILDREN DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES, AND EVENTS IN THE PAST AND PRESENT THAT RELATE TO SELF, GROUP IDENTITY, AND A SENSE OF THEIR COMMUNITY.</p>	<p>Shows awareness of personal membership of self and others in family, community, program, and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to demonstrate awareness of group membership according to different environments, activities, and routines (e.g. uses terms to show group identity, such as our house, the farmer’s fence, my grandmother, our car, the policeman’s car). • Observes, describes, and predicts events around them as they connect new experiences to past. • Identifies group membership in family and explains roles (e.g. Mommy goes to work, and she buys groceries...) • Recognizes that people rely on others for goods and services. • Recalls information about the immediate past. • During routines and daily activities, uses vocabulary associated with time and sequence (now, today, and later). • Discusses different cultures as experienced through books and media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to draw pictures, paint, and dictate stories that depict child’s group identity at home or other settings (e.g. dance recital, gymnastics, or church group). • Talk to and listen respectfully to each child. • Model respect for diversity. • Tell stories that show how people are alike and different. • Tell stories and post pictures of celebrations or typical routines across cultures. • Recite and display words or expressions in different languages that express the same thought or object. • Have ample time for children to describe and ask questions about family routines and events during group times, including circle times, small group times, dramatic play, and mealtimes. • Provide picture books illustrating community workers, family activities, and community events.

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 48: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE THE MEANING OF LANGUAGE BY LISTENING.</p>	<p>Receives messages in conversations, directions, music, and stories.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attends to simple stories. • Gains information and understanding through listening. • Listens and participates in finger plays, stories, and nursery rhymes. • Reacts to a spoken refrain in a story such as “And they all said BOO!” or “I think I can, I think I can.”). • Selects specific details in a story and repeats them. • Responds to questions with appropriate concepts and answers. • Attends to an adult or peer who is speaking. • Attends to stories. With support, can ask and answer questions about what is happening in a story (e.g. “What happens next?” “Are you worried about the little bear?”). • Has a growing ability to appropriately respond to fantasy and reality. • Is working on responding to concepts of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the length and complexity of books you read and stories that you tell the child. • Offer a listening ear as children “read” a book you just read, or retell the story you read. • Engage children in two way conversations about pictures and accompanying stories in books, magazines, and catalogs. • Read or tell stories with a refrain that children can speak and change (“Trip trop, who’s that trip- tropping over my bridge?!”). • Play games with child that require listening and understanding (“Going on a Bear Hunt,” “Red Light/Green Light, Red stand up, green stand up, yellow and blue sit down”). • Provide English Language Learner (ELL) or child learning any other language with opportunities to participate in by using gestures, props, pictures, demonstration. • Provide tape-recorded stories from the child’s home culture and in the child’s home language. • Provide a listening center for child to listen to books, music, and to respond to sound games. • Ask questions and give prompts about events in the past, present, and future.
<p>Goal 54: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPREHENSION AND MEANING IN LANGUAGE.</p>	<p>Demonstrates increased comprehension of language structure and content and vocabulary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to simple questions. • Responds to “wh” questions (what, when). • Recall information and sequences from stories and poems. • Recognizes and responds appropriately to nonverbal cues. • Engages in conversation that develops a thought or idea (tells about a past or future event). • Recognizes and responds in a culturally appropriate way to more subtle nonverbal cues. • Comprehends analogies. • Understands complex sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk, sign, sing, and read to child. • Read colorful books to child. • Use the environment to encourage discussion of familiar objects, places, and people. • Use adult-like language when conversing. • Help the child explain experiences through the use of descriptive language. • Discuss concepts from stories read. • Establish routines in the child’s world. • Compare and contrast objects and actions for the child.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 56: CHILDREN DEVELOP PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS.</p>	<p>Recognizes phonemes as both initial and ending sounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminates letter sounds that are the same and different (La, la, la, da, da, da). • Joins in and repeats rhyming songs, finger plays, and poems. • Shows beginning understanding of rhyme and alliteration. • Recognizes the similar initial sounds of words (bug, bat, boy). • Finds objects in a picture with the same beginning sound, with assistance. • Makes up silly words and rhymes. • Differentiates between similar-sounding words (three and tree). • Fills in the missing rhyming word in a song or story. • Identifies the beginning sound of familiar words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a sound for children and ask them to listen for that sound as you read a simple story or poem with that sound. • Have child complete sentences in familiar and predictable books and stories (Brown Bear, Brown Bear; What Do You See?). • Sing word songs, leaving out parts as you sing along (such as BINGO, and in each consecutive paragraph leave out a letter but mark the spot with silence or a clap). • When reading to child or children include them by involving them in the storytelling (omit a word that they fill in, encourage them to make appropriate sounds and hand motions, ask them to answer open-ended questions). • Have child complete sentences in familiar and predictable books and stories.
<p>Goal 58: READING - CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS OF PRINT CONCEPTS.</p>	<p>Knows that languages and words have a written form that can be read, and shows awareness of reading conventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies some letters in own name, and some letters in others names. • Enjoys following along as book is read. • Begins to read books from front to back and recognizes front and back of book. • Turns pages one at a time. • Differentiates between print and pictures. • Knows that printed text carries meaning when read. • Recognizes that written words represent spoken words. • Imitates the act of reading a book by looking at pictures, reciting from memory, or retelling of familiar stories. • Differentiates between letters and numbers. • Begins to understand that print progresses from left to right (exceptions are Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese text). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read daily to child. • Plan to read and re-read books with patterns and repetition. • Share enthusiasm and love for reading. • Encourage child to follow the text with movement, mime, or choral reading. • Write child's dictated stories and read back to them. • Assist child in creating books and other printed materials in home language and other languages. • Keep a variety of fiction and non-fiction books, poetry, etc., where child can reach them and look through them. Place books near couch, chairs, pillows, and or bed. • Make regular visits to the library. • Allow children to select books.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 59: READING - CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPREHENSION OF PRINTED MATERIALS AND ORAL STORIES.</p>	<p>Understands information from oral stories, reading books, and pictures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses pictures to predict a story. • Imitates the act of reading a book by looking at pictures, reciting from memory, or retelling of familiar stories. • Orally fills in or completes familiar text when looking at picture books. • Tells own stories with conventions (“once upon a time...”). Begins to make predictions for what comes next in the story. • Explores characters in stories with puppets, dramatic play, and flannel board figures. • Begins to make personal connections to character and events in a story and relating to real life experiences. • Begins to understand the sequence of a story (beginning, middle, and end). • Makes up an ending for a story. • Distinguishes between fictional story books and non-fiction information books with assistance. • Recognizes that oral language has a written counterpart (a spoken phrase can be written and read). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to read and re-read books with patterns and repetition. • Share enthusiasm and love for reading. • Provide child with literary props. • Ask child to make predictions about a story and draw connections to themselves. • Show the cover of a book and ask child to predict what will happen in the story. • When reading a favorite story with child, pause before an often repeated word and give him/her the opportunity to say the word. • Engage with child in retelling a recently read or listened to story. • Engage child in looking at wordless picture books, tell the story in your own words, and then encourage child to tell their own version of the story based on the pictures. • Make regular visits to the library. • Allow children to select books.
<p>Goal 60: READING - CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS THAT WRITTEN MATERIALS CAN BE USED FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES.</p>	<p>Uses books and written materials to gain information and enjoyment in a variety of settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses maps, menus, cookbooks, dictionaries during play. • Uses printed materials for entertainment (pretending to read). • Imitates common reading activities appropriately in play (pretends to use directions while putting something together, pretends to write a list or message). • Realizes that letters and words represent ideas and feelings. • Recognizes that printed materials have power (addresses, phone numbers, last name, knowledge). • Selects books to read. • Cares appropriately for books and pictures. • Uses signs in the environment for information. • Finds information in books. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read a variety of print including magazines, maps, menus, recipes, environmental print. • Use reference books to look up information in response to child’s questions (e.g. “I don’t know; let’s look it up.”). • Use cookbooks with pictures instead of words to give a recipe. • Provide opportunities for child to write and read messages to other children (put SAVE sign on a block or building bricks construction). • Refer to repair manuals, menus, cookbooks, phone books, and internet sites for information; and place in play areas. • Re-read favorite stories. • Make regular visits to the library. • Allow children to select books.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 64: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY IN HOME LANGUAGE WHILE ACQUIRING BEGINNING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH.</p>	<p>Demonstrate varying competency in learning English depending on age, onset, and amount of language exposure.</p> <p>Communicates with purpose to convey information, and uses phrases and sentences with more complex vocabulary in home language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recalls words from simple songs in home language and recognizes words from songs in English. • Occasionally inserts words from home language while speaking English. • Relies on non-verbal cues to communicate in English, but does not rely on non-verbal cues to communicate in home language. • Focuses on the meaning of words rather than grammar in acquiring spoken English language competency. • Follows linguistic rules of home language and constructs own rules for English. • A bilingual child adjusts language and communication form used according to person with whom he/she is speaking or place where he/she is at. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide picture books in child’s native language and in English. • Teach songs and finger plays in child’s native language and in English. • Model new concepts with pictures and actions paired with English words. • Wait for child “to find” English word when asking a question or needing a response. • Provide a lot of repetition when introducing new concepts. • Model positive vocabulary learning strategies (reading cues from the context). • Help native, English-speaking children understand the English Language Learner’s speech and vocabulary. • All instruction must be sensitive to the child’s conceptual understanding in both the home language(s) and English.

Carpentry Area

Children love to “make stuff” and figure out how things work! They like to imitate adults and use “real tools” like their parents. A satisfying sense of competence comes from pounding a nail or sawing a piece of wood. When using carpentry tools, children use their hands and large muscles and work on balance, coordination, and motor planning skills. Pounding nails can be soothing

In the Carpentry Area, Children Learn...

- About working independently
- Motor skills, coordination, and strength
- Hand-eye coordination
- Resiliency—to try new things and to try again
- About working with tools
- Safety skills and awareness
- Stability and balance

Getting organized

Clear boundaries (sheltered from other classroom areas) and safety are prime concerns when arranging a room with a Carpentry Area. A round of wood, a hammer, and nails can work in a visible corner; however, a workbench needs space for children’s movements, a display area for tools and wood, and storage. In good weather, a carpentry bench can be placed outside under a covered porch, or near a dry, locked storage shed. Perhaps your carpentry area changes with the seasons as well as with children’s skills.

Like other curriculum areas, labeled spaces for equipment are important and support children’s learning and completion of tasks. A peg board with hooks and

for children who feel frustrated, angry, or overstimulated, allowing them to rejoin the group. For younger children, pounding nails and sawing are usually solitary activities, but four- and five-year-olds often plan and negotiate projects or work side by side. Layers of learning and new skills are constructed along with airplanes, boats and inventions in the Carpentry Area.

- To explore force, and cause and effect
- About the properties of different materials
- To be creative with construction
- About taking apart (deconstructing) to understand how things work
- A sense of competence
- To plan and sequence

outlines of the saw, hammer, and other tools makes tools visible and inviting. Labeled cans or clear containers for different kinds of nails support discrimination skills and the selection process. Wood is bulky and usually needs an array of containers—these can be sorted by dimensions. Good carpenters organize their tools and supplies!

An area with carpet or even just a defining piece of a rug helps minimize noise. Visibility for supervision is an important safety consideration. Limits to the number of children at the carpentry bench and in the area are other organizational and safety decisions.

Basic Equipment

- A sturdy work bench or low table with a vise
- A tool rack with hooks, and outlines and labels for the tools
- Thick rigid foam, golf tees, and wooden mallets for beginning pounding skills
- Real tools:
 - 14-inch crosscut saw (sharpen annually for safety)
 - 6 oz. hammer
 - Crescent wrench
 - Screw drivers: mid-sized, flathead, and Phillips
- Wood: pine or other “soft” woods (no plywood!)
 - 1” x 1”
 - 2” x 4”
 - Boards less than 24” (find scraps)
- Nails with heads, including short, large-headed roofing nails
- Safety goggles
- Sandpaper
- Paint brushes and tempera paint
- Paper and pencils to draw plans, labels, etc.
- Tape measures and rulers
- A round pine stump for pounding nails
- Washable glue

“New Vocabulary!”

Alicia had a plan: she wanted to build a boat for the lions so she chose the Carpentry Area after morning meeting. She had been doing a lot of pounding nails and gluing wood scraps, cork, and cardboard on boards. She went to the carpentry bench, put on her safety goggles and carefully selected a 2x4 piece of wood. You could almost see the “wheels turning” as she looked over the board. It must have been too long, for she put it in the vise and took the saw off its hook.

She had some trouble getting the cut started, and so she asked the teacher to help. Some instruction about positioning the wood in the vise, how to stand, and aligning her arm and saw perpendicular to the board supported her success. After a few pulls and tries, Alicia was sawing. As she got “the feel,” she sawed faster. Suddenly she stopped and looked at her progress, and exclaimed: “Look, it makes crumbs!”

“Sawdust” became a favorite word in her vocabulary.

Think About...

Carpentry skills follow a sequence. The use of some tools is dependent on the development of strength, grasp, and eye-hand coordination. You don't need to begin with the carpentry bench.

- A good starting point for children 2½-years and older is to pound golf tees into a piece of rigid foam (recycled foam works well) with a light hammer or wooden mallet. This builds strength in the arms and hand grasp, and helps develop the coordination to hit the tee with the hammer. Children usually use both hands when they start—this can be a good time to introduce safety goggles and talk about safety.
- The next step is to pound nails into a stump. A round of pine with a diameter wide enough to provide good stability and high enough (less than waist high) for a child to kneel and pound into is the foundation. Roofing nails are short and have wide heads (good targets) and they don't take long to pound all the way into the stump. Teach children how to pinch the nail and gently start it into the wood, and then put both hands on the handle of the hammer to pound the nail.
- When a child comes to you with a building plan, it is time to move to the carpentry bench. Say, for example, the task is to nail two pieces of wood together.
- Again, learning how to pinch the nail and start it into the wood is important to protect fingers and ensure success. Pounding the nail into the top piece of wood until it just pokes through, then placing it on the base can reduce frustration while building logic. At first, using both hands to pound helps with accuracy, stability, and success. In time, children will feel how to use the weight of the hammer by using one hand and moving it further up the handle for more force—the physics of feel and experience.

- Sawing skills require greater development of grasp, coordination, and a stable stance. Start with pieces of 1x1 or 2x2 pine secured in the vise. Explain the importance of allowing enough length to ensure that the saw doesn't cut the work table. Show children the "teeth" of the saw and let them feel the sharpness of a real saw. Talk about safety, and let them offer suggestions for being safe in carpentry. Help each child stand with their arm and the saw in a straight line at a right angle to the wood. If they are pulling or pushing at a different angle, the saw blade will get stuck. Use the hand that is not grasping the saw to hold on to the wood for stability.
- Children who have mastered the basics can take on projects. A teacher and children can make plans to make "rhythm shakers" from a 1x1 length of sanded wood, with bottle caps nailed on the wood. Group decisions can be made about the length, the number of caps, and ideas about painting and decorating the shakers. The plan can be written and illustrated, then posted in the Carpentry Area.

Tools invite exploration of how everyday objects work. Along with construction, deconstruction can take place on the carpentry bench. The best "take aparts" are mechanical devices rather than electronic devices: most electronics contain toxins and are best safely recycled. Old wind-up clocks have parts to explore and moving parts that can be seen. A seasoned preschool teacher advises looking for old sewing machines as the "ultimate take apart" for four- to six-year-olds. With the outer screws loosened, children spend focused time unscrewing, finding gears, and seeing how the drive wheel makes the inside parts turn. Using a screwdriver takes many skills: hand grasp and wrist rotation are specific motions. Finding screws and connecting pieces takes careful scrutiny, as does the identification of which kind of screwdriver to use. Sorting small gears and pieces can lead to the creation of new inventions or sculptures!

How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in the Carpentry Area

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 3: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT TO INITIATE AND COMPLETE ACTIVITIES USING A VARIETY OF APPROACHES.</p>	<p>Initiates and sustains interactions and activities with increasing independence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects new activities during playtime (e.g. creates art with an unfamiliar medium). • Finds and uses materials to follow through on an idea. • Makes decisions about activities and materials to work with from the selection offered. • Plans time for completing activities. • Shows completed projects to others, and explains what they did. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach children about finding enough space to do their activity or project. • Modify group activities to ensure participation of each child, including those with special needs. • Provide environments that create opportunities for child to initiate activities where failure is acceptable. • Offer opportunities to display work, including three-dimensional structures. • Structure classroom environment so children select materials, work with them, and return materials to designated place.
<p>Goal 11: CHILDREN FIND MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS TO QUESTIONS, TASKS, PROBLEMS, AND CHALLENGES, INCLUDING TRIAL AND ERROR.</p>	<p>Tries multiple ways to solve problems and create play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores various ways to solve a problem and tries out options until satisfied. • Seeks assistance from another child or adult to solve problems. • Modifies actions based on new information and experiences (e.g. changes block structure when the tower continues to fall). • Shows surprise and sometimes frustration when previously successful solutions do not work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available and watchful to know when a child needs an assist with challenges, questions, and tasks to solve. • Offer the least amount of assistance needed by the child. This may be a full physical assist, a partial physical assist, words, or just a gesture. • Demonstrate several alternatives to solving a problem if a child gets stuck and asks for help. • Guide child through the problem-solving process (e.g. "The wagon is stuck. What can we do?").

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 20: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE THE STAMINA AND ENERGY TO PARTICIPATE IN DAILY ACTIVITIES.	Engage in organized and spontaneous physical activity both indoors and outside.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitively practices new skills. • Engages in unstructured active physical play on a daily basis (60 minutes each day). • Engages in structured active physical play 30 minutes each day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of daily opportunities for the child to engage in noncompetitive physical activities. • Provide at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activities each day. • Make physical activity interesting and challenging.
Goal 26: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF SAFETY RULES.	Follow safety rules, with and without assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies safety signs posted indoors and outdoors. • Understands and anticipates the consequences of not following rules. • Shows an interest in participating in setting rules for indoor and outdoor play in a classroom setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic safety equipment for all of child's activities, including helmets, flotation devices, and seat belts. • Model safe practices (e.g. wearing personal floatation devices, helmets, and practicing fire safety). • Reassure children that you are here to keep them safe. • Encourage participation in setting rules for the classroom.

DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 38: CHILDREN REGULATE THEIR FEELINGS AND IMPULSES.	With adult assistance and guidance, controls aggressive actions, words, and emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With assistance, calms self after having strong emotions. Frequently waits a brief time for a turn. • With assistance, sticks with difficult tasks without becoming frustrated to the point of quitting or aggressive behavior. • Follows simple rules without reminders (e.g. puts toys back on a shelf, puts lids back on markers). • Uses most materials for intended purpose, and safely (e.g. uses paints or markers on paper, uses glue stick with attention to keeping other surfaces clear of the glue). • Names and talks about own emotions and controlling those emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate and provide guidance when child needs assistance regulating emotions. • Provide opportunities for child to understand and discuss own and others' feelings. • Be aware of cultural and gender differences in expressing feelings. • Avoid stereotyping a child's expression of emotion (e.g. validate both boys and girls when they cry or when they get angry). • Acknowledge child for expressing and regulating feelings.

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 41: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING OF PATTERNS, RELATIONS, AND FUNCTIONS USED TO ORGANIZE THEIR WORLD AND FACILITATE PROBLEM SOLVING.</p>	<p>Sorts, orders, classifies, and forms simple patterns among objects using color, number, size, and shape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compares shape and size of familiar objects. • Sorts and builds stable structures with two- and three-dimensional shapes. • Sorts and classifies objects using vocabulary to describe and compare groups (e.g. more/less and same/different). • Creates pictures and structures using various shapes. • Puts together and takes apart shapes to make other shapes (e.g. uses two triangles to make a rectangle). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for child to create art projects that use shapes. • Provide materials that can be connected and combined to create new shapes. • Provide picture recipes that include step by step instructions for children to follow and complete. • Ask child to describe or explain a sequence used during a familiar activity or routine and ask, "What comes first?," "What comes next?," "What comes last?" • Provide storage for materials that encourage sorting clean up (labeled separate containers for pencils or markers).

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 52: CHILDREN USE EXPRESSIVE VOCABULARY.</p>	<p>Uses phrases and sentences with functional and descriptive vocabulary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers why, what, and where questions. • Uses new vocabulary in spontaneous speech. • Asks the meaning of unfamiliar words and then experiments with using them. • Uses words to further describe actions or adjectives (running fast, playing well). • Uses multiple words to explain ideas. • Uses words to express emotions (happy, sad, tired, or scared). • Uses complex vocabulary to describe events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When talking with a child in conversation, make ample wait time for the child's response. • Model for the child how to use and expand language (jokes, rhymes, songs). • Support meaningful use of language for dual language learners (DLL) by avoiding translating everything for child and by using props, gestures, role-plays, pictures, physical movements, and demonstrations. • Engage child in play for using a varied vocabulary to describe emotions (frustrated, discouraged, thrilled, confused).

Cooking Experiences Area

Cooking provides the kind of “real life” experiences that delight young children. Talking, sharing, passing, serving, and pouring are important experiences for a child’s healthy development. Setting the table with napkins, cups, and chairs builds number sense and a sense of caring for others. The sense of competence that comes from making, sharing, and enjoying food enhances sense of self and

relationships with others. Parents who visit to share traditional foods expand cultural understanding and widen children’s sense of taste and food. In addition, health and good nutrition become part of everyday experience. The Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines have specific goals and references for nutrition and health. Good eating habits are supported in the classroom!

When Cooking, Children Learn...

- About eating healthy food
- Sequences and how to follow directions
- Measuring and counting
- To use their senses of taste, touch, and smell
- To try new foods
- How to watch ingredients change
- New words and vocabulary
- About cooperation and working together
- To use real kitchen tools
- About safety
- To match pictures, numbers, and words
- New problem solving skills

Basic Equipment

- Mixing bowls of several sizes
- Large spoons (some wooden) for mixing
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Potato mashers
- Whisks
- Graters and peelers
- A sieve/colander
- Funnels
- Tongs
- Small clear plastic pitchers
- Knives: sharp ones, silverware ones, and sharp blunt-ended “spreader knives”
- Cutting boards
- Pizza cutters
- Muffin pans and paper liners, and cookie sheets
- Hot pads
- A dishpan and drainer, scrubbers, paper towels, and dish soap
- Disinfectant wipes or bleach solution for tables and food preparation surfaces

Getting Organized

The first big question: does your classroom have access to a stove and refrigerator? If not, an electric frying pan and a microwave or toaster oven are alternatives to kitchen equipment. Food prepared without heat can also provide experience and healthy snacks for young children. (If your school has a commercial kitchen, sanitation code usually doesn't allow children in the kitchen because safety is an issue.) A sink is important for hand washing, as a water source, and for clean-up. Some classrooms have space for a Cooking Center, but many classrooms set up a snack table for cooking experiences. "Cooking boxes" (storage bins with lids) organize tools and ingredients for specific kinds of cooking (pancakes, scrambled eggs, biscuits, etc.). For occasional use, coolers can keep ingredients and prepared foods at a safe temperature.

It is critical to know about the food allergies and sensitivities of the children in your class! Peanut allergies can be life-threatening—they require vigilance by teachers, cooks, and parents who bring treats. Children with special needs may need adaptations for chewing, swallowing, specific food textures, and choking hazards.

Simple, healthy recipes that children enjoy making and eating are worth collecting! Write them on large cards (or posters) using pictures (3 measuring cups, 2 eggs), numbers, and words (color code for languages). Laminate them for classroom use. Children can read the pictures and become quite skilled at following the recipes.

Real kitchen tools are important. Children enjoy using "grown-up" utensils, and these utensils can develop skills and help children understand some safety rules.

- Thinking skills develop when using a hand egg beater (compared to a whisk) when mixing eggs or pancake batter.
- Small muscles and eye-hand coordination are involved with spreading, cutting, and peeling.

- Pouring from a small pitcher is an important skill to develop when filling a bowl or cup.
- Concepts like more, enough, go, and stop are observed.
- Getting a small sponge to wipe up the spills is an important self-sufficiency skill.

Decide if you want children to help with clean-up and dish washing. Washing the bowls, whisks, and measuring cups in a sudsy dishpan can be a part of the food preparation experience, and can become an extension of water play. (Cooking equipment will still need to be run through a dishwasher, or sanitized.)



"Mmm, this tastes good!"

Cooking with a group of three-year-olds is a wonderful (untidy) adventure! We started with "smashed potatoes:" warm boiled potatoes were put on the table in flat bottomed pans with several kinds of "smashers." Children washed their hands, chose their tool, and took turns mashing and watching the others.

They were excited and amazed as they transformed the chunks of spuds into nice lumpy mashed potatoes. The potatoes were happily eaten after

being garnished with shredded cheese and/or butter. "What tastes good?," "How do the potatoes feel on your tongue?," "How did you change the potatoes?" and "Can you smell them?" became the snacktime conversation.

Young children often don't know where food comes from, or how it changes when cooked and prepared. Children usually like foods they have helped prepare, forming a foundation for healthy eating.



Think About...

How can cooking and snack preparation support your goals for children's learning and development? How does food enhance curriculum and focused projects? What is your personal comfort level with cooking experiences for young children—is this a new area for your professional growth?

- Safety and sanitation are key considerations in children's cooking. Close adult supervision is critical! Safety, both with food and tools, helps keep everyone healthy. Teach children to wash their hands, rubbing them with soap for 20 seconds (try singing a song while washing). A picture sequence of washing and drying can also be posted over every sink.



- Three- to five-year-olds can be taught to use sharp knives, pizza cutters, graters, and peelers. Serrated spreading knives with rounded ends can cut fruit and vegetables. Children can then learn to hold the food with their fingers curled (in a “claw” grip) and away from the knife blade, and to cut with a sawing or slicing motion. Start with foods with softer textures, like oranges, and advance to crisp apples or carrots. A short (5-6 inch) chef's knife or paring knife with a sturdy non-slip grip works well and can be the next step in cutting. Focus on a secure, safe grip and keeping fingers away from the blade—and don't hurry! Use a clean cutting board and cut round fruits and vegetables to create a flat, stable side to place on the board.
- When cooking food like scrambled eggs or soup, wooden spoons won't get hot. Use great care with hot pans, talk with children about what they think is safe, and discuss safety rules. Self-regulation is supported by safe sensory experiences.

There are many wonderful books with food themes—some even have recipes (a good example is *Thunder Cake*, by P. Palocco). Many curriculum themes can be enhanced with cooking experiences: spring, garden, and growing themes can benefit from planting a “salad bar” garden or pot. Watching seeds (like beans or corn) sprout in a cup, and then eating beans, corn, or dried seeds connects science to everyday life. A restaurant in the Dramatic Play Area can include “menu items” for cooking and snacks.

Children's health and obesity have become issues of national focus. Nutrition education and enjoyment of healthy foods are important elements in health curricula. Social development and peer relationships are strengthened when children “sign-up” as a pair to make pancakes for each other and then eat together.

How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in Cooking Experiences

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT			
Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 5: CHILDREN DEVELOP AND CARRY OUT PLANS</p>	<p>Develops ideas for how things work and attempts tasks that have unknown outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapts plans as new knowledge is gained through exploration. Uses goal directed activities in play and routines. Recalls how problems were solved and can brainstorm additional strategies to use. May ask adult for materials or help for an activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help child understand sequences (e.g. "What do we do first?"). Assist child in explaining plans and the outcomes of plans. Encourage child to look at the possible outcomes of plans. Encourage children to predict the possible outcomes of their plans, and to explain their roles in plans. Review their predictions and discuss future plans.
<p>Goal 12: CHILDREN USE CONJECTURE, HYPOTHESIZING, AND GUESSING.</p>	<p>Uses a repertoire of thinking and language skills for testing ideas about things and relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks questions to get more information about why something happens. Explains the effects that simple actions have and their outcomes. Answers "what next" questions. Becomes aware that other people can have different ideas or thoughts from their own. Categorizes objects into groups. Uses "why" more than other question words, to ask questions as they hypothesize. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support cause and effect activities by asking extending questions (e.g. "What do you think will happen next?"), or offering another prop or problem statement into the activity. Help child know when to use "wh" questions; "Why," "Who," "What," "Where," and "When." Pose questions when children are experimenting (e.g. "What do you think will happen if..." "Can you make that happen again?").

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 23: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE PERSONAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE SKILLS.	Demonstrate independence in personal hygiene skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washes and dries hands before eating and after toileting, without assistance. Covers mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with elbow or tissue. Uses tissue to wipe own nose and throws tissue in wastebasket. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish hand washing routines (wash hands using liquid soap, running water, and disposable towels) for appropriate times throughout the day (on arrival, after handling pets, before and after eating, after toileting and blowing nose, after outdoor play). Make a place for child's personal grooming. Provide child with enough time to take care of personal hygiene.
Goal 24: CHILDREN EAT A VARIETY OF NUTRITIOUS FOODS.	Participate in mealtime routines with increasing independence and using utensils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepts a greater variety of foods, displays greater acceptance of textures and flavors. Expresses food preferences using increasingly descriptive vocabulary. Uses spoon and fork, but continues to use fingers for efficiency. Begins to have accuracy with a knife for spreading soft foods such as butter or jelly. Uses serving utensils to self-serve food, with increasing accuracy. Passes food at the table and takes appropriate-sized portions, or participates in other culturally-specific family serving styles. Begins to identify sources of food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve meals that include foods with a variety of textures, shapes, temperatures, sizes, and colors. Acknowledge a child's hunger and fullness cues. Respect a child's food preferences. Offer unfamiliar foods many times to help the child gain familiarity. Talk with child about food choices in relation to allergies, religion, culture, family choices, and overall health. Establish the expectation for the child to join with family or group at mealtime. Resist forcing child to eat. Provide opportunities for child to serve themselves from common bowls and pitchers. Provide opportunities for child to handle food, and to help prepare meals and snacks. Talk about food and nutrition concepts including texture, vocabulary, appearance, and preferences during meal times.

DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 35: CHILDREN RECOGNIZE, APPRECIATE, AND RESPECT SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN PEOPLE.	Shows curiosity about differences and similarities between self and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of own gender and cultural identity. With guidance, includes other children in activities who are of a different gender, ethnic background, who speak other languages, or who have special needs. Asks questions about other's families, ethnicity, language, cultural heritage, and differences in physical characteristics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate cultural, linguistic, and physical similarities and differences of all children and families. Demonstrate and explain that one person may play different roles (father and teacher). Invite parents and others from the community to tell stories and read books to children. Host volunteer visitor days where people of all abilities, age, race, and gender are included.

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 40: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING OF MEASURABLE ATTRIBUTES OF OBJECTS AND THE UNITS, SYSTEMS, AND PROCESSES OF MEASUREMENT (INCLUDING SIZE, VOLUME, HEIGHT, WEIGHT, LENGTH, AREA, AND TIME).</p>	<p>Uses geometric modeling and spatial reasoning according to different dimensions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compares several objects based on one or more attributes (length, size, weight) using words such as “shorter,” and “shortest,” “bigger,” and “lighter.” • Uses positional terms such as “between,” “inside,” “over,” “under,” and “behind.” • Orders events in terms of time. • Measures liquids, solids, and semi-solids, such as sand and water, using a variety of containers. • Uses measuring tools for objects using standard units and vocabulary, though not always accurately (rulers, tape measures, scales). • Uses picture cookbook to follow sequence and measures amounts for cooking projects, with assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in activities that use nonstandard measurement (e.g. use handfuls to measure rice, use footsteps to measure distance). • Provide a variety of measuring tools (tape measures, rulers, balance scales, measuring cups) for child to use in purposeful ways (e.g. cooking experiences). • Model and engage use of conventional measuring tools and methods in everyday situations (e.g. during cooking, art projects, grocery shopping). • Continue to model language involving comparisons for size, volume, weight, and height (length) of people, toys, and objects. • Display information using measurement graphs to visually compare activities and experiences (e.g. how many children have had asparagus or which is heavier, a pine cone or a rectangular block).
<p>Goal 43: CHILDREN ENGAGE IN EXPLORING AND MAKING SENSE OF THE NATURAL WORLD BY ASKING QUESTIONS AND MAKING PREDICTIONS ABOUT CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONS THAT CAN LEAD TO GENERALIZATIONS</p>	<p>Investigates unfamiliar phenomena using both trial and error and systematic trials, with assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses everyday routines and events as springboards to systematic thinking (e.g. participates in food preparation and cooking, including mixing ingredients, measuring, kneading dough, observing and describing how ingredients change and taste). • Verbalizes observations. • Makes simple predictions and inferences about cause and effect relations based on observations, explorations, and experimentations with objects and events in the natural world. • Compares predictions with actual observations. • Makes predictions about observed changes in the environment that lead to generalizations. • Connects math to science by using measurement tools and counting phenomenon or events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage child to try out ideas, make mistakes, and develop contradictions and ask, “What do you think will happen if ...?” • Provide opportunities for food preparation and cooking (e.g. pat the dough into tortillas and cook them, or pour eggs into a pan and watch them change as the eggs are scrambled, and, then, thinking about how the eggs in the muffin mix will change in the oven). • Encourage children to act on their own observations of patterns and make predictions (e.g. add varying amounts of milk to pancake batter to see what happens when pancakes are cooked and eaten). • Offer ways for children to document the outcomes of their predictions with what they see (e.g. “What happened with the pancakes? Did they look, taste, or cook the way you thought they would as you changed the amount of milk you put in the batter?”).

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 51: CHILDREN USE RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY.</p>	<p>Demonstrates increased comprehension of spoken language, vocabulary, and gestures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies objects by name and category. • Follows three-step directions. • If learning a second language, may have a period of silence (not speaking), but shows comprehension. • Responds to yes or no, who, what, where, when, how, and why questions. • May look quizzical when hearing new words in a verbal context. • Responds to simple time concepts (tonight, tomorrow, yesterday). • Responds to basic number concepts of one, all, sets. • Responds to directions in sentences with mean lengths of 5 to 7 words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the child gain vocabulary and better understand objects and experiences through descriptive words (e.g. "This bowl of beans is a bit warm to touch. I would call it tepid."). • Make request using specific attributes and category (e.g. "Bring me the green towel. I need a cloth towel for this clean up."). • Provide opportunities for child to listen for new words in the environment and identify them when heard. • Converse naturally about what child is doing, hearing, or watching. • Expand a child's vocabulary for comparison and contrasting objects and actions (e.g. "Soup is hotter than milk and cereal.").

Dramatic Play Area

Play is process.

Play is purposeful and active.

Play is child-selected, child-directed, and pleasurable.

Play expresses what a child is feeling and thinking.

Play is how a child constructs meaning from their experiences.

Play can be fantasy/symbolic, representational, and functional.

Play is how a child generates, adapts, and establishes rules and roles.

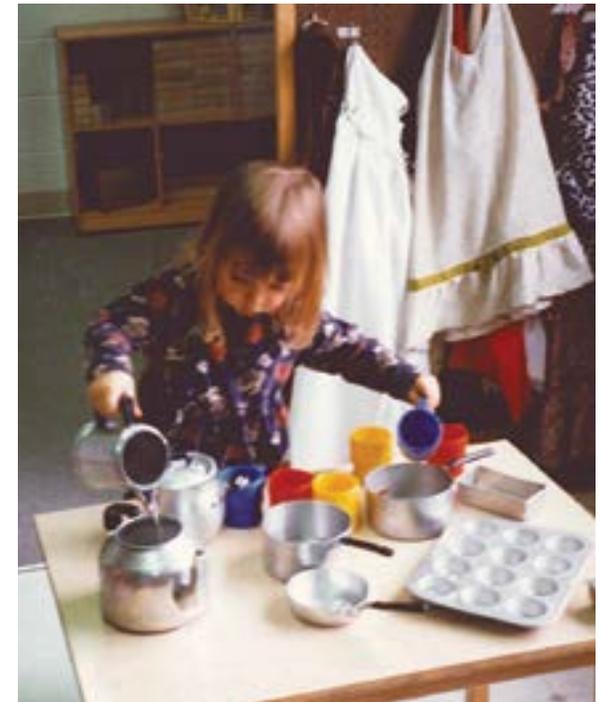
In our busy work—and product—oriented society, a child’s self-directed play can easily be dismissed as the opposite of “learning.” The value of play is hard to measure; it can be messy and doesn’t conform well to schedules. However, there is both a research foundation and a cultural history of the importance of play. It is more than “the child’s work”—it is at the heart of healthy development, understanding, and relating to others. Play is where the child explores what is real and what is pretend; it spans the range of fantasy and reality which matures over time, age, and experience.

Play is often divided into social and emotional stages during early childhood: Solitary, Parallel, Associative, and Cooperative.

- Solitary Play: An infant will play happily alone, turning and mouthing a toy.
- Parallel Play: Toddlers will play next to each other in the sand, and look at each other occasionally, perhaps trying what the other child does.
- Associative Play: Three-year-olds feed their babies, smile at each other, and pass bottles and cups to one another.
- Cooperative Play: A group of children playing with shared themes and agreed-upon roles that can negotiate the script and sustain the game.

While the stages are developmental, once they are established the child can move between kinds of play. A four-year-old can play alone, engrossed with imaginative characters, or play with a younger child showing her how to make cars “zoom;” yet she can still join with a group of friends to play “pizza restaurant.”

Dramatic play is one of the richest and most complex sources of learning in the preschool classroom. It can be incorporated into curriculum through children’s interests and can promote learning in all domains of development and especially supports executive functions in the brain!



In the Play Area, Children Learn...

- Engagement in creative dramatic activities
- To enhance their imaginations
- To “read” social situations, cues and plots
- About working cooperatively, negotiating, and observing rules
- The consequences of actions in social relationships
- Concepts of family by practicing roles and sequences of family routines
- To participate in leader/follower roles and work on issues of power

Getting Organized

The Dramatic Play Area needs sufficient space, time, equipment, and a range of materials to stimulate role playing, self-expression, and initiative. It should be a clearly defined space. Placement near the Unit Block Area offers the opportunity for thematic play to stretch between the dramatic play and the blocks depending on the teacher’s planning and the age and skill of the children. Shelves, cupboards, and dividers can provide the play area with some protection, while still allowing the teacher to monitor activities.

Time is a critical element in rich dramatic play. Some children choose dramatic play quickly; others need to see the action unfolding to be drawn into the plot

Basic Equipment

- Child-sized table and chairs
- Child-sized stove, sink, refrigerator, and kitchen supplies (dishes, cups, pans, etc.)
- Cupboards, shelves, and hooks for hanging clothes
- Play food (multicultural, especially linked to the cultures of children in class)
- Dress-up clothes including hats, shoes, scarves, purses, uniforms—both male and female
- Full-length mirror

- About making choices and decisions
- To explore roles of adult work and jobs
- About self-help skills such as dressing, pouring, and using utensils
- New vocabulary in a variety of imaginative play situations
- To match objects in one-to-one correspondence
- Sorting and classification skills
- Expanded cognitive skills

and to find roles. Research indicates that children need at least 35 minutes of free choice time for dramatic play to be successful. With more experienced players (4- to 5-year-olds), 45 minutes is more realistic.

The Dramatic Play Area is prime area for interest-driven curriculum to develop! A quick change of props and a “house” can become a hospital, restaurant, store, post office, space capsule, or other theme location. “What do you know about...?” and “What do you want to know about...?” questions can lead to inquiry or project-based learning with thematic books, props, field trips, and demonstrable outcomes in learning.

- Doll bed and child-sized rocking chair
- A variety of dolls
- Telephones
- Toy cash register
- Printed materials: maps, phone books, coupons, magazines
- Writing materials: notepads, pencils
- Several theme “Prop Boxes”: hospital, restaurant, space lab, store, etc.

The Misread Script

The busy hum of the three-year-olds' classroom is broken by shrieks from the housekeeping area. The teacher wraps an arm around each of the crying children: "What are you playing?"

"Well, I'm the mother and these are my babies..."

"No way! This is Superman's house!" sobs the caped boy.

A conflict has emerged: imaginative three-year-olds playing together who think that other children know the script of the play. Yet, the urge to play—and to play together—triumphs through supported clarification and negotiation. Soon Superman is flying around the room, coming home to eat dinner and washing the baby with the "poopy bottom." Witness the power of dramatic play and another step toward peer communication!

Think about...

For young children, play is the mechanism used to figure out the world, its roles, and how things work. Consider how you want to structure the environment to support dramatic play, social development, and curriculum goals.

- Think about the ages and needs of your students when starting the school year. Basic, familiar house or family play, perhaps with fewer children in the area, can give a teacher a prime opportunity to observe each child's development, skills, and level of understanding. It also gives children the play time needed to start social relationships.
- The teacher becomes the questioner, stage manager, resource for props, coach, mediator, and scribe. The teacher's support is important to help some children learn to enter a game or dramatic play. If a socially inexperienced child runs in and demands or tries to be "the mother," she will often be rejected by the existing players. A teacher can help her to quietly observe the scene before joining: "What do you think they're playing?," "Who do you think is the mother?," or "Who could you be in this game? Do they need a pet?" If language is an issue in joining play, the teacher can clarify in the child's own language or scaffolds a role that enhances the child's inclusion.

- With younger children, an adult might need to play a "supporting role" to start or enhance the play and the children's pretend roles: "Mmm, this tea is delicious! Please pour me another cup."
- Other times, the teacher is the person who clarifies the script and helps children learn to resolve conflicts (some of them age-related). Three-year-olds can have multiple "mommies" in the house; however, four-year-olds vie and fight for the supreme power of the one and only "Mother!"



How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in the Dramatic Play Area

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 7: CHILDREN INTERACT, UNDERSTAND, AND VIEW THE WORLD INFLUENCED BY TEMPERAMENT.</p>	<p>Adapts personal style to self-regulate behavior and explore a variety of social and physical settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks shared experiences. • Begins to see peers as impacting their actions and self-view. • Observes, listens to, and responds to a friend or family members' ideas, likes, or dislikes. • Uses a variety of strategies to cope with transitions, new experiences, and a wider range of people. • Focuses attention on a project or game, sustaining the attention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model language, labels, feelings, thoughts, and experiences with the child. • Anticipate and respond to child's individual temperament traits to support interactions and transitions. • Make sure each child has access to all experiences. • Support and clarify imaginative play roles that appeal to children with different temperaments (e.g. "instigator," "group joiner," or "watchful").
<p>Goal 15: CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN PRETEND OR SYMBOLIC PLAY.</p>	<p>Develops plots, scripts, and takes on roles, with a mixture of reality and fantasy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes on pretend roles and situations. Uses appropriate language, tone, and movements (e.g. pretends to be a baby, meows and purrs pretending to be a kitty, or has a "fire" on the stove playing in housekeeping). • Uses primarily solitary, parallel, or associative play styles, with cooperative play sometimes occurring. • Explores experience by taking on familiar roles in the home and community (firefighters, restaurant, doctor's office). • Engages in complex make-believe play with others, uses theme-oriented play that involves multiple characters and settings. • Believes objects, events, and characters can be "magic" or have "powers." • May need help with conflict that arises when child does not take on roles or play within the expectations of another child. • Plays out social and emotional issues (power, loss, fears). • Extends and consolidates understanding through play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the child in activities and interactions that develop fantasy characters while helping them differentiate between make-believe and reality. • Provide environment and time for sustained dramatic play. • In child care, respect and protect each child's right to dramatic play. Assure that children who are taking on big, very active physical role playing, do not interfere in the space where children are carrying out less physically active role playing. • Provide props that can be adapted to various themes (e.g. hospital, firefighters, restaurant, airport, cooking). • Scaffold entrance into dramatic play for child who needs support to join play. • Clarify scripts and roles as part of conflict resolution. • Keep books and writing materials that support dramatic play and literacy nearby pretend play areas. • Know the difference between styles of play, and provide protection for those children who are not yet proficient in playing cooperatively for a common goal.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 16: CHILDREN REPRESENT EXPERIENCES AND THOUGHT THROUGH SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION SUCH AS MOVEMENT, DRAWING, SINGING/ VOCALIZING, AND PLAY.	Use symbols in arts, communication, and numeracy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a description of a person or object that is not present (e.g. child describes the toy bear as big, soft, and brown). Uses many gestures to represent meaning (e.g. stop!, rain, points for desired objects, shakes head vigorously, claps hands to show enthusiasm). Uses objects to represent real items in make-believe play, but also chooses real objects when available. May use movement and drama to recreate experiences or express emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for child to engage in symbolic play (act happy, imitate a sad puppy). Provide opportunities for child to draw pictures of people, feelings, family, animals, and objects. Identify and point out symbols during daily activities; demonstrating and explaining what they mean. Read stories and provide props for dramatizing the plot (e.g. <i>Three Billy Goats Gruff</i> with blocks, pictures of bridges, and some writing utensils and paper for signs).

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 22: CHILDREN PRACTICE BASIC PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES.	Initiate and carry out personal care routines, with and without assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dresses and undresses, with minimal help. Chooses own clothes to wear, when asked. Puts shoes on, without assistance. Participates in helping younger siblings or other children with personal care routines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer plenty of guidance and opportunities for child to take care of self (e.g. put on own coat, clean up after spills and messy projects). Give child enough time to take care of personal needs such as zipping and unzipping coat. Provide opportunities for child to help younger siblings and other children with appropriate personal care routines.

DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 28: CHILDREN DEVELOP FRIENDSHIPS WITH PEERS.</p>	<p>Engages in mutual social play that involves cooperation and shared purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacts with peers in play, playing common themes and taking turns using the same materials and activities. • Smiles, gives eye contact, and communicates verbally and non-verbally while playing with other children. • Shows preference for particular playmates. • Tries a variety of strategies to engage a peer. • Initiates conversations with other children. • Makes decisions with other children, with adult prompts as needed (making rules). • Leads or participates in planning cooperative play with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for child to engage in a variety of play activities with other children (e.g. dramatic play, art projects, block building...). • Teach children strategies that children can use when they want to join others in play (e.g. watching other children to see what they are playing and how they are playing; offering a prop that would add something to the play...). • If a child is just learning how to join play, support that child as they learn new strategies. Help that child accept and move on to another play setting if rejected for that particular activity. • Support the child who is nonverbal by teaching other children to use basic signs, body language, and other visual supports for communication. • Provide opportunities for children to solve problems and resolve conflicts with adult help/facilitation.
<p>Goal 32: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE SYMPATHY AND EMPATHY.</p>	<p>Recognizes and responds to another's emotions and situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notices and shows concern for peers' feelings. • Observes other's reactions to self-actions, sometimes adjusting to other's reactions. • Adopts a variety of roles and feelings during pretend play. • Shows emotional states consistent with events and actions of others. • Shows awareness of what others get to do or to have, in relation to self. • Uses descriptive words to show a range of emotional states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model a friendly, positive, and respectful manner when listening and responding to child's comments and suggestions. • Name and discuss feelings (e.g. "I see that you're disappointed because..."). • Schedule time for children to engage in sustained, uninterrupted play together, so that they can work out ways to communicate their intentions and feelings. • In play groups, offer group activities such as washing baby dolls in tubs full of water when new siblings are expected in families. Offer conversation starters about what a new baby might need and let the conversation move from there. • Learn about the many variations in how children cope with loss and grief. Stay attuned to the child's play themes of loss and grief.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 33: CHILDREN DEVELOP A SENSE OF HUMOR.</p>	<p>Uses novel language, sounds, and meanings to initiate interaction with adults and peers. Uses physical humor for social purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laughs with others. • Mimics others actions and expressions, sometimes impersonating favorite amusing characters. • Uses slapstick, physical humor. • Uses body function humor. • Makes absurd, sometimes rude noises. • Combines nonsense syllables and real words. • Laughs at gender reversals and incongruous actions (e.g. a cow on skates, a cat in a costume). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect jokes and group silliness and respond with smiles. Intervene if the silliness becomes physically hazardous to the children. • Use humor as a tool for language development. Offer children opportunities to use reversals of ideas and knowledge that result in absurdities. • Clarify social humor between children. • Use joint attention, social referencing, and reciprocation with child when humor is tentative. • Understand cultural norms for humor for children in a group.
<p>Goal 35: CHILDREN RECOGNIZE, APPRECIATE, AND RESPECT SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN PEOPLE.</p>	<p>Shows curiosity about differences and similarities between self and others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of own gender and cultural identity. • With guidance, includes other children in activities who are of a different gender, ethnic background, who speak other languages, or who have special needs. • Demonstrates an understanding of inclusion or fairness through words and actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for child to describe own physical characteristics. • Celebrate cultural, linguistic, and physical similarities and differences of all children and families. • Demonstrate and explain that one person may play different roles (father and teacher).

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 44: CHILDREN DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES, AND EVENTS IN THE PAST AND PRESENT THAT RELATE TO SELF, GROUP IDENTITY, AND A SENSE OF THEIR COMMUNITY.</p>	<p>Shows awareness of personal membership of self and others in family, community, program, and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to demonstrate awareness of group membership according to different environments, activities, and routines (e.g. uses terms to show group identity, such as our house, the farmer’s fence, my grandmother, our car, the policeman’s car). • Recognizes and identifies familiar community helpers and their association with activities, routines, and locations (e.g. firefighters/fire truck/fire station; doctor/nurse/ clinic/ injections; policeman/police car/siren). • Identifies group membership in family and explains roles. • Identifies relationships used during role play based on his/her personal home and family. • Recognizes that people rely on others for goods and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use digital photography of events at school that represent groups of children playing and doing routines together. • Assure that children know each other’s names. • Talk to and listen respectfully to each child. • Model respect for diversity. • Provide a variety of materials and toys for pretend role play. • Provide community worker props and costumes for children to explore and pretend play. • Have ample time for children to describe and ask questions about family routines and events during group times, including circle times, small group times, dramatic play, and mealtimes.
<p>Goal 45: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF INDIVIDUAL FAIRNESS, GROUP RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES (DEMOCRATIC IDEALS) FOR MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN GROUP ACTIVITIES (SUCCESSFUL CITIZENSHIP).</p>	<p>Engages cooperatively in organized, culturally acceptable practices with familiar people, objects, settings, and play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the time, chooses acceptable behaviors to control strong emotions in group situations. • Follows simple rules and respects boundaries, most of the time. • Recognizes their roles as part of a group. • Tries out strategies for entering group play. • Shows awareness of group rules, though may need adult assistance to follow those rules. • Shares occasionally (e.g. gives up a desired object or activity at expense of self-desires). Expect that younger children in this age range to be more amenable to adult-mediated turn taking than true sharing. • Begins to say “that’s not fair” as a rationale for getting their way. • Participates in dramatic play with props to pretend roles and scenarios of community helpers. • Makes choices among limits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a consistent, predictable, caring, responsive environment. • Talk to and listen respectfully to each child, and assist children to do the same with each other. • Model respect for diversity. • Encourage child to listen to, verbally express, and respond to others’ emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways. • Give child appropriate words to express emotions. • Assure children that they will get a turn at a desirable item or activity, and then be sure to follow through to be sure children get a turn. This encourages trust in groups. • Encourage conflict resolution through active listening and simple questioning between you and the children, and among children. • Provide time, space, and props for dramatic play as children pretend adult roles and jobs (e.g. mom, dad, firefighters, law enforcement, health care folks, food service staff, or ambulance drivers).

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 46:</p> <p>CHILDREN USE CREATIVE ARTS TO EXPRESS AND REPRESENT WHAT THEY KNOW, THINK, BELIEVE, OR FEEL.</p>	<p>Uses artistic expression and language to communicate emotions and make meaning of experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes on roles and offer simple themes in dramatic play activities (e.g. pantomimes movement of familiar things, acts out stories, takes on roles, and reenacts events from own life). • Performs simple elements of dramatic presentation (e.g. bowing, clapping, microphones, audience, actors, stage). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of supplies, time, and space for artistic exploration and expression. • Have a digital camera always ready to document children's creative efforts. Make a file that includes a sequence showing beginning to final products.



DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 50: CHILDREN COMPREHEND AND USE CONVENTIONS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION.	Sustains interactions using social conventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses spoken language or signing for greetings including, "Hi," "Good-bye," and softeners in language such as "please and thank you." • Seeks interaction with others. • Recognizes subtle, nonverbal cues (e.g. crooking a finger to indicate come closer, or finger on lips for "Shhh). • Initiates and takes turns in group conversations. • Bilingual children adjust language and communication form according to the person with whom they are speaking. • Communicates in simple conversation with age peers. • Defines the expectations during play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up dramatic play opportunities where children practice social conventions. • Use props, puppets, and role-play to encourage child to participate in group conversations. • Provide opportunities for interaction within child's own social conventions and also other languages and cultural groups. • Provide child with opportunities for problem solving. • Ask child to describe their play to adult or other children. • Pair kind, sensitive, patient peer models with less competent or reticent children for conversation. • To prime the conversation pump, be the third person when two children are playing. Offer words to the children that they might say to each other.
Goal 54: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPREHENSION AND MEANING IN LANGUAGE.	Demonstrates increased comprehension of language structure and content and vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes and responds appropriately to nonverbal cues. • Follows directions that involve a two- or three-step sequence of actions, which may not be related. • Extends/expands the thought or idea expressed by another. • Engages in conversation that develops a thought or idea (tells about a past or future event). • Recognizes and responds in a culturally appropriate way to more subtle nonverbal cues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the environment to encourage discussion of familiar objects, places, and people. • Use adult-like language when conversing. • Help the child explain experiences through the use of descriptive language. • Establish routines in the child's world. • Compare and contrast objects and actions for the child. • Play games that involve two- and three-step directions, (e.g. "Crawl through the tunnel, run to the fences, and sit down.").
Goal 55: CHILDREN USE LANGUAGE FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES.	Follows social conventions of language to access, gain, and share information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to questions. • Takes turns in conversation. • Uses words to protest. • Asks questions to obtain information. • Engages in conversation with peers and adults. • Uses words and phrases to relate observations, concepts, ideas, and relationships. • Uses words to express feelings of self and others. • Uses polite words (e.g. please and thank you) and some warm ups and softeners (e.g. "When you are done, I can play here."). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage a child in conversation and give wait time for response. • Encourage and model dramatic play (pretend play). • Engage child in conversations that lend themselves to expressing different ideas (explanatory talk, conversations about science). • Encourage child to express feelings verbally. • Use expanded adult language when conversing. • Establish routines in the child's world. • Compare and contrast objects and actions for the child.

Manipulatives Area

Manipulatives is an area of the classroom focused on the development of specific skills. This is the area of puzzles, sorting and matching materials, pattern blocks, board games, and toys with interlocking pieces. With these materials, children often work alone or in pairs. Teachers can use this area to promote individualized learning for a child. Careful selection of the skill levels and range of materials makes it an area where children seek a favorite activity, or where the teacher can direct a child to observe a specific task.

A rich Manipulative Area contains both “closed-ended” activities, where the materials guide the child to the correct answer, and “open-ended” materials which can be used in a variety of combinations with multiple “right ways.” Closed-ended toys include puzzles, shape sorter balls, and Montessori seriation cylinders where each piece fits in a particular hole or space. Open-ended materials are toys such as patterning blocks, locking shapes, sorting materials, and gears that fit together in different configurations. Open-ended materials are needed for children to develop logic and creative thinking skills. The closed-ended toys support specific skill development and understanding of shapes and properties. Both categories of toys engage children in satisfying play and are valuable for a child’s development. As we consider the kinds of activities that support STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) consider the kinds and range of manipulatives in your classroom. Children return again and again to favorite manipulatives to consolidate thinking or expand their ideas with new elaborations.



In the Manipulatives Area, Children Learn...

- Concepts such as “part” and “whole” by sorting, matching, sequencing, and classifying
- Vocabulary to define quantities, relationships, and to make comparisons
- About groups by sorting and matching
- Perceptual awareness skills
- To practice counting
- About similarities and differences

Getting Organized

A well-organized and defined area of the room supports children’s successful use of puzzles and other manipulative materials. Low shelves that store and display materials can be used to shelter the play for individuals or a small group of children. A small table and chairs, and floor space with a rug for activities works well. Mats or small trays can define an individual workspace. Many varied and interesting activities can be assembled for use in this area—anything that invites children to construct, match, sort, sequence, put together, or make patterns works well here.

With so many small pieces, this is an area that needs to be well organized! Shelves at the child’s level with picture and word labels on both the game box and the shelf make putting away another matching activity and promote completion. Word labels can be printed in specific colors for different languages to support bilingual literacy. A few toys may be displayed on top of the shelves to create interest in the area. Puzzles need to be stacked so children can identify them and know where to return them when completed. Materials need to be rotated to meet the skill level of the children and lead them to the next level of challenge.

- About basic addition and subtraction skills through experiences
- To strengthen small muscles, and grasp and wrist rotation with puzzles and connecting pieces
- Three dimensional eye-hand coordination skills
- To use objects to make and repeat simple patterns using
- To identify and name geometric shapes
- About persistence, attention, and problem-solving skills
- Foundational thinking and reasoning skills through tactile experiences



Basic Equipment

- Puzzles of varying difficulty and a puzzle rack
- Matching or lotto games
- Pattern blocks and patterns to complete
- Objects that link or snap together
- Beads of varying sizes, with laces for stringing
- Objects to sort such as buttons, keys, plastic teddy bears, and others
- Button, lace, zip, and snap clothing boards for self-help skills
- Objects to sequence by size or color
- A “light table” or board with clear colorful sorting and patterning items
- Counting and alphabet games
- Pegs and “geo” boards
- Tongs and large tweezers for picking up and sorting objects
- Building sets with many pieces (table blocks, Legos)
- Simple games with rules

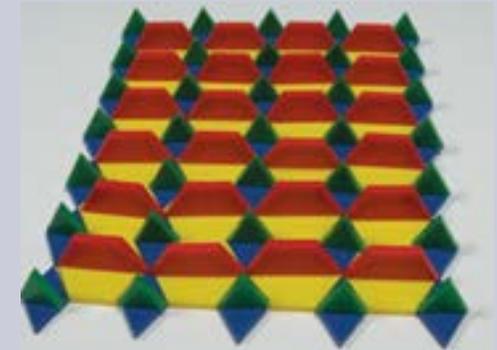
In some areas, supplemental manipulative toys can be checked out from your local Child Care Resource and Referral toy lending library, from public libraries, or shared among classrooms for greater variety or specific skills. There are many games and manipulatives that can be created by teachers.

Zac Fills the Space

Children who struggle with representational skills often benefit from being given physical work boundaries when using open-ended manipulative materials. Zac, a four-year-old with developmental and speech delays, demonstrated the benefit of this strategy while working with pattern blocks on 8x10 inch white boards. Limiting the workspace and defining the boundaries freed Zac to focus on the attributes of the materials and explore the building possibilities they presented.

And focus he did! Starting with yellow hexagons laid end to end, he began to fill his space. Coming to the second row, Zac realized the blue diamond fit the ‘puzzle hole’ created by the yellow hexagons. His excitement grew as he recognized the stability of his repeating pattern and his classmates, joining in his excitement, offered up their yellow hexagons and blue diamonds to add to his grand design.

After the first layer of yellow and blue carpet was laid, Zac started standing red trapezoids, long side down, on each yellow hexagon. When each hexagon was complete with its red “house” he carefully planted green “trees” on each blue diamond.



An hour later, Zac’s town was finished and his diligence and design were rewarded with the highest possible acknowledgement. A classmate propelled Zac into the role of ‘Parquetry Block Expert’ by announcing, “That’s cool, Zac! You did it again and again.”

Think about...

- A thoughtful range of manipulative toys creates a great place to observe children's skills and interests.
- Puzzles need to be put away with all pieces in place so children can see the whole picture before taking it apart (except for boxed jigsaw puzzles for older children).
- Younger children benefit from puzzles in which each piece is a whole object—a cow, truck, etc.—as their first puzzles. The pieces with a tiny knob encourage a “neat pincer grasp,” but may be too difficult for little fingers. Watch carefully for small muscle dexterity and the ability to rotate a puzzle piece.
- It's important to sequence puzzles for gradual degrees of difficulty. Too many pieces can overwhelm a child, while one that is “too easy” isn't fun.
- Puzzles with missing pieces are just frustrating—replace them.
- Encourage children to use one game or toy at a time so pieces don't get mixed, and the skill required by each toy is developed. Put a stop to “dumping” to ensure that toys are complete, the area is inviting, and the children are respectful of each other's work. Children often need help to get started with “pickup” in this area: giving a two minute warning for completion before “pickup time” helps children finish and anticipate the next task.
- Clear storage bins with a picture label (a photo or cutout from a catalog) and a printed word label on the bin and shelf support learning about completion and order, as well as providing another matching activity.
- Pattern blocks are an important learning tool. Children can start by freely exploring the shapes, maybe sorting by color or shape. Making their own increasingly complex patterns follows. Matching a pattern shape by placing the pieces on the pattern develops eye-hand coordination, shape recognition, and the ability to see parts to whole. Making the pattern while just looking at the card is the next step. Pattern blocks can be used for children to replicate simple patterns— triangle, square, triangle (A-B-A), circle, circle, rectangle (A-A-B), and other more complicated repetitions. Such patterns support both literacy and mathematical conceptual skills. Some pattern blocks come with templates for duplicating the shapes with construction paper, so children can make a pattern and then replicate it with paper shapes and glue.
- Documentation as well as replication! Photos of children's patterns and completion of other manipulatives documents their development and provide useful content for portfolios.

Thoughtful ways to choose and use manipulatives to support scientific and engineering thinking.

How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in Manipulatives

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT			
Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 4: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE PERSISTENCE AND SUSTAIN ATTENTION WHEN FACED WITH CHALLENGES OR FRUSTRATION.</p>	<p>Uses a variety of approaches to master complex challenging tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustains focus on tasks of interest to them, when few distractions exist. • Remains engaged in an activity for at least 5 to 10 minutes, much of the time. • Manages tasks with sequences of three to four steps. • Persists in trying to complete a task after previous attempts have failed (completes a puzzle, builds a structure, redoes a failed painting). • Uses at least two different strategies to solve a problem. • Uses self-talk to guide action when solving a problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a child encounters difficulty, be available and responsive, but not intrusive. Watch for the child’s cues of wanting help. • Comment positively on child’s persistence and concentration. • Talk with children about what worked and what did not. • Ask what child would like to try first when solving problems. • Help children stay focused by breaking tasks into manageable pieces, giving visual and spoken cues, and helping children return to a task after distractions. • Keep distractions to a minimum (e.g. sounds, crowded, littered floors.). • Modify expectations for persistence to meet individual variations for temperament, age, stage, or ability.)
<p>Goal 9: CHILDREN USE PRIOR RELATIONSHIPS, EXPERIENCES, AND KNOWLEDGE TO BUILD FOUNDATIONAL MEMORY.</p>	<p>Combining past experiences and familiar situations, explores, plans, problem solves, and carries out plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents things in environment with available materials; moving from simple to complex representations (e.g. recreate picture of a house, build road with blocks, or make a tree with modeling clay). • Thinks out loud and talks self through a plan or situation. • Works out problems using information from prior experiences rather than through trial and error. • Points to and tells about objects that are out of place. • Completes sequence puzzles and pictures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage child about what he/she has seen, heard, or done. • Be certain a child gets to respond by intentionally waiting for the child to respond. • Ask open-ended questions that encourage reflection (e.g. “What if...?,” or “How else could you do this?”). • Provide play interactions with children and props that elicit previous experiences. • Use photos to prompt routines such as hand washing, brushing teeth, putting away toys. • Rotate toys and activities based on input from children and their comments about past experiences.

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 18: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH AND COORDINATION OF SMALL MOTOR MUSCLES.	Use fingers and hands for purposeful tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies shapes and geometric designs. Manipulates small objects with ease (e.g. sorts counting bears into groups, strings beads, screws large screw into soft wood, plants seeds in soil, fits small objects into holes). Fastens large buttons. Zips and unzips zippers with some support in getting a zipper started. Completes increasingly complex puzzles (single, cut-out figures to 15-piece puzzles). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage child to strengthen grasp of thumb/forefinger (gluing small pieces of paper, peeling/sticking stickers, picking up small objects with fingers). Provide a variety of tools to encourage use of precision grasps (e.g. writing utensils such as crayons, pencils, markers, paints, spoons, forks, table knives, glue sticks, scissors). Provide opportunities for child to practice tying, buttoning, and beading. Modify activities to ensure participation of each child (e.g. attach rubber grips to pencils and pens, offer handwriting frame). Provide toys that include objects that fit into and beside a structure.

DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 27: CHILDREN TRUST, INTERACT WITH, AND SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM ADULTS.	Shows confidence in seeking assistance from familiar adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approaches adults for assistance and offers to assist adults. Carries out actions to please adults. Asks questions of adults to obtain information. Brings simple problem situations to adult's attention. Works alone at a task, but asks for help when needed. Works cooperatively with an adult to plan and organize activities and solve problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model, explain, and provide opportunities for child to interact appropriately with and show respect to adults. Communicate expectations clearly by modeling and showing the child ways to respond. Show respect for child's choices and attempts at solving problems (e.g. when children are both wanting a toy, help them work out a way to each get a turn). Daily, provide one-on-one time when a child can confide in a parent, child care provider, or school staff.
Goal 36: CHILDREN PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS.	Uses strategies to differentiate themselves from others, and to get their needs met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates awareness of their abilities, characteristics, and preferences. Chooses individual activities when practicing skills (e.g. doing puzzles, painting). Compares self with others. Attempts to exert will and preferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge child's accomplishments. Encourage child to experiment with growing competence and individuality by providing child opportunities to make choices or decisions. Offer many and varied opportunities for children to document their skills and abilities, including digital pictures, dictated stories, family photos, and charts and graphs of children's ideas and opinions.

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 40: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING OF MEASURABLE ATTRIBUTES OF OBJECTS AND THE UNITS, SYSTEMS, AND PROCESSES OF MEASUREMENT (INCLUDING SIZE, VOLUME, HEIGHT, WEIGHT, LENGTH, AREA, AND TIME).</p>	<p>Uses geometric modeling and spatial reasoning according to different dimensions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matches, sorts, groups, and classifies objects based on one or more attributes or related characteristics. Compares several objects based on one or more attributes (length, size, weight) using words such as “shorter,” and “shortest,” “bigger,” and “lighter.” Uses positional terms such as “between,” “inside,” “over,” “under,” and “behind.” Orders objects by size, volume, height, weight, and length; with assistance. Uses descriptive words for measurable properties such as length and weight, or capacity. Measures objects using variable nonstandard units (e.g. “It’s five shoes long!”). Uses some vocabulary in relationship to measurement tools (scale, cup, and ruler). May not have accurate understanding of meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model language and use body and objects using positional terms (behind, inside, on top, under). Provide materials that support classifying and ordering objects by size, shape, color, and volume. Provide a variety of measuring tools (tape measures, rulers, balance scales, measuring cups) for child to use in purposeful ways (e.g. cooking experiences). Continue to model language involving comparisons for size, volume, weight, and height (length) of people, toys, and objects. Play measuring games with child (e.g. “Which is heavier?,” “Which is longer?,” or “Let’s see if we can tell what comes next in our schedule.”). Measure objects using standard measuring units (measure a wooden block using paper clips, markers, then use a ruler, tape measure, and balance). Document findings with the children.
<p>Goal 41: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING OF PATTERNS, RELATIONS, AND FUNCTIONS USED TO ORGANIZE THEIR WORLD AND FACILITATE PROBLEM SOLVING.</p>	<p>Sorts, orders, classifies, and forms simple patterns among objects using color, number, size, and shape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares shape and size of familiar objects. Identifies and labels different kinds of two-dimensional shapes (square, circle, rectangle, and triangle). Sorts and builds stable structures with two and three-dimensional shapes (e.g. unit blocks, Legos, spheres, cubes, cones). Sorts and classifies objects using vocabulary to describe and compare groups (e.g. more/less and same/different). Describes and compares characteristics of familiar geometric and non-geometric shapes in the environment, with assistance. Puts together and takes apart shapes to make other shapes (e.g. uses two triangles to make a rectangle). Makes and describes patterns including serration based on numbers, shapes, and size. Predicts what comes next in a pattern and completes the pattern with art materials or blocks. Creates or extends a complex pattern with more than two repeating elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a variety of increasingly complex materials related to patterns including preschool Legos, puzzles, and stringing beads. Provide materials that can be connected and combined to create new shapes. Play classification games with child (e.g. gather a group of items that include pairs of objects that go together - shoe/sock flower/ vase, and find the items that go together). Play matching games that challenge the child to recognize what is missing. Play games that challenge the child to describe and identify shapes. Challenge child to repeat patterns made by clapping, stomping, or with rhythm instruments. Provide materials such as pattern blocks to create patterns and designs. Display children’s daily activities in sequence. Encourage child to explore ordinal numbers (first, second, third, etc., and last) used to describe members of a sequence of objects or events. Provide storage for materials that encourage sorting clean up (e.g. label separate containers for pencils or markers).

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 55: CHILDREN USE LANGUAGE FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES.</p>	<p>Follows social conventions of language to access, gain, and share information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks questions to obtain information. • Engages in conversation with peers and adults. • Uses words and phrases to relate observations, concepts, ideas, and relationships. • Interprets written symbols, pictures, and letters to a listener. • Uses words to express feelings of self and others. • Uses polite words, such as please and thank you, and some warm ups and softeners, such as “When you are done, I can play here.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage a child in conversation and give wait time for response. • Engage child in conversations that lend themselves to expressing different ideas (explanatory talk, conversations about science). • Encourage child to express feelings verbally. • Introduce a variety of new experiences to child (library, zoo, parks, shopping). • Use expanded adult language when conversing. • Compare and contrast objects and actions for the child.
<p>Goal 64: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY IN HOME LANGUAGE WHILE ACQUIRING BEGINNING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH.</p>	<p>Demonstrates varying competency in learning English depending on age, onset, and amount of language exposure.</p> <p>Communicates with purpose to convey information, and uses phrases and sentences with more complex vocabulary in home language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasionally inserts words from home language while speaking English. • Relies on non-verbal cues to communicate in English, but does not rely on non-verbal cues to communicate in home language. • Focuses on the meaning of words rather than grammar in acquiring spoken English language competency. • Follows linguistic rules of home language and constructs own rules for English. • Uses sentences in home language and begins to use single word or telegraphic speech in English to communicate. • A bilingual child adjusts language and communication form used according to person with whom he/she is speaking or place where he/she is at. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach school concepts in both languages. • Label shelves and toy containers with pictures and both written languages, each language consistently color coded (red: English; blue: Spanish; green: Bosnian). • Encourage the use of English in school by providing a safe, responsive audience. • Wait for child “to find” English word when asking a question or needing a response. • Provide a lot of repetition when introducing new concepts. • Help child develop reasoning skills through use of home language. • Model positive vocabulary learning strategies (reading cues from the context). • Help native, English-speaking children understand the English Language Learner’s speech and vocabulary. • Learn tone, key words, and common gestures of child’s home language. • All instruction must be sensitive to the child’s conceptual understanding in both the home language(s) and English.

Outdoor Play Area

Playing outside; feeling the wind; watching the weather; experimenting with sand, mud and water; exploring; chasing; and squealing with delight—these are some of the essentials of an Idaho childhood. Healthy development includes active outdoor play and fresh air. A well-designed outdoor learning environment stimulates a child’s senses and imagination while allowing them to test their abilities in the physical world. Young children need plenty of time for active play—60 minutes per day is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

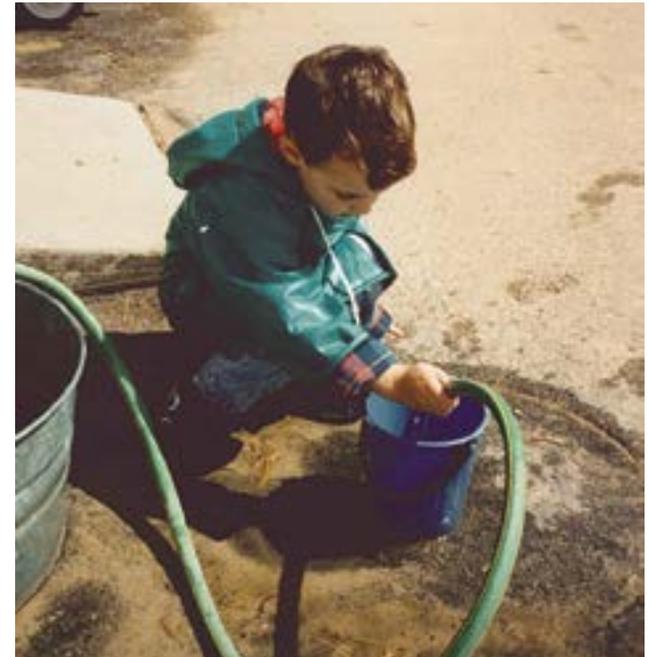
As adults plan and structure outdoor play environments, they often strip away some reasonable challenges in the name of safety and convenience. Safety is critical, but so is learning to take risks and feel competent to move and

When Playing Outdoors, Children Learn...

- About using their bodies to increase strength, balance, and endurance
- About practicing new physical skills: kicking, throwing, riding, climbing, and jumping
- About taking some risks
- How to initiate play with other children
- About taking turns and playing with peers
- About negotiation and problem-solving
- To invent their own games and rules
- Concepts about nature
- How to make scientific observations
- Verbal expression and communication skills
- Self-confidence and a sense of competence
- About developing an appreciation for the environment

experiment. A sense of trust in one’s own body, strength, and ability to play “like the big kids” is an important source of resilience and motivation.

Helpful supervision not only keeps children safe, it supports the natural opportunities for children to discover how physical play and social play coexist. For younger children, this can happen as they realize that the laughing glance given while running is an invitation to play “chase.” Opportunities to learn about fairness are presented as older four- and five-year-olds negotiate the “rules” of games, often spending more time on “fairness” than playing the game. Fitness, fairness, fantasy, competence, exploration, and “getting out the wiggles” are the wonderful benefits of outdoor play!



Getting Organized

Start by thinking about safety, access, and capacity. Safety starts with a hard look at surfaces and falls: what kind of materials buffer falls? Are they deep enough? Have they gotten compacted through use? Is the area fenced and secure from outsiders? Is all of the area clearly visible to the teacher? Is there a daily/weekly inspection for safety (sharp or broken equipment, pinching and entrapment, etc.)?

Is there enough space for the groups(s) of children who use the play area? The bare minimum is 75 square feet per child. Is there an assortment of surfaces and spaces for outdoor play: running, digging, water play, a climbing structure, a space for tricycles and wagons, a mix of sun and shade? How many children can be safely engaged at one time on all of the equipment?

Think of zones and ratios of children to equipment/activities—are there choices? A variety of equipment suitable for a number of children to use at once is preferable to one large structure that limits participation.

Basic Equipment

- A climbing structure with numerous parts to encourage a range of physical skills
- Safe, impact-absorbing material under the climbing structure
- Enough equipment options to allow all children in class to be engaged
- Some paved areas and some grass or softer areas
- Different elevations with ramps or inclines
- Adaptive materials and surfaces for children with disabilities
- Sand, water, and garden dirt (and a cover for the sand pit)
- A water source
- Picnic or other child-sized table and benches
- Tubs, buckets, small shovels, scoops, and other sand and water toys

How and where will you store outdoor equipment and props (both the large and smaller toys)? Tricycles, wagons, and scooters are great for the physical development of three- to five-year-olds, but they need secure storage space. Can you set up a “parking” area with yellow parking lines to use between classes, and a space to lock them up at night? Sand toys like buckets, shovels, sieves, trucks, and cars need containers that allow sand and water to drain or sift out. All storage bins need labels with a format consistent with indoor toys.

Do you have an outdoor water supply? A hose can be invaluable for filling water tables and buckets, for watering gardens, and for cooling (or cleaning) equipment and hot pavement. A drinking fountain is also important, especially during warm weather, and it helps to save on cups and pitchers.

Is your play yard accessible to children with disabilities? What spaces and activities are available to include them in play? Are there ramps from the classroom to the play yard? If the climbing structure is the main activity, look at other options and equipment for inclusive play.

- Tricycles, scooters, wagons, and other wheeled toys
- Storage for outdoor toys
- Balls of varying sizes and types
- A garden box/big pots and/or garden plot and tools
- Covered areas for shade and outdoor extensions of curriculum areas (art, music, carpentry)
- A place to make a fort or “play house”
- Materials for dramatic play
- A tire swing
- Sun hats and sunscreen

An Idyllic Moment

A perfect sunny morning on the playground—the kind of day that delights children and teachers alike! Bright faces, happy loud voices, active bodies—a great time to just observe the action...

Rosa is part of the chase game, speeding around with the tricycle riders in her wheelchair. The sand pit is awash with buckets of water being carried to fill a lake and make 'cakes' in a sandy bakery. Peter and Ashley are in the garden area with the student teacher figuring out how many bean plants they need to

make a "Bean Tepee." The playhouse is being "painted" by a group of girls with big brushes and bucket of water. The tricycle traffic seems to be getting a little wild. Hmm, maybe time to not only revisit the rules, but talk about making some traffic safety signs. Where is the outdoor drawing box?

Dr. Sally Provence, a legendary early childhood professor once said: "Don't just do something! Stand there and watch!" Sometimes as teachers we just need to stop, savor the moment, watch and think about what is going on. Then act.



Think about...

The outdoor play environment needs to be as thoughtfully designed, equipped, and utilized as the classroom—it is an extension of the room and part of the learning environment!

Think about the kinds of vigorous play you want to encourage for your group of children. Peer relationships are important, and can be supported outdoors. However, too few tricycles, wagons, and scooters will create conflicts and long waits for a turn. The same goes for sand toys and balls. Thoughtfully plan to avoid conflicts with enough equipment and space.

Areas for complex play that accommodate several children with multiple options are needed. A big sand pit with access to water (to carry in buckets), shovels, sieves, scoops, pans, and tools that sand and water flow through (big funnels, sieves, and PVC pipe) can accommodate multiple children at a variety of skill levels. Tire swings usually hold one to three children and are fun to share with a friend. Single child equipment like tricycles can be balanced with the complex activity spaces.

Zones are important:

- A paved track with a designated traffic pattern is great for the wheeled toys.
- Climbing structures need impact-absorbing materials beneath them, and they must be separated from the main running areas.
- Grass or turf of some kind is best for the running/chase game areas. Such a space works for many organized/team games as well.
- Spaces for painting easels or a water table need to be out of the main paths of “traffic”—a quieter space that is still visible to teachers.
- A place for dramatic play, maybe with sheets and tarps for making “tents” and having prop boxes, helps to extend imaginative play and invite small group involvement.

- An outside Carpentry Area also works as an extension of indoor curriculum, and handles the noise of hammering well. Perhaps having a nail pounding stump (or small cable spool) and a hammer and nail bin in a sheltered area can make carpentry a more readily available activity than it is indoors.

Science activities can and should be a constant part of outdoor play! Wet experiments work well outdoors.

- A bin with lengths of PVC pipe and “elbow” and “T” joints promotes experiments about how water flows and how it can be diverted. Plastic rain gutter lengths also promote “water works” and endless exploration and variations.
- Keep a few bags for “collections” handy. Rocks, seed pods, and other “found objects” can be collected. Some sturdy hand lenses allow for the observation of insects and plants.
- Gardens and planting tubs are part of science as children plant and observe growth. Planting “salad bar” plots with favorite healthy veggies combines the delight of growing with healthy eating.

Be alert for the wondering looks and the “what” and “why” questions engendered in outside experiences!



How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in the Outside Play Area

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT			
Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 1: CHILDREN SHOW CURIOSITY AND INTEREST IN LEARNING AND EXPERIMENTING.	Becomes inquisitive; seeks information and vocabulary to build understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks others for information (e.g. "What is that?," "Why is the moon round?"). Shows interest in how and why others do things. Uses "wh" questions to get additional information about how their world works (why, who, what, where, and when). Actively engages in play and putting materials together to test end results. Uses fantasy and reality to explain phenomenon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule adequate time for child initiated play and exploration. Provide open-ended materials such as blocks and building materials, liquids for pouring and mixing . . . Help child use vocabulary that leads to exploration (e.g. exploring together), offer open-ended questions and comments (e.g. "I wonder...?," "How could that work?," "What do you think about...?," or "What ideas do you have?"). Elaborate and embellish a child's utterances (Child says, "I rode the trike." Adult responds, "Yes, you rode on the tricycle with two small wheels and one large wheel.").
Goal 2: CHILDREN GENERATE/CREATE NEW IDEAS, APPROACHES, AND ACTIVITIES IN DAILY ROUTINES.	Expands personal expression through language, play, and creative exploration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imitates roles and creates scenarios for those roles. Invents activities and games. Creates and negotiates acceptable rules for group activities. Engages in open-ended exploration of raw materials (messy play). Uses materials in novel ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask open-ended questions to encourage creative thinking. Provide tasks where the goal is trying different strategies rather than right or wrong answers. Provide opportunities for child to create and complete projects in their own way.
Goal 14: CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN EXPLORATORY PLAY.	Explore materials and actions with an intended purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climbs, swings, jumps, dances, and hops to test skills. Aims, throws, catches, and kicks balls to explore projectile management and imitate skills of others. Uses tools, hammers, saws, shovels, and levers to explore the physical properties of moving masses. Plays with wheeled toys (tricycles, scooters, wagons) to explore velocity. Creates tests to explore the physical environment (e.g. builds a sand structure with water and sand or dams up a flowing stream building a rock dam). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide time for outdoor activities and play with digging tools, buckets, wheel toys, and balls. Provide fine motor opportunities during free play times and structure activities based on children's interests and skills. Outdoors, have props nearby, including access to water, for easy access when ideas occur.

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 17: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH AND COORDINATION OF LARGE MOTOR MUSCLES.</p>	<p>Coordinate whole body to move in complex ways with strength, agility, and balance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks and runs following circular paths (around obstacles and corners). • Runs, pivots to change direction, and stops as appropriate. • Climbs on play equipment. • Throws large beanbags or ball with some accuracy. • Catches large balls with two hands. • Kicks ball forward. • Balances on one foot; hops forward on two feet, then on one foot. • Jumps on two feet and jumps over small objects with balance and control. • Pedals consistently when riding a tricycle. • Starts and stops a tricycle intentionally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide safe equipment and environments that vary in skill levels (e.g. tricycles, scooters, tires, hoops, balls, balance beam, climbing equipment). • Teach child new skills (e.g. dance moves, bounce and kick ball activities, swimming, skiing, and tumbling). • Provide activities in which only one side of the body is used at a time (e.g. hopping, standing on one foot). • Provide opportunities for dance and other movement activities that use both sides of the body (e.g. bending, twisting, stretching, and balancing). • Provide safe inside and outside environments that offer variation in elevation, so children can jump to and from a height and practice balancing. • Play games where children meet imagined or real obstacles to go under, over, through, and up or down.
<p>Goal 20: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE THE STAMINA AND ENERGY TO PARTICIPATE IN DAILY ACTIVITIES.</p>	<p>Sustain strength for increased periods of time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitively practices new skills. • Engages in unstructured active physical play on a daily basis (60 minutes each day). • Pushes self on wheeled toys with agile steering. • Engages in structured active physical play 30 minutes each day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of daily opportunities for the child to engage in noncompetitive physical activities. • Provide at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activities each day. • Provide adult-led sustained active physical play in several short activity periods to total 30 minutes in a day. • Rotate active physical play toys to match children's interests and growth/development.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 21: CHILDREN ENGAGE IN A VARIETY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES.</p>	<p>Participate in a variety of age appropriate movement and physical daily activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in large motor physical challenges (e.g. jumping from heights, climbing, and rough and tumble play). Initiates structured and unstructured physical activities throughout the day. Incorporates various physical activities while transitioning from one place to another (e.g. marches between the kitchen and the bathroom, dodges pretend objects walking...). Participates in simple cooperative games with peers. Uses a variety of complex movements to help with physical chores (e.g. putting away toys...). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage child in group exercise times/activities (e.g. bike rides, group activities using playground structures, group games such as exercising together to music, family walks). Provide opportunity for child to try many types of physical activities (e.g. throwing and catching different types of balls, using a variety of playground equipment and outside environmental challenges, helping with physical chores, dancing in different styles). Provide child the opportunity to play in a variety of physically challenging settings (e.g. a neighborhood park with outdoor play equipment, areas with steeper hills for running up and down, equipment for climbing up and over, and physically negotiating space for playing around and among other children).
<p>Goal 25: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND AVOID HARMFUL OBJECTS AND SITUATIONS.</p>	<p>Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of harmful objects and situations and respond, with and without assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates to peers and adults when seeing dangerous behaviors such as someone throwing rocks on the playground. Recognizes dangerous objects and areas, when taught about the danger. Can tell about the danger, but cannot be relied upon to avoid the area or objects. Identifies appropriate clothing and sunscreen for various weather conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide constant close adult supervision and guidance. Be vigilant about appropriate clothing and skin protection. Demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries about harmful objects and situations (e.g. always put child in car safety seat, helmets for bikes).

DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 30: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS OF BEHAVIOR AND ITS EFFECTS ON OTHERS.</p>	<p>Anticipates the impact of self actions on others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks who, what, when, where, and how questions to understand effects of behavior (“If I do this, why does that happen?”). • Identifies consequences of own actions on others (“If I share my toy, they will be happy.”). • Recognizes other children’s kind or unkind behaviors. • Shows sympathy and/or empathy for physically hurt or emotionally upset child. • States reasons for rules and routines within the group, and mostly acts on those. • Verbally explains connection between actions and reactions though does not always resist carrying out a forbidden action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for dramatic play so that children can practice taking others’ role or perspective. • Have child create “if-then” scenarios (e.g. “If I pick up my toys, then we will go for a walk.”). • When there is a conflict between two children, demonstrate empathy and understanding for both children, and clarify their feelings and the situation. • Provide opportunities for children to participate in developing rules for the environment (e.g. “We walk inside.” “We keep our hands on our own bodies.”). Use “what” and “why” questions in this rules discussion.
<p>Goal 37: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE BELIEF IN THEIR ABILITIES.</p>	<p>Shows confidence and competence in managing simple, everyday skills for daily living, with and without assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses delight with mastery of a skill (e.g. “I did it myself!”). • Shows confidence in achievement (e.g. “I can climb to the top of the big slide!” “I can walk all around the sidewalk on the playground with my walker.”). • Practices a skill repeatedly until achieved. • Shows pride and pleasure when someone reacts to the child’s action or creation. • Shows self-awareness by complying with rules and expectations of adults much of the time. • Near the end of this age range, becomes consistent in sharing and sometimes views sharing as an obligation. • May exaggerate own strength and abilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In child care settings, make a checklist of everyday tasks that a child in this age range is learning. • Plan environments so that children have many and varied activities where they can practice those tasks. Provide opportunities for child to try a task from the list, and offer assistance, as appropriate. • Provide plenty of time and opportunities for child to play, explore, experiment, and accomplish tasks and develop a sense of competence. • Invite child to share ideas, skills, or ways to solve a problem. • Offer opportunities for children to watch each other trying new skills. • Recognize child’s desire to feel capable and strong, and to make progress toward getting better at a skill.

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 42: CHILDREN OBSERVE, DESCRIBE, AND COLLECT INFORMATION BY EXPLORING THE WORLD AROUND THEM.</p>	<p>Calls attention to, describes, discusses, and explains similarities and differences among objects or events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows interest and curiosity in exploring, investigating, and using words to describe living and nonliving things. • Asks “why” and “how” questions about objects and events. • Notices, describes, and predicts changes in the environment (e.g. dark clouds mean possible rain). • Explores earth science, physical science, and life science through observations and experimentation with concrete objects. • Predicts the outcome of an investigation based on observation, evidence, or experience. • Respects living things (e.g. watering plants or trying to avoid stepping on ant hills). • Explores answers to questions and forms new questions or conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to explore, describe, collect, classify, and document materials, objects, and natural phenomena using various senses (e.g. experiment to collect items or experiences that are hot and cold, loud and soft, or rough and smooth). • Provide opportunities to observe and explore different physical characteristics of living and nonliving things using investigative tools (magnifiers, droppers), with assistance. • Play “I Spy” to describe living and nonliving items in the immediate surroundings. • Provide a variety of fruits and vegetables for exploration to find similarities and differences, or to compare attributes of different seeds. Plant a garden and make a month’s long project of exploring, comparing and contrasting plants from soil to seeds to new plants to growing plant to harvesting to cooking and eating. • Provide child with bubble solution and a variety of wands and household items (e.g. ladles with holes, spatulas, funnels, strawberry baskets, straws), and encourage them to describe and predict the bubbles each item makes. • Provide digital cameras, paper, and art materials for documenting child’s observations (e.g. representations of the sequence of the emerging of a caterpillar).

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 45: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF INDIVIDUAL FAIRNESS, GROUP RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES (DEMOCRATIC IDEALS) FOR MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN GROUP ACTIVITIES (SUCCESSFUL CITIZENSHIP).</p>	<p>Engages cooperatively in organized, culturally acceptable practices with familiar people, objects, settings, and play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the time, chooses acceptable behaviors to control strong emotions in group situations. • Follows simple rules and respects boundaries, most of the time. • Uses most materials safely and purposefully in different contexts and settings, with adult assistance. • Manages most transitions and changes in routines. • Takes turns with other children when using objects, or when doing activities, though adult support may be needed for novel or favored object/events. • Tries out strategies for entering group play. • Shows awareness of group rules, though may need adult assistance to follow those rules. • Begins to say “that’s not fair” as a rationale for getting their way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call children by their names. • Talk to and listen respectfully to each child, and assist children to do the same with each other. • Model respect for diversity. • Encourage child to listen to, verbally express, and respond to others’ emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways. • Encourage child to actively discuss, establish, and remind others to follow through on simple rules and limits. • Assure children that they will get a turn at a desirable item or activity, and then be sure to follow through to be sure children get a turn. This encourages trust in groups. • Talk often about turn taking. Explain how to take turns: “When you are done with the digger, let Juan know that it is his turn.” • Encourage conflict resolution through active listening and simple questioning between you and the children, and among children. • Help to ensure that child’s messages are understood by others through discussion and questioning. • Make opportunities for each child to be a leader or helper.

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 50: CHILDREN COMPREHEND AND USE CONVENTIONS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION.</p>	<p>Sustains interactions using social conventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses spoken language or signing for greetings including, “Hi,” “Good-bye,” and softeners in language such as “please and thank you.” • Recognizes subtle, nonverbal cues (e.g. crooking a finger to indicate come closer..., facial expressions for happy, sad, danger, and encouragement). • Asks for help. • Bilingual children adjust language and communication form according to the person with whom they are speaking. • Uses and interprets appropriate language depending on the purpose. • Defines the expectations during play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model and cue the use of greetings, and conventions of politeness (please, thank you) according to culture. • Provide opportunities for interaction within child’s own social conventions and also other languages and cultural groups. • Provide child with opportunities for problem solving. • Ask child to describe their play to adult or other children. • Pair kind, sensitive, patient peer models with less competent or reticent children for conversation. • To prime the conversation pump, be the third person when two children are playing. Offer words to the children that they might say to each other.
<p>Goal 64: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY IN HOME LANGUAGE WHILE ACQUIRING BEGINNING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH.</p>	<p>Demonstrates varying competency in learning English depending on age, onset, and amount of language exposure.</p> <p>Communicates with purpose to convey information, and uses phrases and sentences with more complex vocabulary in home language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasionally inserts words from home language while speaking English. • Relies on non-verbal cues to communicate in English, but does not rely on non-verbal cues to communicate in home language. • Focuses on the meaning of words rather than grammar in acquiring spoken English language competency. • Uses sentences in home language and begins to use single word or telegraphic speech in English to communicate. • A bilingual child adjusts language and communication form used according to person with whom he/she is speaking or place where he/she is at. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label shelves and toy containers with pictures and both written languages, each language consistently color coded (red: English; blue: Spanish; green: Bosnian). • Encourage the use of English in school by providing a safe, responsive audience. • Wait for child “to find” English word when asking a question or needing a response. • Help child develop reasoning skills through use of home language. • Identify and explain patterns in errors of spoken English to help child acquire language competency (note: do not correct child but guide child by example). • Help native, English-speaking children understand the English Language Learner’s speech and vocabulary. • Learn tone, key words, and common gestures of child’s home language.

Sand and Water Area

Playing in sand and water has intrigued young children across time and cultures. From splashing in a bath to a group of children digging channels and building castles, water and sand play are important indoor and outdoor experiences for young children. Through sand and water exploration, children begin to learn basic scientific and mathematical concepts such as “empty” and “full,” “floating” and “sinking,” volume, mass, and changes in solids and liquids. It takes many experiments and pouring repetitions to understand overflowing and filling “to the brim.” How big is a splash? What happens to water poured into sand? How heavy is wet sand? How heavy is a bucket of water? Young scientists thrive physically and intellectually in the messy play of sand and water.

In the Sand and Water Area, Children Learn...

About volume, mass, and measurement

- To make predictions, comparisons, and estimates
- To explore force, cause and effect, solids and liquids
- About gravity, stability, weight, and balance
- To use small and large muscle groups along with strength and balance
- About relationships between materials and how to effect change
- To soothe and manage frustration and upset feelings
- Social skills, problem solving, and discovery with peers
- Vocabulary for quantity and spatial relationships such as more/less than, equal to, over, under, through, and deeper.

By digging sand and scooping water, children improve strength and physical dexterity. When they work together at sand and water tables, they are faced with problems of sharing, compromising, and negotiating. Sand and water play can be two separate activities, but wet sand play allows children to encounter wider principles of math, science, and creativity firsthand. Both indoors and outdoors, sand and water remain universal and essential play experiences for children.



Getting Organized

A water supply is an essential item for sand and water play, both indoors and outside. Drainage and safe surrounding surfaces are the next big logistical issues.

- In an indoor setting, a waterproof, nonskid surface is important, and space for toys, mop, sponges, broom, and dustpan are vital. Child-sized tools allow children to clean up spills as part of the play.
- It is preferable to have both sand and water tables with space for several children. Adjustable table heights allow flexibility for the ages and needs of the children.
- Outdoors, a sand pit with a cover and a place for shovels, buckets, sieves, and sand toys are needed.

Basic Equipment

- An outdoor sand pit with a cover and clean, masonry grade sand
- Water and sensory tables indoors (additional for outside)
- Clean, fine sand and other tactile mediums
- Buckets, shovels, scoops, whisks, and pitchers
- Sieves, funnels, big clear plastic tubing, and funnels
- Measuring cups, spoons, basters, squirt bottles, and sponges
- An assortment of items that float and sink (corks, shells, rocks)
- Toy people and animals
- Toy cars, trucks, boats, and waterwheels
- Various lengths of PVC pipe and plastic gutter for “waterworks”
- Sturdy plastic tubs for equipment storage (those outdoors should have drainage holes)
- Waterproof apron
- Liquid soap for bubbles, and food coloring to show change of color and flow patterns

- A water/sand table enhances the outdoor play space by providing a quieter play area as well as access for children with special needs who use a wheelchair or can't get into the sand box.
- Waterproof aprons can be an asset for vigorous water play.
- Other mediums such as potting soil, pea gravel, rabbit food pellets, cornmeal, beans, or rice (depending on the school's policy about food as play materials and choking hazards) can be used in the table for a variety of textures and experience.
- Think of props that encourage scientific thinking and language such as, “What holds sand or water?” and “What can water go through?”



Making a Splash - What May Be Going On

Several four-year-olds are looking in a tub of plastic pipes and fittings: "Hey, let's put these together and make water come out..." "Yeah, we can make it come out lots of places."

"I'm going to hook these pieces together. This 'T' will make the water go both ways." "We can stick this 'bendy one' on and make it go out this way..."

"It needs to be bigger! Get more pipes!"

Much connecting and negotiating continue, and finally... "Let's pour in a bucket of water."

Water splashes all over, some goes into the pipes—but not enough. "Go find a big funnel. We need to get more in!"

Bucket after bucket of water is poured, leaks are repaired, and more pieces are added. The teacher asks if she can take a picture of their "waterworks invention," as it's almost time to pick up and go inside. Later she invites the "team of inventors" to write a caption for the photo, and asks if anyone wants to dictate a longer description of what happened, how they built it, and how the water flowed and changed.



Think about...

At the beginning of the school year, Sand and Water Areas can be fairly simple to encourage basic sensory exploration chosen for the ages and needs of the children in the group.

- Three-year-olds need time for simply messing, exploring, and learning to manage the newness of a group. Scooping, pouring, and splashing water while standing with another child may be a starting point.
- Patting sand, digging, dumping buckets, and squeezing squirt bottles require hand strength and some grasp and/or wrist rotation skills.
- Watching others, imitating another child, and playing next to each other are important steps in social learning.

Older children who have some group experience can manage a wider range of materials, tools, and experiences both inside and outside.

Think about how the outdoor environment can be an extension of the indoor curriculum. The scale, complexity, and messiness of scientific experience can expand outdoors with some thoughtful planning.

- Full buckets of sand or water strengthen large muscles, and build balance and coordination as lakes, rivers, and bakeries are organized.
- Shovels and large tools use different muscle groups and make different physical demands on growing bodies than cups, small scoops, and spoons. Both the large muscle and small muscle activities are important for sensory growth and healthy bodies.

- An outdoor sand/water table can support the work of children who want a quieter, smaller space, or who need a physically accessible space to play. Experiments can occur on a different scale and be compared between the table and the sand pit.

Children build a deep sense of competence—a “can do” attitude—working individually and in groups as wet sand becomes cakes, water is carried, lakes and rivers are dug, and “sinking” is explored. The teacher’s role is to pose questions and offer new vocabulary to extend and tie this learning to curriculum goals and objectives.

- Children can be challenged to figure out what floats and what sinks—are they always the same?
- Teachers can use mathematical terms like “more and less,” “many and few,” “empty and full,” “how many?,” and “how much?”
- Questions that start and develop scientific thinking are wonderful supports from interested adults: “Why do you think that happened? How do you know? Does it always do that?”
- Older children can learn to count or record their observations, or maybe write their experiences and explanations.

Indoor or outside sand and water play provide an array of learning opportunities and experiences that enhance a child’s whole development. It is worth the mess!

How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in Sand and Water Areas

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 6: CHILDREN CHANGE OR ADAPT THOUGHT PROCESSES, APPLYING PREVIOUSLY LEARNED CONCEPTS AND SKILLS TO NEW SITUATIONS.</p>	<p>Takes risks in novel situations, extending previous learning to the exploration of new settings, people, and objects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plays beside others, using the same kinds of toys or materials. Takes turn in using toys and materials. Sometimes plans and carries out play themes cooperatively with others. Can stop and shift activities, but sometimes needs help when deeply engaged. Seeks out new experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide many and varied safe toys and activities for children to play with alone and in adult-mediated groups. Rotate toys as child appears to lose interest. Later, re-introduce toy to spark renewed interest. Provide time for and materials to process experiences and information. Ask open-ended questions to encourage reflection (e.g. "What if?" or "How else?"). Interpret a peer's intentions or point of view as part of conflict resolution.
<p>Goal 12: CHILDREN USE CONJECTURE, HYPOTHESIZING, AND GUESSING.</p>	<p>Uses a repertoire of thinking and language skills for testing ideas about things and relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the effects that simple actions have and their outcomes. Recognizes which object or element of an object causes the effect in simple relationships. Answers "what next" questions. Holds more than one attribute in mind. Uses less magical thinking and more thinking about causation and planned actions. Uses "why" more than other question words, to ask questions as they hypothesize. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use child-centered play, for the child to discover and practice cause and effect, where the adult direction is limited. Support cause and effect activities by asking extending questions (e.g. "What do you think will happen next?"), or offering another prop or problem statement into the activity. Enrich the environment with enough open-ended materials and time for exploration (e.g. blocks, water table, outdoors, sand, and digging tools). Pose questions when children are experimenting (e.g. "What do you think will happen if..." or "Can you make that happen again?").

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 19: CHILDREN USE THEIR SENSES (SIGHT, HEARING, SMELL, TASTE, AND TOUCH) TO GUIDE AND INTEGRATE THEIR INTERACTIONS.	Coordinate motor activities based on sensory input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates motor activity based on visual input. • Physically reacts appropriately to the environment. • Refines eye-hand coordination for precise movement. • Demonstrates coordination when pushing objects, climbing, swinging on a swing, sliding, and balancing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for the child to explore natural surroundings through the senses. • Provide opportunities to use touch, pressure, and texture to learn to push, pull, or lift an object effectively. • Offer various weights, sizes, heights, and density in play equipment for children to arrange and move (e.g. sand, water, and buckets of mud for constructing).
Goal 20: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE STAMINA AND ENERGY TO PARTICIPATE IN DAILY ACTIVITIES.	Engage in organized and spontaneous physical activity both indoors and outside.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitively practices new skills. • Engages in unstructured active physical play on a daily basis (60 minutes each day). • Engages in structured active physical play 30 minutes each day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of daily opportunities for the child to engage in noncompetitive physical activities. • Provide at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activities each day. • Rotate active physical play toys to match children’s interests and growth/development, incorporate movement to music). • Provide a balance between stimulating and restful activities.

DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 28: CHILDREN DEVELOP FRIENDSHIPS WITH PEERS.</p>	<p>Engage in mutual social play that involves cooperation and shared purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacts with peers in play, sometimes with cooperative play themes where materials and activities are shared. • Smiles, gives eye contact, and communicates verbally and non-verbally while playing with other children. • Tries a variety of strategies to engage a peer. • Initiates conversations with other children. • Asks questions and responds when children approach or seek conversation. • Makes decisions with other children, with adult prompts as needed (making rules). • Briefly waits for a turn when playing with other children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for child to engage in a variety of play activities with other children (e.g. dramatic play, art projects, block building, free active physical play inside and outside, or dance class). • If a child is just learning how to join play, support that child as they learn new strategies. Help that child accept and move on to another play setting if rejected for that particular activity. • Support the child who is nonverbal by teaching other children to use basic signs, body language, and other visual supports for communication. • In school or child care settings, provide opportunities as appropriate for a child and family members to explain to the other children, what that child with special learning needs might do or need in the classroom (e.g. what hearing aids are or why the child uses oxygen, or why a child uses a wheelchair and how other children can play with that child). • Provide opportunities for children to solve problems and resolve conflicts with adult help/facilitation.
<p>Goal 30: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS OF BEHAVIOR AND ITS EFFECTS ON OTHERS.</p>	<p>Anticipates the impact of self actions on others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks who, what, when, where, and how questions to understand effects of behavior (“If I do this, why does that happen?”). • Identifies consequences of own actions on others (“If I share my toy, they will be happy.”). • Recognizes other children’s kind or unkind behaviors. • Accepts consequences of behavior, with assistance. • Verbally explains connection between actions and reactions though does not always resist carrying out a forbidden action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have child create “if-then” scenarios (e.g. “If I pick up my toys, then we will go for a walk.”). • When there is a conflict between two children, demonstrate empathy and understanding for both children, and clarify their feelings and the situation. • Provide opportunities for children to participate in developing rules for the environment (e.g. “We walk inside.” or “We keep our hands on our own bodies.”). Use “what” and “why” questions in this rules discussion.

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 40:</p> <p>CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING OF MEASURABLE ATTRIBUTES OF OBJECTS AND THE UNITS, SYSTEMS, AND PROCESSES OF MEASUREMENT (INCLUDING SIZE, VOLUME, HEIGHT, WEIGHT, LENGTH, AREA, AND TIME).</p>	<p>Use geometric modeling and spatial reasoning according to different dimensions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compares several objects based on one or more attributes (length, size, weight) using words such as “shorter,” and “shortest,” “bigger,” and “lighter.” • Uses positional terms such as “between,” “inside,” “over,” “under,” and “behind.” • Uses descriptive words for measurable properties such as length and weight, or capacity. • Uses measuring tools in play activities (e.g. measuring tape, measuring cups, and scales and balances). • Measures liquids, solids, and semi-solids, such as sand and water, using a variety of containers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in activities that use nonstandard measurement (e.g. use handfuls to measure rice, use footsteps to measure distance). • Provide sand and water play with measurement tools to explore measurement, volume, and weight. • Model language and use body and objects using positional terms (behind, inside, on top, under). • Continue to model language involving comparisons for size, volume, weight, and height (length) of people, toys, and objects. • Measure objects using standard measuring units (measure a wooden block using paper clips, markers, then – ruler, tape measure, and balance.) Document findings with the children.
<p>Goal 43:</p> <p>CHILDREN FURTHER ENGAGE IN EXPLORING AND MAKING SENSE OF THE NATURAL WORLD BY ASKING QUESTIONS AND MAKING PREDICTIONS ABOUT CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONS THAT CAN LEAD TO GENERALIZATIONS.</p>	<p>Investigates unfamiliar phenomena using both trial and error and systematic trials, with assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses tools for sensory exploration in a trial and error fashion. • Observes, describes, and predicts the phenomenon and outcomes. • Verbalizes observations. • Makes simple predictions and inferences about cause and effect relations based on observations, explorations, and experimentations with objects and events in the natural world. • Compares predictions with actual observations (e.g. predicts what will happen as different sized toy cars roll down a ramp, and then shows interest and perhaps surprise at what happens). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an environment that inspires child to have ideas and figure out how to do something. • Provide an outdoor environment with sand, water, sand tools, wheel toys, and props to promote open-ended play and offer cause and effect moments. • Encourage child to try out ideas, make mistakes, and develop contradictions and ask, “What do you think will happen if...” • Provide daily opportunities for child’s exploration of sand, water, mud, and pebbles, with tools for pouring and manipulating; help child question what will happen. • Provide a variety of measurement tools to explore attributes such as weight, lengths, and volume.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 45: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF INDIVIDUAL FAIRNESS, GROUP RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES (DEMOCRATIC IDEALS) FOR MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN GROUP ACTIVITIES (SUCCESSFUL CITIZENSHIP).</p>	<p>Engages cooperatively in organized, culturally acceptable practices with familiar people, objects, settings, and play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows simple rules and respects boundaries, most of the time. • Uses most materials safely and purposefully in different contexts and settings, with adult assistance. • Takes turns with other children when using objects, or when doing activities, though adult support may be needed for novel or favored object/events. • Shares occasionally (e.g. gives up a desired object or activity at expense of self desires). Expect that younger children in this age range to be more amenable to adult-mediated turn taking than true sharing. • Begins to say “that’s not fair” as a rationale for getting their way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to and listen respectfully to each child, and assist children to do the same with each other. • Encourage child to actively discuss, establish, and remind others to follow through on simple rules and limits. • Give child appropriate words to express emotions. • Assure children that they will get a turn at a desirable item or activity, and then be sure to follow through to be sure children get a turn. This encourages trust in groups. • Encourage conflict resolution through active listening and simple questioning between you and the children, and among children. • Make opportunities for each child to be a leader or helper.

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 49: CHILDREN COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY.</p>	<p>Uses a variety of communication forms with purpose to convey a message.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks clearly enough to be understood by most listeners. • Relays a simple message. • Describes objects and events using simple details. • Initiates conversation by making statements or asking questions using why, how, when, what, where, and who, though not always choosing the correct interrogatives. • Uses both simple and complex sentences. • Responds meaningfully in conversation with adults and peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage child to express opinions, feelings, and ideas. • Provide opportunities for children to state their choices and to tell their plans. • Ask open-ended questions that can be answered by child in own way, to eliminate the need for right or wrong answers. • Respect the child's response. • Recognize and encourage alternate forms of communication (dance, drumming, sign, and storytelling). • Provide opportunities for verbal expression in home language.
<p>Goal 55: CHILDREN USE LANGUAGE FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES.</p>	<p>Follow social conventions to access, gain, and share information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to questions. • Uses words to protest. • Asks questions to obtain information. • Participates in conversations about a variety of topics. • Uses words and phrases to relate observations, concepts, ideas, and relationships. • Uses words to express feelings of self and others. • Uses polite words, such as please and thank you, and some warm ups and softeners, such as "When you are done, I can play here." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage a child in conversation and give wait time for response. • Provide multiple experiences in the community and discuss them. • Engage child in conversations that lend themselves to expressing different ideas (explanatory talk, conversations about science). • Encourage child to express feelings verbally. • Use expanded adult language when conversing. • Compare and contrast objects and actions for the child.

Science and Discovery Area

The Science and Discovery Area nurtures children's curiosity about how things work and the natural world around them. It can be the place to bring collections and "found objects" from home and walks—the items children bring from nature to the classroom. Plants and living creatures can be cared for and observed. Plants require watering and perhaps a stick to measure growth. Ant colonies or fish need tending and quickly show growth and change. The Science and Discovery

Area includes the living and dead (the living class guinea pig, the dead butterfly), natural and man-made objects, and the tools to explore, draw, and record changes. It is a place of displays, experiments, and wonder! While we create a designated "science table", scientific thinking and experimentation need to permeate a classroom, just as we saturate for language and literacy skills. Science is everywhere.

In the Science and Discovery Area, Children Learn to...

- Classify materials and make predictions
- Observe change and learn about cause and effect
- Develop curiosity about the natural world
- Ask questions and search for answers
- Develop eye-hand skills by using magnifiers and balances
- Count and graph
- Expand their vocabulary
- Use senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste) to gain information
- Compare similarities and differences between objects
- Observe color, texture, size, shape, and other attributes of objects
- Match, sort, classify, and group objects
- Share, display, and observe "found objects" (rocks, insects, birds' nests)
- Develops the process of inquiry and scientific thinking



Getting Organized

A well-equipped Science and Discovery Area should contain an assortment of materials that require looking, probing, caring, and all types of exploration. A space near a window provides the light needed for lenses and growing plants. A window also offers the opportunity to observe a bird feeder or insect-attracting plants. Use both indoor and outdoor settings and situations for scientific

Basic Equipment

- A well-lit wide shelf or table with a display space and work area
- Weighing devices: balances and small scales with items to be weighed (rocks, shells)
- Hand lenses and stand lenses
- Small mirrors and flashlights
- Magnets and magnetic materials
- Plants, seeds, watering cans
- Clipboards with paper for drawing and recording observations (indoors and outdoors)
- Plain paper and graph paper
- Markers, pencils, scissors, dowels
- A terrarium, fish tank, bug cages, small animal cages
- Insects and small animals
- Collections of natural objects
- Thermometer and weather board
- Pulleys and simple machines
- Science-related books and posters

observations. A space for the attractive displaying of collections (rocks, shells) or special objects like an animal skull or skin draws observations and questions from children. Both natural and physical science play an important role in a child's thinking about scientific principles and how the world works.



Up Close Observation

Annie (4½) discovered a chrysalis hanging from the milkweed plant in a corner of the play yard. For three days she took a clipboard with paper to make drawings and wondered about it. Her teacher helped her find a book with pictures of moths and butterflies, including their cocoons and chrysalis. Other children were interested at first, but were soon busy on the climber and playing chase.

On the fourth day, there was big change—lines were appearing and the shape had changed! Annie shared her exciting news with her teacher, who photographed the chrysalis and promised that she could come out and

make another observation before lunch. It changed more and she made another drawing.

After lunch, when her mom came to pick her up, they looked again. There was the newly hatched butterfly, drying its wings! Another photo was taken, and the following day Annie dictated some descriptions, organized her drawings and photographs, and stapled them into a book. She proudly shared the book at circle time, and then placed it with the library book on the Science Table. Real science!



Think about...

The Science and Discovery Area is always changing as new discoveries are displayed—additional items are added by children or teachers. Complexity grows over the course of the school year. Teachers can respond to an individual child’s interests.

- Preschool teachers tend to build “collections” of natural objects such as shell, animal bones, bits of fur and skins, and items with different textures, shapes, and sizes.
- Some materials can remain constant for observation over time: a fish tank, a weather board/graph, and plants.
- Small animals or live insects can give children experience with pets and their care. Feeding, cleaning cages, and gentle handling of living creatures supports classroom routines and caring. Some children build relationships with animals and then use the shared classroom pet as a “bridge” to relationships with other children.
- Give thought to the aesthetics of the display area. Make it visually inviting. Organize the experimentation space with observation tools. Rotate or respond to curriculum themes and children’s interest in the more temporary items. Plant seeds or bulbs and watch them grow, perhaps with a way to measure their daily growth on a simple graph.
- A weather chart supports daily observation of what is happening outdoors. Charting if it is sunny, cloudy, raining, windy, or snowing with picture symbols introduces graphing, concepts of time and change, and becomes part of the group’s routine. It also supports children’s decisions about how to dress for outside play.

- Consider the range of science. While biology and observing living things is important, don’t forget physical science and physics.

Outdoors is another place of wonderful discoveries and observations.

- Perhaps there is room for a small garden, or at least a large tub that can be planted, watered, and harvested.
- Walks in the neighborhood can provide times to observe changes in leaves, plants, trees, birds, and squirrels. Ask questions like, “What do they eat?” or “Can you find a nest they might have for their babies?” Ants in the cracks of the sidewalk or playground are also worth observing!
- The outdoors is a great source of physical science experiments with water, ice, weather, balances and weights, pulleys, and figuring out how to make the tricycle pull a wagon.
- A small group of children might develop an idea about an experiment with a teacher and try their plan outdoors. Clipboards with plain paper to draw observations help to support scientific observation skills.

How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in the Science and Discovery Area

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 1: CHILDREN SHOW CURIOSITY AND INTEREST IN LEARNING AND EXPERIMENTING.</p>	<p>Becomes inquisitive; seeks information and vocabulary to build understanding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks others for information (e.g. "What is that?" "Why is the moon round?"). Investigates and organizes materials (e.g. uses matching, sorting, and grouping). Shows interest in how and why others do things. Uses "wh" questions to get additional information about how their world works (why, who, what, where, and when). Develops personal interests (trains, animals, dinosaurs). Actively engages in play and putting materials together to test end results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and build on child's individual interests. Teach children to be observers and recorders of what they observe. Help child use vocabulary that leads to exploration (e.g. exploring together). Offer open-ended questions and comments (e.g. "I wonder...?", "How could that work?," "What do you think about...?", or "What ideas do you have?"). Read about topics of interest with the child (trucks, insects, and gardening) to demonstrate how and where people find information.
<p>Goal 5: CHILDREN DEVELOP AND CARRY OUT PLANS.</p>	<p>Develops ideas for how things work and attempts tasks that have unknown outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapts plans as new knowledge is gained through exploration. Verbalizes intentional plans to peers and/or adults during play. Invites peers to join in developing an activity or play ("I've got a great idea! Let's get the trikes and wagons..."). Recalls how problems were solved and can brainstorm additional strategies to use. May ask adult for materials or help for an activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help child understand sequences (e.g. "What do we do first?"). Encourage child to look at the possible outcomes of plans. Offer plenty of time for child-initiated projects. Help children document their ideas, then, use their ideas and documentation to plan for additional activities to expand and embellish their learning. Encourage children to predict the possible outcomes of their plans, and to explain their roles in plans. Review their predictions and discuss future plans.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 8: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE AWARENESS OF CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIPS.</p>	<p>Experiments with and uses words to describe simple causal relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies objects that have an effect on other objects (e.g. dirt makes the water muddy, the cat's dirty paws leave marks on the floor, jelly makes my hands sticky, chili makes my tongue feel spicy). Asks questions to gain words and understanding of causation ("If I do this, why does that happen?"). Recognizes which element of an object causes the effect in simple relationships (Those beads inside the box make the noise.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage child in activities that demonstrate cause and effect (e.g. sand and water table activities, pulleys and inclines, riding toys, weights and balances, cooking projects, planting seeds and watching them grow). Demonstrate, explain, and provide opportunities for child to explore cause and effect in nature (e.g. plants, foods, eating, digestion, and energy; animal behaviors; weather, liquids, and solids). Use observation, prediction, and experimenting to extend cause and effect thinking. Be certain to debrief, reflect, and document results.
<p>Goal 11: CHILDREN FIND MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS TO QUESTIONS, TASKS, PROBLEMS, AND CHALLENGES, INCLUDING TRIAL AND ERROR.</p>	<p>Tries multiple ways to solve problems and create play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explores various ways to solve a problem and tries out options until satisfied. Seeks assistance from another child or adult to solve problems. Modifies actions based on new information and experiences (e.g. changes block structure when the tower continues to fall). Uses emerging perspective taking to think of multiple situations for problem solving. Shows surprise and sometimes frustration when previously successful solutions do not work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be available and watchful to know when a child needs an assist with challenges, questions, and tasks to solve. Offer the least amount of assistance needed by the child. This may be a full physical assist, a partial physical assist, words, or just a gesture. Demonstrate several alternatives to solving a problem if a child gets stuck and asks for help. Guide child through the problem-solving process (e.g. "The wagon is stuck. What can we do?").
<p>Goal 13: CHILDREN BUILD KNOWLEDGE USING COMPARISON, CONTRASTS, EXAMINATION, AND EVALUATION.</p>	<p>Combines observation, past experiences, and knowledge to address novel or unfamiliar situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies new information or vocabulary to an activity. Generates a strategy based on one learning event and extends it to a new learning opportunity. Uses concepts and words to characterize same and different. Labels aspects of an event. Matches, sorts, and classifies objects based on one or more attributes (e.g. shape, size, textures, or color). Compares and contrasts experiences, with or without prompting and/or drawbacks of choosing one course of action, with/without prompting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the child in activities and interactions that make connections by recalling past learning and events (e.g. "remember when..." games and discussions). Engage child in generalizing by asking open-ended questions (e.g. "Where else would this work?" or "What if...?"). Expand and embellish children's vocabulary for descriptive words such as "darker," "not quite red, but almost orange," or "You saw a comet in the sky, and it moved across the sky and looked brighter than a star. What a treat for your eyes!"). Document children's observations and explanations using digital videos and pictures, and written dictation. Use open-ended questions and comments that give children opportunity to express their evaluation of things and situations. Document children's opinions about what works or what they think about something.

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 19: CHILDREN USE THEIR SENSES (SIGHT, HEARING, SMELL, TASTE, AND TOUCH) TO GUIDE AND INTEGRATE THEIR INTERACTIONS.	Coordinate motor activities based on sensory input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates motor activity based on visual input. Physically reacts appropriately to the environment (e.g. bends knees to soften a landing, moves quickly to avoid obstacles). Refines eye-hand coordination for precise movement. Coordinates motor activity based on auditory input (e.g. runs to look out the window when hearing a siren, moves quickly aside to avoid an object that comes from behind). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for the child to explore natural surroundings through the senses (e.g. balance on a low curb, sway in the wind, or kneel and peek under a bush). Provide opportunities to use touch, pressure, and texture to learn to push, pull, or lift an object effectively. Offer various weights, sizes, heights, and density in play equipment for children to arrange and move (e.g. large blocks and boxes for lifting, movable play tables, tents for erecting, sand, water, and buckets of mud for constructing).

DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 37: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE BELIEF IN THEIR ABILITIES.	Shows confidence and competence in managing simple, everyday skills for daily living, with and without assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses delight with mastery of a skill (e.g. "I did it myself!"). Expresses own ideas and opinions. Practices a skill repeatedly until achieved. May try to negotiate with caregiver about what they are supposed to do. Talks to self, using private or inner speech to help remember rules and standards for behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide plenty of time and opportunities for child to play, explore, experiment, and accomplish tasks and develop a sense of competence. Invite child to share ideas, skills, or ways to solve a problem. Offer opportunities for children to watch each other trying new skills. Assist children as they are learning a skill by figuring out where they are starting with their learning, then provide encouragement for each little bit of the skill they achieve. (e.g. talk with child about all the things she can do on her own).

DOMAIN 4: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 39: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING OF NUMBERS, WAYS OF REPRESENTING NUMBERS, RELATIONSHIPS AMONG NUMBERS, AND NUMBER SYSTEMS.</p>	<p>Uses number words and concepts to explore and manipulate quantity, size, and relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses number to represent quantity (e.g. gets three apples out of the box). • Sorts and groups objects, then uses number concepts to explain the effort (counts objects without assigning number to object). • Counts quantities up to ten, recognizing that the last number counted represents the “total objects” and that counting is cumulative. • When counting, assigns number to each item, leaving none out, and counts the item only once. • Uses quantity comparison concepts (e.g. more, less, some, many, all, a few, none, huge, tiny, small, smaller, large, larger). • Uses meanings of numbers to create strategies for solving problems and responding to practical situations, with assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During daily routines, talk aloud about number, using number words and concepts to engage child in meaningful counting and activities that incorporate simple math computations. • Estimate how many objects you have or will see and then count out loud (e.g. “How many children are here? Who is not?”). • Describe and explain how printed numbers have different meanings (e.g. speed limits, temperature, clock, prices). • Use pictures to represent real life situations involving mathematical concepts. • Provide a variety of objects for the child to collect, handle, and sort into groups (buttons, stones, pine cones).
<p>Goal 42: CHILDREN OBSERVE, DESCRIBE, AND COLLECT INFORMATION BY EXPLORING THE WORLD AROUND THEM.</p>	<p>Calls attention to, describes, discusses, and explains similarities and differences among objects or events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows interest and curiosity in exploring, investigating, and using words to describe living and nonliving things. • Makes comparisons and calls attention to details; and with adult assistance, explores the ways in which things are alike and different (e.g. notices how shells are the same or different; notices objects that float or sink; listens to and mimics different sounds of animals). • Notices, describes, and predicts changes in the environment (e.g. dark clouds mean possible rain). • Observes, compares, classifies, measures, and communicates observations of events and objects. • Explores earth science, physical science, and life science through observations and experimentation with concrete objects. • Uses simple tools (magnifiers, lenses, droppers) for exploration and investigation. • Predicts the outcome of an investigation based on observation, evidence, or experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to explore, describe, collect, classify, and document materials, objects, and natural phenomena using various senses (e.g. experiment to collect items or experiences that are hot and cold, loud and soft, or rough and smooth). • Provide opportunities to examine and create nature collections such as rocks, shells, and insects. • Provide opportunities to group, order, and classify collections of rocks, shells, and toy animals. • Provide child with bubble solution and a variety of wands and household items (ladles with holes, spatulas, funnels, strawberry baskets, straws), and encourage them to describe and predict the bubbles each item makes. • Provide opportunities to compare and describe the similarities and differences of living and nonliving things with photos or illustrations in books. • Provide digital cameras, paper, and art materials for documenting child’s observations (e.g. representations of the sequence of the emerging of a caterpillar; rubbings of shells, or a series of drawings of an amaryllis blooming).

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 43: CHILDREN ENGAGE IN EXPLORING AND MAKING SENSE OF THE NATURAL WORLD BY ASKING QUESTIONS AND MAKING PREDICTIONS ABOUT CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONS THAT CAN LEAD TO GENERALIZATIONS.</p>	<p>Investigates unfamiliar phenomena using both trial and error and systematic trials, with assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates strategies from trial and error to explore attributes and solve problems. • Observes, describes, and predicts the phenomenon and outcomes. • Verbalizes observations. • Shows curiosity and interest about familiar/unfamiliar and living/nonliving things. • Makes simple predictions and inferences about cause and effect relations based on observations, explorations, and experimentations with objects and events in the natural world. • Compares predictions with actual observations (e.g. predicts what will happen as different sized toy cars roll down a ramp, and then shows interest and perhaps surprise at what happens). • Connects math to science by using measurement tools and counting phenomenon or events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an environment that inspires child to have ideas and figure out how to do something. • Encourage child to try out ideas, make mistakes, and develop contradictions and ask, "What do you think will happen if..." • Encourage child to observe patterns and offer possible predictions through questions (e.g. "What will happen if we put this flower in a vase without water?"). • Provide daily opportunities for child's exploration of sand, water, mud, and pebbles, with tools for pouring and manipulating; help child question what will happen. • Provide child opportunities to explore, observe, and describe the properties of magnets with different materials such as fabric, plastic toys, nuts and bolts, or coins. • Offer ways for children to document the outcomes of their predictions with what they see.

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 63: CHILDREN USE WRITING FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES.</p>	<p>Makes scribbles, pictures, symbols and letters with meaning and purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tells ideas and stories, songs, rhymes, and asks adult to write them out. • Makes scribbles and pictures to express an idea. • Uses letter-like symbols to make lists, write messages, and write stories. • Copies some environmental print/symbols. • Creates notes and messages for a purpose. • Makes signs and messages for peers (e.g. SAV TOWR in blocks, DO NOT TOUCH by item brought from home). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write notes to the child and read them together. • Measure the growth of plants (bean seeds, bulbs) in science area or garden and keep a daily record of changes. • Provide writing materials in all areas of classroom and outdoors (as needed). • Encourage use of creative spelling to label pictures, write name, and write notes to family and community members.
<p>Goal 64: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY IN HOME LANGUAGE WHILE ACQUIRING BEGINNING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH.</p>	<p>Demonstrates varying competency in learning English depending on age, onset, and amount of language exposure. Communicates with purpose to convey information, and uses phrases and sentences with more complex vocabulary in home language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasionally inserts words from home language while speaking English. • Relies on non-verbal cues to communicate in English, but does not rely on non-verbal cues to communicate in home language. • Uses sentences in home language and begins to use single word or telegraphic speech in English to communicate. • A bilingual child adjusts language and communication form used according to person with whom he/she is speaking or place where he/she is at. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach school concepts in both languages. • Encourage the use of English in school by providing a safe, responsive audience. • Model new concepts with pictures and actions paired with English words. • Wait for child “to find” English word when asking a question or needing a response. • Help child develop reasoning skills through use of home language. • All instruction must be sensitive to the child’s conceptual understanding in both the home language(s) and English.

Writing Area

Writing, like speaking, is a developmental process. It begins with scribbles and proceeds to lines, circles, and intentional drawings, then letter-like shapes, then letters, and finally to strings of letters that become words. The link between letters and their sounds, spaces between words, and writing conventions are eventually learned. Reading and writing are as closely linked as words and their meanings. A group of letter—and number—like shapes read by a four-year-old as a story or a label is indeed that child’s unique writing and reading. The leap has been made to literacy!

Drawing is a critical stage and part of learning to write. Drawing comes before writing and remains an important expression for children, even after they have mastered the skill of writing. It is a way of representing experience and feelings while words are still emerging as a form of communication, and it is especially important for dual language learners.

Young children need lots of time to draw with a variety of materials. The “feel” or tactile experience of using crayons on construction paper is different than markers on smooth paper, but both have value. The size of paper also changes the drawing or writing experience: big pieces of paper invite whole arm motions, or lots of detail within the space, while smaller pieces of paper and pencil or pens require greater hand and finger dexterity. The development of the hand, fingers, and grasp grow from the larger arm motions to the finer finger-controlled marks.

Print and writing opportunities saturate early learning classrooms for three- to five-year-olds, but devoting a special desk or space to writing especially encourages written expression. When they see writing as necessary, purposeful, and enjoyable, children pursue it eagerly. Given opportunities and materials, they can produce lists, labels, cards, letters, stories, and books while learning the many forms of written language and communication.

In the Writing Area, Children Learn...

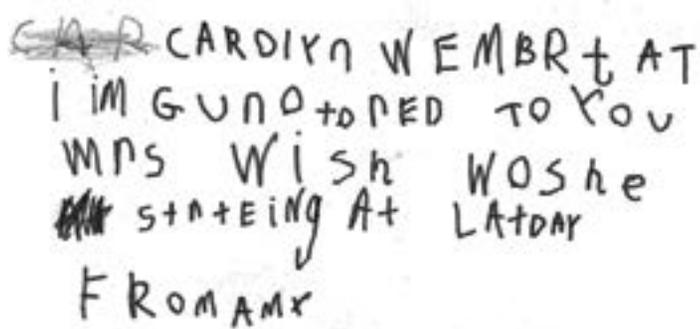
- To strengthen and develop small muscles in their hands and arms
- To use oral language in a variety of situations
- Expression with drawings as a precursor to writing and dictation
- That spoken language has a written counterpart
- To communicate with squiggles, letters, and words
- That writing can entertain and inform
- To use a variety of writing tools
- How to convey thoughts, feelings, and meaning with writing
- That letters have sounds
- To create stories using drawing, dictation, and invented letters and spelling
- Letters and numbers and how to write them
- The conventions of writing

Getting Organized

The Writing Area needs a quiet space with a table or small desks for several children. Paper, from small cards to full sheets, invites children to make labels for block structures, messages to friends, and drawings that can be combined into books. Folded construction paper stapled with a few sheets of blank paper inspires book writing.

Basic Equipment

- Table/desks and chairs for children
- A variety of papers, cards, envelopes, and sizes and shapes of paper
- Pencils, markers, crayons, chalk, and other writing tools
- Scissors, hole punch, stapler
- Tape and glue sticks
- Yarn, ribbon, and string for book binding
- Small chalk or white boards
- Clipboards



~~CAR~~ CAROLYN WEMBR t AT
I IM GUNO TO PED TO YOU
MRS WISH WOShe
~~AM~~ STATEING AT LATDAY
FROM AMX

"Carolyn remember that I'm going to read to you Mrs. Wishy Washy starting at late day.
From Amy" (4 1/2 years old)

Markers, pencils, pens, and crayons can be neatly organized for drawing and writing. Staplers, glue sticks, and tape enhance the creativity. Small chalk boards or white boards also stimulate writing. Picture name cards for children in the class encourage the printing of the child's own name, as well as written notes and messages to friends. This area needs to be kept well organized and well stocked to be inviting. In some classrooms this area is combined with the Reading Area to create a Reading and Literacy Area. It can also be a separate space or one shared with computers.



The Scribe's Comeuppance

Emily, a four-year-old adopted as a baby from China, was drawing a very detailed picture of a family with children, pets, and a house. She made a number of angular square marks in a vertical line along one side of the drawing. She could competently print her name with letters in the correct order moving from left to right. She often "wrote messages" using a few letters and shapes that looked like letters. She was definitely "a writer."

This particular day, Emily asked me to be her "scribe" and write her dictated story on the bottom of the page. When we had finished, she gave me

a serious look and pronounced that the other symbols she had written were Chinese, but that I couldn't read them since I wasn't Chinese. (Had her mother shown her Chinese characters? How did she know how they looked?) I agreed, and she reassured me that "we could still write stories together." However, she had clearly demonstrated what she knew about Chinese characters: they are block-like, are written vertically, and can't be read by teachers who don't know Chinese!

Think about...

Early childhood classrooms need multiple spaces for writing and writing materials in addition to the Art Area.

- Where is the best space for your Writing Area?
- What kind of area or combination of areas fits best with your curriculum and teaching style?
- Do you have the space to combine it with the Reading Area or with computers?
- Would a separate small area be more appealing to some of the reluctant writers in your group?

Perhaps you plan to start the school year with one kind of arrangement, and move to another configuration as the school year progresses and the children become more competent and confident writers.

The Early Learning eGuidelines, Domain 5: Communication, Language and Literacy, are carefully aligned with the Idaho Core Standards. Please refer to the eGuidelines as you integrate reading and writing skills into your classroom environment. (www.earlychildhood.dhw.idaho.gov)

- When dramatic play is centered on a restaurant, suggest creating menus and using note pads for taking orders.
- The Block Area can use writing materials for making road and building signs, as well as "Keep Out" and "SAVED" signs.
- Cooking experiences can use picture—word recipes which can be copied for home.

Look around your classroom. Is it thoughtfully saturated with print? Are shelves and containers labeled with pictures and words? Are words color-coded for languages spoken in your class—one color for English, another color consistently used for another language? Do you need Braille labels? Are there writing and drawing materials in key areas to support and extend play? Periodically throughout the school year, stop and re-assess your literacy materials. It will remind you of the incredible growth of literacy understanding that is occurring with your class!

How Goals, Indicators and Strategies Look in the Writing Area

(A small sample of Goals and Indicators from the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines.)

DOMAIN 1: APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT			
Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 9: CHILDREN USE PRIOR RELATIONSHIPS, EXPERIENCES, AND KNOWLEDGE TO BUILD FOUNDATIONAL MEMORY.</p>	<p>Combining past experiences and familiar situations, explores, plans, problem solves, and carries out plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents things in environment with available materials; moving from simple to complex representations. • Thinks out loud and talks self through a plan or situation. • Works out problems using information from prior experiences rather than through trial and error. • Tells a story or recounts an event from photographs of self and others (e.g. "We made a big tent with boxes and blankets."). • Uses words for yesterday, today, and tomorrow even though the timing may be incorrect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage child about what he/she has seen, heard, or done. • Be certain a child gets to respond by intentionally waiting for the child to respond. • Help child remember experiences using photographs, mementos, and re-told stories. • Sing songs and tell/read stories with repeating lines or sequences of activities. • Write down family stories and read them back to the children. • Play name word games and sing name songs to help children know one another's names.
<p>Goal 16: CHILDREN REPRESENT EXPERIENCES AND THOUGHT THROUGH SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION SUCH AS MOVEMENT, DRAWING, SINGING/ VOCALIZING, AND PLAY.</p>	<p>Use symbols in arts, communication, and numeracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses symbols or pictures as a representation of oral language. • Uses objects to represent real items in make-believe play, but also chooses real objects when available. • Recognizes objects, places, and ideas by symbols (gender signs for restrooms, commercial signs, stop signs). • May use shapes and letters to "write messages." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for child to draw pictures of people, feelings, family, animals, and objects. • Identify and point out symbols during daily activities; demonstrating and explaining what they mean. • Encourage child to draw a story, with caregiver as "scribe," writing dictated words. Child tells the story and draws to represent the story. • Read stories and provide props for dramatizing the plot (e.g. <i>Three Billy Goats Gruff</i> with blocks, pictures of bridges, and some writing utensils and paper for signs).

DOMAIN 2: MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 18: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH AND COORDINATION OF SMALL MOTOR MUSCLES.	Use fingers and hands for purposeful tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses various drawing and art materials (crayons, brushes, finger paints). • Copies shapes and geometric designs. • Opens and closes scissors with one hand. • Cuts a piece of paper on a straight line, then on a curve. • Uses stapler or hole-punch. • Writes recognizable letters and numerals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage child in activities that strengthen hand grasp (e.g. molding play dough, using a hand-held hole-punch). • Provide a variety of tools to encourage use of precision grasps (e.g. writing utensils such as crayons, pencils, markers, paints, spoons, glue sticks, scissors). • Offer a variety of scissors, including hand over hand scissors, lefty scissors, adaptive scissors, blunt scissors, and sharp safety scissors. Demonstrate how to use them safely. • Modify activities to ensure participation of each child (e.g. attach rubber grips to pencils and pens, offer handwriting frame).

DOMAIN 3: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
Goal 37: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE BELIEF IN THEIR ABILITIES.	Shows confidence and competence in managing simple, everyday skills for daily living, with and without assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses delight with mastery of a skill (e.g. "I did it myself!"). • Asks others to view own creations (e.g. "Look at my picture!"). • Expresses own ideas and opinions. • Practices a skill repeatedly until achieved. • Shows pride and pleasure when someone reacts to the child's action or creation. • Talks to self, using private or inner speech to help remember rules and standards for behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide plenty of time and opportunities for child to play, explore, experiment, and accomplish tasks and develop a sense of competence. • Invite child to share ideas, skills, or ways to solve a problem. • Offer opportunities for children to watch each other trying new skills. • Assist children as they are learning a skill by figuring out where they are starting with their learning, then provide encouragement for each little bit of the skill they achieve. (e.g. talk with child about all the things she can do on her own).

DOMAIN 5: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 53: CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE PROGRESSION IN GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX.</p>	<p>Use basic conventions of grammar and syntax.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses complete sentences in conversations during play with peers. • Talks in sentences with five to six words to describe people, places, and events. • Describes a task, project, and/or event sequentially in three or more sentences. • Asks questions for information/clarification. • Starts using and understanding past, present, and future tense. • Begins to correctly use subject and verb tense. • Strings multiple sentences together in logical order. • Combines more than one idea using complex sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage child in conversation and give wait time for a response. • Model adult sentences in conversation. • Ask open-ended questions (e.g. “What do you think?,” “What do you think will happen if . . . ?,” or “What if . . . ?”). After child answers, repeat the answer in a complete sentence or sentences. • Set aside a regular time during daily routines to engage child in meaningful conversation (if child is bilingual, talk with the child in both languages at different times of the day). • Let child know that you recognize all languages and means of expression as a valid means of communication. • Model good grammar. • Ask real questions, rather than questions for which you already know the answer.
<p>Goal 61: WRITING - CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF LETTERS AND SYMBOLS.</p>	<p>Represents ideas and spoken language using drawing, scribbles, symbols, and letters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses horizontal scribbling with breaks or separate marks to represent writing. • Uses pictures, symbols, and letters to convey meaning. • Knows that alphabet letters are a special category of graphics that can be individually named and written. • Uses different marks for writing and drawing. • Uses scribbling and letter-like symbols to represent their name. • Attempts to copy one or more letters of the alphabet. • Labels pictures using letter-like marks. • Shows awareness of two or more different writing systems (especially appropriate for ELL and bilingual/multilingual children). • Uses letters to represent sounds in words. • Recognizes the difference between letters and numbers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of writing and drawing tools with different kinds of paper (tablets, shopping lists, loose paper, sandpaper, etc.). • Model writing by writing and using lists, letters, daily log of classroom activities, and notes stating the words as they are written. • Encourage the use of creative spelling to label pictures, write name, and write notes to family and community members. • Call attention to names of children that begin with the same alphabet letter. • Guide the child in writing his or her own name. • Provide opportunities for child to write letters, lists, invitations, cards, and notes. • Serve as the “scribe” (writer) for a child’s dictated story, and then have child draw the illustrations to go with text.

Goal	Developmental Growth	Child Indicators	Caregiver Strategies
<p>Goal 62: WRITING - CHILDREN USE WRITING SKILLS AND DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF WRITING CONVENTIONS.</p>	<p>Writes and draws with increasing coordination using a variety of tools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows hand preference for writing. • Uses whole arm and finger movements to write. • Intentionally scribbles to convey meaning; tells caregiver what it means. • Makes strings of letters or marks from left to right. • Uses tripod grasp to hold writing tools. • Uses letter-like symbols to represent words. • Copies simple shapes. • Draws basic geometric shapes (circle, triangle), though they may be distorted. • May write letters upside down or sideways when writing name. • Uses invented spelling with letters and marks to represent words. • Uses pretend writing activities during play that represent print conventions in home language (vertical for Chinese, right to left Arabic). • Uses letters and symbols to label or convey directions (SV for a “save” sign when block building). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage appropriate grasp to hold writing and drawing tools. • Encourage preferred hand for writing and drawing. • Provide an accessible writing area for child with smooth writing surface, writing tools, and paper. • Provide paper and writing tools (and/or if you choose to use one, access to a computer) for child to use for specific purposes. • Positively acknowledge child’s attempt to write. Ask them to read you their words. • Ask child to “sign” artwork, cards, and letters. • Point out the shapes of individual letters to help child learn letters. • Write down child’s dictations and read back exactly what he/she said (for English Language Learner, in both languages). • Provide opportunities to talk about what child notices about two different writing systems (especially appropriate for ELL and bilingual/multilingual children).
<p>Goal 63: WRITING - CHILDREN USE WRITING FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES.</p>	<p>Makes scribbles, pictures, symbols and letters with meaning and purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tells ideas and stories, songs, rhymes, and asks adult to write them out. • Makes scribbles and pictures to express an idea. • Uses letter-like symbols to make lists, write messages, and write stories. • Copies some environmental print/symbols. • Creates notes and messages for a purpose. • Makes signs and messages for peers (e.g. SAV TOWR in blocks, DO NOT TOUCH by item brought from home). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of drawing mediums (finger paint, paint with easel, sidewalk chalk, and markers). • Write notes to the child and read them together. • Write a story as a small group, writing down children’s exact ideas and words. • Encourage use of creative spelling to label pictures, write name, and write notes to family and community members.

Resources

Classroom Design

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