The Children's Curriculum

All teachers in the Child Development Laboratories use the same curriculum, which draws heavily from the Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum of Kostelnik, et al. (2010), as the basis for instruction in their classrooms. This curriculum was developed here at Michigan State University, over a period of years, by teachers and faculty in the Department of Family and Child Ecology (now Human Development and Family Studies). It has achieved national recognition.

The curriculum is divided into six domains, which are:

1. Aesthetic Development
2. Affective Development
3. Cognitive Development
4. Language/Communication Development
5. Physical Development
6. Social Development

Teachers plan in the process areas of Construction and Pretend Play.

Looked at individually, the first six domains represent major facets of child development, the latter two, processes by which these facets are integrated. Taken together, the entire array represents the whole child.

Every week, teachers plan a variety of activities and experiences corresponding to all eight domains. Although we realize that no one facet of development can be isolated from the rest, we believe that purposeful planning for each domain results in a more comprehensive approach to instruction. Moreover, we can achieve a consistency in application from classroom to classroom that contributes to the positive growth of children as they move through the program. Simultaneously, classroom individuality is maintained because each teacher brings his/her own special emphasis and understanding of development to its implementation. Thus while we all share common goals, application of the curriculum is personalized and tailored to meet the needs of individual classes at the Child Development Laboratories.

The curriculum also meets or exceeds the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) quality curricular standards and the State of Michigan Preschool and Infant/Toddler Quality Standards (2013).

The curriculum used in the Child Development Laboratories is described in more detail in the following pages. Each domain is presented individually and includes a developmental focus, a purpose, and a list of goals. The purpose defines those facets of development covered within that domain. The purpose is a global statement that refers to the long-range purpose of the domain.

Kostelnik, M., Soderman, A. and Whiren, A., (2010) Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson

Curricular Domain: Aesthetic Development

Planning activities in the arts is easier when teachers consider specific goals. The National Standards for Arts Education, published by CNAEA (1994), along with the Music Education Standards from the Music Educators National Conference (MENC; 1994), provide a set of useful goals for teachers to use.

Purpose

For children to become aware of beauty in nature and art, to appreciate and participate in creative arts to achieve personally meaningful ends.

Goals

As children progress toward the goal, they will:

1. Become aware of beauty in nature.
2. Experience various art forms (music, dance, drama, and visual art.)
3. Become familiar with different types of each art form (e.g., types of dance such as ballet, tap, folk, and square.)
4. Use a variety of materials, tools, techniques, and processes in the arts (visual art, music, dance, and drama.)
5. Recognize and respond to basic elements of art (e.g., line, color, shape, texture, composition, pattern.)
6. Recognize and respond to basic elements of music (e.g., beat, pitch, melody, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, mood.)
7. Talk about aesthetic experiences.
8. Participate with others to create music, dance, and visual art as means of communication.
9. Recognize that music, dance, drama, and visual arts produce means of communication.
10. Recognize themselves as artists.
11. Participate in aesthetic criticism, describe, analyze, interpret, and judge.
12. Contribute to the aesthetic environment.
13. Begin to recognize the arts as a lifelong pursuit.
14. Begin to appreciate the arts in relation to history and culture.
15. Begin to make connections between the arts and other curriculum areas.

Curricular Domain: Affective Development

Developmental Focus

- Trust
- Autonomy
- Initiative
- Industry
- Self-concept
- Self esteem

Goals

For children to see themselves as lovable, valuable, and competent.
The following objectives give children the opportunities to:

1. Learn that school is safe, supportive, predictable, interesting and enjoyable.
2. Demonstrate that they have a feeling of belonging in the school environment.
3. Engage in affectionate relationships beyond the family.
4. Identify the characteristics and qualities that make each of them unique.
5. Identify their own emotions.
6. Explore similarities and differences among people to gain personal insight.
7. Demonstrate growing ability to care for themselves and meet their own needs.
8. Independently begin and pursue a task and control their own behavior without external reminders.
9. Make choices and experience the consequences of personal decisions.
10. Gain experience and demonstrate independence in using age-appropriate materials and tools (writing implements, cutting tools, measuring instruments, the computer, tape recorder, keyboard, etc.).
    a. Use tools and materials safely and appropriately.
    b. Complete a task they have begun.
11. Assume responsibility for caring for their personal belongings and classroom materials.
12. Contribute to maintenance of the classroom (e.g. caring for classroom pets, watering plants).
    a. Demonstrate increasing awareness of and ability to evaluate their accomplishments, as well as to set new standards and goals.
    b. Voluntarily attempt experiences they are unsure of/or that are new to them with reasonable confidence and enthusiasm.
    c. Learn satisfying and effective strategies to express and cope with personal emotions and tensions.
    d. Learn to accept both positive and negative emotions as a natural part of living.
    e. Become familiar with the situational circumstances that influence personal emotions.
    f. Learn how to act deliberately to affect their own emotions.
13. Understand the concept of possession and ownership.
14. Value their own gender, family, culture and race.
    a. Engage in a full range of experiences, not limited to stereotypes related to gender or background.
15. Increase their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their own cultural heritage.
16. Develop cross-gender competencies of various kinds.
17. Experience the pleasure of work.

18. Recognize factors that contribute to quality work (e.g., time, care, effort, responsibility, etc.).
19. Make reasonable attempts to master situations that are difficult for them.
20. Experience success through evaluation and describing competencies.
21. Give criticism in a constructive manner.
22. Learn how to recover from setbacks.
23. Imagine and speak of future potential for themselves.
24. Give and accept opinions.
25. Adapt to the time and routine events associated with coming to school (arrive, participate in daily schedule, and depart).

Curriculum Domain: Cognitive Development

Purpose
The aim of the cognitive domain is for children to acquire, apply, adapt, integrate, and evaluate knowledge as they construct new or expanded concepts.

Goals for Science and Other Cognitive Functions
As children progress, they will:

1. Examine the observable properties of man- made and natural objects, using their multi-sensory abilities to:
2. Determine the relations among objects
    a. Discriminate similarities and differences among objects
    b. Develop and refine their attending skills and their ability to ignore irrelevant information
3. Learn and apply the scientific process:
    a. Observe attentively
    b. Predict what they think will happen on the basis of a hypothesis
        c. Guess why certain things happen
    d. Carry out experiments
    e. Formulate conclusions
4. Explore firsthand a variety of cause-and effect relationships.
5. Demonstrate an awareness of the interdependence of all things in the world.
6. Develop and refine their reporting skills:
    a. Develop strategies for remembering
    b. Connect and combine information in an integrative manner
    c. Evaluate predictions
    d. Draw conclusions
    e. Review or summarize experiences
    f. Generate alternative approaches to problems
    g. Communicate findings
7. Become aware of their thought processes, building more accurate, complete, and complex concepts with time.
8. Recognize that knowledge and data come in many forms and can be organized and displayed in diverse ways.
9. Acquire knowledge related to technology:

a. Differentiate between natural and man-made objects
b. Become aware of tools and techniques that have been created to solve human problems
c. Understand how tools aid observation, measurement, and investigations
d. Become more competent in using hardware and software

10. Acquire scientific knowledge related to the life sciences:
    a. Characteristics of living plants and animals
    b. Life cycles and processes
    c. Basic needs, habitats, and relations
11. Acquire scientific knowledge related to the physical sciences:
    a. Changes in matter
    b. Forces affecting motion, direction, speed, light, heat, and sound
    c. Physical properties and characteristics of phenomena
12. Acquire scientific knowledge related to the earth sciences:
    a. Weather
    b. Space
    c. Ecology
    d. Major features of the earth
13. Explore a variety of scientific equipment, such as simple machines, magnets.
14. Use scientific equipment appropriately and safely.
15. Develop and use an accurate vocabulary related to scientific events, objects, and processes:
    a. To describe (e.g., soft or hard, high or low, smooth or rough, large and small, fast and slow, sweet or sour, symmetrical, alternating; dissolving, combining, disappearing, changing)
    b. To name (e.g., solution, liquid or solid, larva, pupa, beetle, petal, stamen, pistil, vein)
    c. To measure (e.g., weight, length, volume, area, time, standard and nonstandard tools) scientific events, objects, and processes
16. Participate in recording scientific data.

Goals for Mathematics and Other Cognitive Functions

As children progress, they will:

1. Understand number, ways of representing number, relations among numbers, and number systems:
    a. Count with understanding and recognize “how many” in sets of objects
    b. Use multiple models to develop initial understandings of place value and base-10 number system
    c. Develop understanding of the relative position and magnitude of whole numbers and of ordinal and cardinal numbers and their connections
    d. Develop a sense of whole numbers and represent and use them in flexible ways
    e. Connect number words and numerals to the quantities they represent
    f. Understand and represent commonly used fractions, such as 1/4, 1/3, and ½
2. Understand meanings of operations and how operations relate to one another:
    a. Understand various meanings of addition and subtraction of whole numbers and the relation between the two operations
    b. Understand the effects of adding and subtracting whole numbers

c. Understand situations that entail multiplication and division, such as equal groups of objects and sharing equally

3. Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates:
    a. Develop and use strategies for whole-number computations, with a focus on addition and subtraction
    b. Develop fluency with basic number combinations for addition and subtraction
    c. Use a variety of methods and tools to compute with, including objects, mental computation, estimation using paper and pencil, and calculators
4. Recognize, describe, and extend patterns:
    a. By a single property or function
    b. Regrouping by a different criteria, creating subclasses and supraclasses
5. Sort, classify, and order objects by size, number, and other properties.
6. Represent and analyze mathematical structures, using algebraic symbols:
    a. Illustrate operations such as commutatively, using specific numbers (e.g., 3+4=4+3=4+1+1+1)
    b. Use concrete, pictorial, and oral representations to develop an understanding of invented and conventional symbolic notations
7. Add and subtract whole numbers, using objects, pictures, and symbols.
8. Describe change in various contexts (e.g., qualitative change, such as a students' growing taller (or change, such as a student growing 2 inches in 1 year).
9. Analyze characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes:
    a. Recognize, name, build, draw, compare, and sort two- and three- dimensional shapes
    b. Describe attributes and parts of two- and three- dimensional shapes
    c. Investigate and predict the results of putting together and taking apart two- and three-dimensional shape
10. Specify locations and describe spatial relations
    a. Describe, name, and interpret relative positions in space
    b. Describe, name, and interpret direction and distance
    c. Find and make locations on maps
11. Recognize symmetrical shapes in a variety of positions.
12. Use visualization, spatial reasoning, and geometric modeling:
    a. Create mental images of geometric shapes
    b. Recognize and represent shapes from different perspectives
    c. Relate ideas in geometry to ideas in number and measurement
    d. Recognize geometric shapes and structures in the environment and specify their location
13. Understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and processes of measurement
    a. Recognize the attributes of length, volume, weight, area, and time
    b. Compare and order objects according to these attributes
    c. Understand how to measure, using nonstandard and standard units
    d. Select an appropriate unit and tool for the attribute being measured
14. Apply appropriate techniques, tools, and formulas to determine measurements:
    a. Measure with multiple copies of units of the same size, such as paper clips laid end to end
    b. Use repetition of a single unit to measure something larger than the unit, for instance, measuring the length of a room with a single meter stick

c. Use tools to measure
d. Develop common referents for measures so that comparisons and estimates can be made

15. Formulate and ask questions using data:
    a. Pose questions and gather data about themselves and their surroundings
    b. Sort and classify objects according to their attributes and organize data about the object
    c. Represent data by using concrete objects, pictures, and graphs
16. Select and use appropriate statistical methods to analyze data.
17. Develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data.
18. Understand and apply basic concepts of probability.

Curricular Domain: Language/Communication Development

Purpose

For children to communicate their ideas and feelings and to accurately interpret the communications they receive.

Goals: Listening and Viewing

As children progress, they will:

1. Participate in experiences that help them interpret unspoken messages, including tone of voice, facial expression, and body language.
    a. Identify sounds in their environment.
    b. Listen for pleasure.
2. Demonstrate courteous listening behaviors by:
    a. Looking at the speaker
    b. Sitting relatively still
    c. Waiting for a turn to speak
    d. Responding to oral cues
3. Increase their receptive vocabulary.
4. Develop their understanding of contemporary media (e.g., television, videos, CDs, DVDs, and computer technology); discriminate which aspects are likely true and which are fantasy.
5. Demonstrate auditory memory by repeating in correct detail and sequence the messages they hear.
6. Demonstrate auditory comprehension and critical listening skills by:
    a. Retelling, in their own words, the messages or stories they hear
    b. Responding to oral language with relevant comments or questions
    c. Orally linking personal experiences to what have heard
    d. Responding accurately to single and multi-step directions
7. Create sounds by singing, music making, incorporating rhythm, volume, and pitch.
8. Articulate their intents, emotions, and desires.
9. Describe events from the past, present, and future.
10. Ask and answer questions.
11. Tell stories about pictures.
12. Create and describe imaginative situations.
13. Present conclusions based on the investigation of an issue or a problem.

14. Use appropriate body language (eye contact, body position, and gestures) to alert a listener to their intent and to convey emotion.
15. Increase their expressive vocabulary.
16. Use increasingly complex sentence structure:
    a. Conditional statements (if… then
    b. Causal statements (…because…or when…)
    c. Prepositions, adverbs, adjectives
17. Participate in conversations with peers and adults.
18. Demonstrate self-confidence and poise during group speaking and creative dramatics activities.
19. Dictate stories.
20. Connect letter sounds to graphemes.
21. Generate graphemes.
22. Recognize that they can convey messages to others through written symbols (drawing and writing).
23. Understand that there is a system, pattern, and organization for print.
24. Put their thoughts on paper, first through simple pictures and then incorporating print into their drawings.
25. Use their own contemporary versions of writing, working gradually toward conventional spelling, punctuation, and format.
26. Expand their writing vocabulary.
27. Select topics to write about.
28. Learn to organize their ideas in a logical sequence.
29. Begin to use writing strategies such as mapping, webbing, and clustering to organize and plan writing.
30. Express their ideas in complete thoughts.
31. Improve their ability to evaluate and edit their writing, preparing rough and final drafts.
32. Use reference materials, including electronic sources, to help them improve their writing.
33. Use the writing process to create original story poems and informational pieces.
34. Use word-processing programs on the computers.
35. Recognize graphemes-the letters of the alphabet.
36. Recognize they can get meaning from print.
37. Enjoy shared reading experiences with a variety of texts.
38. Practice reading-like behavior, moving from “pretend” reading to attempting to match the flow in their language with book illustrations and with print.
39. Increase their receptive and expressive reading vocabularies.
40. Respond to written symbols in the environment (e.g., their name and others’ names, signs, advertisements, labels).
41. Predict, on the basis of the information in the story.
42. Develop an understanding of story elements and structure:
    a. Story sequence (first, next, last, beginning, middle, end; before, after)
    b. Main ideas both at the literal level and at the differential level
    c. Characters and character development setting
    d. Plot development, cause and effect, problems and solutions, and logical conclusions
43. Tell or dramatize their versions of stories to show comprehension of what they have read.
46. Create new endings for stories, drawing on logical elements of the original stories.
47. Read familiar or memorized nursery rhymes, songs, poems, and plays.
48. Distinguish between real and make-believe, fact and opinion, in written materials.

49. Read their own writing.
50. Expand their phonological awareness:
    a. Recognize and generate rhymes and rhyming words
    b. Segment words into sounds, syllables, or beats
    c. Blend or stretch sounds into words
    d. Manipulate sounds to create new words
51. Expand their alphabetic knowledge:
    a. Identify uppercase and lowercase letters
    b. Increase concepts about letter-sound relations
    c. Identify vowel patterns
52. Develop a sight vocabulary.
53. Increase their word-decoding skills.
54. Read independently:
    a. Construct meaning from birth narrative text and expository text
    b. Use decoding strategies (e.g., picture cues, context clues, phonic analysis, and syntax) to predict what makes sense
55. Interaction reading out-loud.
56. Develop general concepts of print:
    a. Books are read from front to back
    b. Books have identifiable parts: front/back, cover, table of contents, index, chapters, dedications, and pages
    c. Books are written by authors and sometimes have illustrators
    d. Letters have names and sounds
    e. Letters are different from words
    f. We read the words, not the pictures
    g. Print is organized from left to right and from top to bottom and the order of print is relevant
    h. Letters are used to write words, letters stand for the sounds we say, letters can be used more than once to make words
    i. Words are things that we read
    j. Spaces are used between words
    k. Punctuation is used to inform the reader
57. Apply, to their lives and others' lives, knowledge, ideas, and issues drawn from the texts
58. Become familiar with libraries as interesting places to find books and other materials for entertainment and information.
59. Evaluate their developing literacy skills, identifying their strengths and needs.
60. Use information gained from reading to:
    a. Compare and contrast
    b. Analyze
    c. Infer
    d. Express ideas
    e. Solve problems

Curricular Domain: Physical Development

Purpose

For children to develop confidence and competence in the control and movement of their bodies and to develop the attitudes, knowledge skills, and practices that lead to maintaining, respecting, and protecting their bodies.

Goals

As children progress they will:

1. Gain confidence in using their bodies.
2. Identify body parts by name and location.
3. Develop spatial awareness (understanding of personal and general space, direction, and spatial relations).
4. Develop temporal awareness (awareness of speed, timing, duration, and rhythm).
5. Improve total sensory awareness and integrate sensory information to solve movement problems.
6. Distinguish the foreground from the background visually and auditory.
7. Engage in a variety of activities that require static and dynamic balance.
8. Engage in a variety of activities that require coordinated movements with large- and small-muscle systems.
9. Sustain vigorous motor activity with time to develop endurance.
10. Engage in activities to develop muscular strength in all parts of the body (climbing, hanging, etc.).
11. Engage in a variety of activities that require flexibility, agility, and stretching.
12. Move the major joints of the arms. Legs, and trunk through a full range of motion.
13. Use their whole bodies in appropriate activities to strengthen muscle and muscle groups.
14. Demonstrate appropriate form in the fundamental motor skills such as jumping, hopping, running, skipping, leaping, galloping, sliding, and climbing.
15. Demonstrate appropriate form in the control of objects: throwing, catching, kicking, and striking.
16. Demonstrate competence in non-locomotors skills in bending, twisting, pushing, pulling, swinging, etc.
17. Demonstrate good posture while walking, sitting, or standing.
18. Demonstrate, imitate, or create movement in the response to selected rhythms.
19. Demonstrate locomotors skills in time to rhythmic patterns using a variety of movement concepts.
20. Demonstrate control of speed, direction, and force of movement through space.
21. Coordinate wrist, hand, ginger, finger, thumb, and eye-hand movements.
22. Control the movement of their bodies in relation to objects.
23. Coordinate skillfully, including implements for eating, writing, dressing, and playing.
24. Develop a positive attitude toward their bodies; appreciate their competence and that of others.
25. Learn practices that keep their bodies and their environments clean and sanitary.
26. Acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills about physical activity that predispose them to maintaining physically fit lifestyles.
27. Learn and practice sound nutritional habits and healthy, polite eating behaviors
28. Demonstrate self-help skills such as nose blowing, hand washing, using the toilet independently, tooth brushing, and grooming and other behaviors that reduce health risks to themselves or others.
29. Learn and practice appropriate safety procedures for school, playgrounds, home, and the neighborhood.
30. Discriminate good and poor health, nutrition, and safety practices.

31. Learn how to apply health, nutritional, and safety knowledge when making choices in daily life.

Curricular Domain: Social Development

Purpose

For children to develop social awareness and social competence in a culturally diverse, democratic society in a interdependent world.

Goals

As children progress they will:

1. Develop play skills
    a. Initiate play
    b. Join a group at play
    c. Make suggestions
    d. Take suggestions
    e. Recognize ways to deal with unpleasant social situations and the emotions associated with these situations
    f. Learn to plat productively alone
2. Develop peer friendship relationship skills which initiate, maintain, and terminate interactions and develop relationships constructively.
3. Become aware of other people's opinions, viewpoints, and attitudes
4. Learn how to negotiate conflicts in peaceful ways by compromising, bargaining, talking, and working through difficult situations.
5. Develop empathy for others (recognize others' emotions, respect others' emotional responses).
6. Perceive adults as sources of gratification, approval, and modeling.
7. Learn how to conform to reasonable limits set on behavior, play space, use of materials, or the types of activities in which they are involved.
8. Identify the reasons for classroom rules.
    a. Distinguish acceptable from unacceptable classroom behavior.
    b. Use their knowledge of appropriate behavior in one circumstance to determine appropriate conduct in another.
9. Begin to develop skills related to self-control, resistance to temptation, delay of gratification, and how to carry out positive social actions.
10. Learn how to cooperate (work with others toward a common goal).
11. Learn how to be helpful (share information or materials, give physical assistance, offer emotional support.
12. Recognize their own and others' cultural values and practices.
13. Develop some understanding and respect for the similarities and differences among people.
14. Learn approved behaviors related top social and ethnic customs (e.g., manners and other respectful behaviors).
15. Acquire rudimentary ideas of how goods and services are produced, exchanges, and consumed.
16. Recognize their place in the physical environment and how they and others orient themselves.
17. Develop a sense of responsibility for the environment.
18. Develop an understanding of time, continuity, and change in relation to past and present events.
19. Understand and act on democratic principles and practices.
20. Develop awareness of and concern for the rights and well-being of others.

17. Become aware of how people live together in families, neighborhoods, and communities.
18. Develop positive attitudes about belonging to a group beyond the family.
19. Develop skills related to social studies content, such as collecting and analyzing data, mapping, and making decisions.
20. Acquire social studies vocabulary and facts.

Construction Development

Developmental Focus

- Iconic representation

Goal

For children to translate mental images into tangible products, that represent their own interpretation of an object or event.

Mediating Objectives:

The following objectives lead to the ultimate goal:

Children have opportunities to:

1. Engage in a wide range of experiences from which to draw their interpretations.
2. Interpret events and reconstruct them in tangible ways.
3. Use diverse approaches to represent objects or events.
    a. Represent a single object or event using different materials or techniques.
    b. Represent different objects and events using one material or technique.
    c. Collaborate with classmates to construct a representative object.

In construction activities, children create models or pictures that represent their internal vision of an object or event. In this way, construction is a concrete way in which children symbolize the world. It is a highly cognitive process. Yet, for children to build out of real materials the models or pictures that originate in their minds, they must draw on other abilities as well—

- Creativity, imagination, aesthetic appreciation
- Fine motor, gross motor and perceptual skills
- Planning strategies, language, and often social interaction techniques.

Thus, as children construct something out of paper and paste, clay or blocks, they coordinate all aspects of the self. It is this synthesizing characteristic that explains the importance of construction within our program.

Pretend Play

Developmental Focus:

- Imitation
- Role playing
- Symbolic play
- Dramatization

Goal:
For children to suspend the laws of reality in order to carry out a play theme over time.

Mediating Objectives:
The following objectives lead to the ultimate goal. Children have opportunities to:
1. Display in their play behaviors what they have seen or experienced.
2. Use their bodies to represent real or imaginary objects or events.
3. Assign symbolic meaning to real or imaginary objects using language or gestures.
4. Take on the role attributes of beings or objects and act out interpretations of those roles.
5. Create play themes.
6. Experiment with a variety of objects, roles, (leader, follower, mediator) and characterizations (animals, mother, astronaut, etc.).
7. React to and interact with other children in make-believe situations.
8. Dramatize familiar stories, songs and poems.
9. Integrate construction into pretend play episodes.

Children engage in many forms of pretend play and each affords them chances to talk, listen, interact socially, express emotions, explore attitudes, manipulate objects, practice creative thinking, experiment with problem solving, use their imagination and assimilate a variety of role behaviors. Moreover, pretending is one of the purest forms of symbolic thought available to young children. Its use permits them to symbolize objects and events using words, actions, situations and materials. Thus, in pretend play, children draw on all aspects of the self to create their own interpretations of the world. Because pretend play is such an integrative means for children to gain concepts and skills, it is an essential part of our progam.