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Introduction
Completing my Master’s degree contributes to the fulfillment of a life long dream. I have always loved being around children and being involved in their lives. As early as I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher. I started working towards this goal as a teenager. I baby sat and helped with children’s programs such as vacation Bible schools (VBS). I received my bachelor’s degree from Columbia International University (CIU) in 1997. During my time at CIU, I spent two summers traveling Alaska teaching VBS and summer camps to children ages three to 14. Using good teaching practices, I developed lesson plans and activities to peak interest and build understanding among participants at each VBS and camp, and provided basic needs like nutritious food and safety to these participants. I built relationships with families through conversations and home visits.

Following my graduation, I taught two and three year olds in various preschool settings. In 1999, I moved to Alaska to work as receptionist/administrative assistant at Alaska Bible College. While I was working at the college, my desire was to gain entry into the public school as a teacher. I taught children’s groups and participated in community outreach especially geared to children and their families. I substituted and volunteered at the local elementary school. In 2001, I obtained a long-term substitute job as the aide in a kindergarten classroom in a nearby community of Native Americans. This job was at Copper Center Elementary School (CC). I saw how embracing culture is of the utmost importance. At CC, we had a potlatch (native custom) to celebrate grandparents and elders. I observed the importance of meeting the basic needs of food and sleep before a student constructed knowledge. During that same school year, I transferred to another school in the district and became a special education aide working with small groups of students with different needs. I taught students with comprehension, decoding, and spelling difficulties as well as students who struggled in math. In 2002, I became the librarian and taught
keyboarding and library skills to students in kindergarten through sixth grade. During this school year, I taught Kindergarten as a long-term substitute for 5 months. Finally, in a kindergarten classroom I employed teaching strategies learned over time. I continued to develop my teaching philosophy and to put it into practice. I arranged furniture, scheduled activities, built relationships and engaged students. In 2002, the following school year I was the kindergarten teacher at Glennallen Elementary School. Obtaining this teaching position was a second milestone in my life. Graduating with my teaching degree was the first. I taught kindergarten at Glennallen for 6 and one half years. In 2006, I aspired to further my knowledge and began the Master’s of Education in Early Childhood Education at the University of Alaska Southeast. It has been a journey, which resulted in renovating and re-constructing my understanding of children and teaching, allowing me the freedom to step out of the box. For example, when doing an activity it is not a necessity that all children sit in their seats, nor is it necessary for all children to be doing the same activity at the same time. I individualize lessons based on each student’s need and interest.

I have become more confident when teachers seek advice and direction. The impromptu after school debriefing with colleagues in my classroom often focused on looking for different ways to meet the needs of a struggling or challenging student. Collaboration often led to looking at assessments and observation data, which lead to planning and new ideas.

It is with great empowerment and excitement I look forward to my next milestone, the completion of this Master’s program. I will seek opportunities to continue to grow and be a lifelong learner. It is with gratitude to the educators that have been in my path and a song in my heart that I finish this program.
Section One
NAEYC Early Childhood Standard 1: Relationships

The program promotes positive relationships among all children and adults to encourage each child’s sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community and to foster each child’s ability to contribute as a responsible community member.

1.D. Creating a Predictable, Consistent, and Harmonious Classroom

*Decision-making*
*A caring community*
*Perspective taking*
I create a classroom environment where students feel safe to take risks. My classroom includes opportunities for students participating in decision making, caring for others, and learning to take the perspective of others. I model, facilitate and guide students as they progress in their abilities as a member of the class. Students become positive and confident contributors to the community, freeing them to develop skills through trial and error.

The creation of classroom rules, plans, and activities are ways students can take part in making decisions for the class. I lead discussions and role-playing in which students come to conclusions about what is best for the community of learners. Each student’s ideas are valued. I want my students to develop the ability to make sensible decisions in order that as adults they will be wise decision makers.

A caring community respects each member regardless of differences. I plan activities that support student interaction through turn taking, negotiating skills, and conflict resolution. Regularly scheduled class meetings provide a time for students to express and discuss feelings. Active listening, where students look at the person speaking and reflect back what they heard is another practice I model and encourage to build community.

Seeing an event or situation through another’s eyes is perspective taking. Young children are developmentally self-absorbed, they only see what they want or do not have. Thinking about another child’s feelings or desires is difficult. Role playing, modeling and scaffolding is how I promote the development of this skill. I also guide discussions on feelings, which lead students to perspective taking.

A caring classroom community respects differences, participates in decisions and sees a situation through the eyes of the other person. Whole group and small group activities as well as individualized instruction contribute to the students in my class being successful in developing
these skills.

The following work samples demonstrate my understanding of this standard and UAS SOE Goal 2: Human Development and Learning:

ED 610 Standards paper

ED 628 Technology Unit.

My ED 610 Standards Paper explains how I develop a caring classroom community. My ED 628 Technology Unit shows how I engage students in activities and discussions to create a predictable and caring classroom where students are decision makers.
NEAYC Early Childhood Standard 2: Curriculum

The program implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children and promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive.

2.H. Curriculum Content Area for Cognitive Development: Technology

Creative,
Across the curriculum,
Collaborative

Documentation,
Interests, strengths, special moments,
Communication
Technology is a tool I use in my classroom to enhance learning across the curriculum.

Computers for whole group lessons use an electronic interactive whiteboard. Small groups, pairs, or individual students use computers to research, build skills, explore and develop understanding, and create projects. Other ways I incorporate technology in my classroom are practicing math skills, researching science topics, listening to read aloud stories.

Using computers, digital cameras, and tape recorders in my classroom facilitates creativity. Students use computers to write stories and document events without encumbering them with the mechanics of pencil and paper. Editing and revising skills develop without the dread of having to physically copy over the story or information.

Students and I use digital cameras to document progress and learning. Pictures of “work” show the development and growth of a student or the lack of development and growth. Students use them as tools to aid in their discovery process and to record data of events. Digital cameras provide high motivation for engagement in learning. Communication is another benefit of digital cameras. A student and I, or a group of students, or a parent and I can communicate on another level by looking at and discussing pictures of students work and activities in the classroom. I also use digital cameras to communicate with the wider school population and the community.

The following work products from my master’s program demonstrate my understanding of this standard as well as UAS SOE Goal 9: Technology

ED 628 Technology Unit

ED 626 Research Paper

My ED 628 Plant Unit demonstrates ways I use digital cameras and computers in my classroom. My research paper from ED 626 explains ways I use technology in my classroom.
NEAYC Early Childhood Standard 3:

The program uses developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective approaches that enhance each child’s learning and development in the context of the program’s curriculum goals.

3.E. Responding to Children’s Interest and Needs

3.F. Making Learning Meaningful to All Children

3.G. Using Instruction to Deepen Children’s Understanding and Build Their Skills and Knowledge

Stimulate thinking, 
Foster curiosity, 
Flexible framework
The use of modified activities assists in meeting individual needs and interests. Through class discussions, conversation with individual students and interaction with their families I learn the interest and needs of my students. All cultures and development levels are respected and valued. Some adaptations I use are varying materials, length of time, or method for completing the activity. I observe social interactions and group students to support strengths or to build new skills this enhances the learning for each student.

Routines and schedules help to bring safety and security to students in my classroom; however, there is flexibility. Understanding expectations and schedule of events students become secure and engage in activities. Nonetheless, flexibility is used. The student’s need determines the length of an activity.

Various teaching materials and resources are used and available for students. Since play is the most natural way for children to learn and construct knowledge, as much as possible this is the method for learning that I use in my classroom. Teacher and child-initiated activities foster new understandings by acting upon a child’s interests and needs. At times explicit teacher explanations are most affective for the skills being developed, other times guiding or scaffolding are best.

The following work products from my master’s program demonstrate my understanding of this standard as well as UAS SOE Goal 3: Diversity and Differentiation

ED 652 Standards Paper
ED 653 Standards Paper
ED 644 Standards Paper and Thematic Unit
ED 605 Play is Crucial
ED 628 Technology Unit
My ED 652 Standards Paper demonstrates how I get to know individual students, their families, and the importance of routines. My ED 653 Standards Paper shows how I respect cultural and linguistic diversity. My ED 644 Standards Paper, Thematic Unit, and ED 628 Technology Unit explain how I differentiate. Play is Crucial from ED 605 shows how I value and provide opportunities to learn through play.
NEAYC Early Childhood Standard 4: Assessment of Child Progress

The program is informed by ongoing systematic, formal, and informal assessment approaches to provide information on children’s learning and development. These assessments occur within the context of reciprocal communications with families and with sensitivity to the cultural context in which children develop. Assessment results are used to benefit children by informing sound decisions about children, teaching, and program improvement.

4.A. Creating an Assessment Plan

4.D. Adapting Curriculum, Individualizing Teaching, and Informing Program Development

4.E. Communicating with Families and Involving Families in the Assessment Process

Gather the data, Analyze, collaborate, Develop a plan
I gather data by observing children at play, listening to families, and collecting work samples. Formal and informal assessments are other methods I use to gain information about students. I assemble a student’s age, gender, culture, and family beliefs. The data shows the skills and interests of the student and provides a close look at individuals.

I analyze the data for progress and things that are impeding progress. By examining the data, I pinpoint missing links and explain to caregivers exactly what their student needs. I look for interest and struggles. I confidentially discuss areas of disabilities or need with other staff members in specialized areas and with families. The data guides my planning for lessons. I continue to add to this portfolio of information on each student through the year and adjust the learning plan as needed.

The following work products demonstrate my understanding of this standard as well as UAS SOE Goal 5: Facilitating Student Learning

ED 644 Standards Paper

ED 661 Standards Paper

ED 628 Plants Unit

ED 644 demonstrates assessments use in a unit on nutrition. ED 661 explains reading assessments that I use to monitor progress and needs. My Plant Unit shows ways I monitor and collect student progress.
NEAYC Early Childhood Standard 5: Health

The program promotes the nutrition and health of children and protects children and staff from illness and injury.

5.A. Promoting and Protecting Children’s Health and Controlling Infectious Disease

5.B. Ensuring Children’s Nutritional Well-Being

5.C. Maintaining A Healthful Environment

*Nutritious meals, snacks,*

*Liquid soap, running water,*

*Allergy aware*

*Sanitize toys, tops,*

*Large-motor activities,*

*Health needs and records*
I believe basic needs of food and safety are part of the foundation for children to be able to learn and construct new knowledge. I provide nutritious snacks for students who do not bring a snack from home. I demonstrate and assist students in hand washing to ensure the following health guidelines. I facilitate students singing songs or counting as a way of knowing how long to lather hands. Awareness gained through questioning parents and reading enrollment papers allows the implementation of proper precautions necessary to protect the health of students from any allergies.

I disinfect toys, tabletops, and other surfaces with disinfectant or soap and water. I also, clean and disinfect areas where body fluids touch. I know the health records and plan of action to meet the need for students. I have had students that were allergic to bees and have an epidermal pen. I have acquired the necessary training in its proper administration and follow-up patient care.

I provide a safe environment with age and developmentally appropriate furniture, toys, and materials. I guide and facilitate the equipment to provide for safety and learning. Incorporated in the daily routine are large motor activities, outside play and/or skills development in the gym. Various activities provide students with opportunities to move.

The following work products from my master’s program demonstrate my understanding of this standard as well as UAS SOE Goal 2: Human Development and Learning

ED 653 Standard 3 Paper
ED 653 Standard 4 Paper

My ED 653 Standard 3 Paper explains how I model, scaffold and guide students to have good hygiene. My ED 653 Standard 4 Paper shows my understanding for the need of large-motor activities.
NEAYC Early Childhood Standard 6: Teachers

The program employs and supports a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children’s learning and development and to support families’ diverse needs and interests.

6.A. Preparation, Knowledge, and Skills of Teaching Staff

6.B. Teachers’ Dispositions and Professional Commitment

Respect families
Construct, reflect, make changes
Policies, safety
In order to reach their potentials, the establishment of a relationship based on mutual respect between the student’s family and I are essential. I value each family’s culture and family beliefs and traditions. In this environment of respect students, develop moral autonomy, self-determined, responsible behaviors. By communicating and collaborating with families, I strengthen this environment providing the best conditions for each student to construct new thinking and learning.

I know the policies and procedures to follow for health and safety. These contribute to the learning environment. As a professional, I am continually looking for ways to enhance this environment. I reflect on lessons, procedures, room arrangement and students’ needs then assess. Changes are made in scheduling, types of activities, where and how things are arranged.

The following work products from my master’s program demonstrate my understanding of this standard as well as UAS SOE Goal 1: Philosophy and Practice: ED 610 Standard Paper. My ED 610 Standard Paper explains my philosophy and practice.
NAEYC Early Childhood Standard 7: Families

The program establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child’s family to foster children’s development in all settings. These relationships are sensitive to family composition, language, and culture.

7.A. Knowing and Understanding the Children’s Families

7.B. Sharing Information between Staff and Families

Caregiver conferences
Email, phone calls, visiting
Advocate for child
I know and support families in many ways. I conference, write notes, make phone calls, and invite caregivers to visit class. I view files and collaborate with staff members.

I build a relationship by calling to invite the student and caregiver(s) to kindergarten registration the spring before the child will begin kindergarten. During registration, the child explores the classroom and completes assessments working with me. I talk with caregivers (I use this term because many of my students are not with their parents. They may be with another family member or with a foster care family) about the program and how they can be involved in classroom activities and how they can support learning at home. I invite them to share about their culture, job, or other topics in which they might be interested. I send a follow up letter during the summer to the caregiver and a welcoming post card to the student.

Communication and collaboration continues throughout the school year through conferences, casual conversations, notes, emails, visits and participation in school activities. Behavior, progress, successes and concerns are all topics or reasons to make connections with caregivers. I work with other staff members to access the opportunities, services and resources available to meet needs.

The following work products from my master’s program demonstrate my understanding of this standard as well as UAS SOE Goal 7 Parent and Community Partnership:

ED 652 Standard 3 Paper
ED 653 Standard 3 Paper
ED 628 Technology Unit

My ED 652 Standard 3 Paper shows how I build a relationship with students and their families. My ED 653 Standards 3 Paper demonstrates how I show respect for cultures. My ED 628 Technology Unit shows how I involve families in learning activities. I know and support families
in many ways.
NAEYC Early Childhood Standard 8: Community Relationships

The program establishes relationships with and uses resources of the children’s communities to support the achievement of program goals.

8.A. Linking with the Community

8.B. Accessing Community Resources

Neighborhood outreach
Transitioning from Head Start
Using resources
I link with the community by visiting the library, inviting guest speakers and taking field trips. I visit Head Start, the only local preschool, to begin the bridge to my classroom. I tell them about kindergarten and answer questions, read a story, and interact with students during center time. Later, Head Start students (and their caregiver) visit the kindergarten classroom. They participate in an activity with current kindergarteners and explore the classroom, as well as tour the school meeting other staff and the principal. I access resources from the community library and local businesses. I invite a nurse, trooper, park service employee and other community members to visit and share. I network with kindergarten teachers in and out of the district. I take students on a field trip to a SAPA, a farm that is mostly self-supporting but also interacts with the surrounding communities. They see how to make cheese and butter, learn about wood heating and cooking, milking cows, growing plants, and building houses out of wood. I participated in school wide activities and events that were neighborhood and community outreach inclusive, like district wide field day, concerts, conferences, and in-services. One big event that was community wide was a book basket auction held by the school. Local businesses and community members donated baskets and door prizes. Due to a large community, attendance teachers made connections and discovered local resources.

The following work products from my master’s program demonstrate my understanding of this standard as well as UAS SOE Goal 8: Professionalism:

ED 610 Standard 1 Paper

ED 626 Research Paper

My ED 610 Standard 1 Paper demonstrates my philosophy of teaching and explains how I link with the community. My ED 626 Research Paper shows how I access community resources.
NEAYC Early Childhood Standard 9: Physical Environment

The program has a safe and healthful environment that provides appropriate and well-maintained indoor and outdoor physical environments. The environment includes facilities, equipment, and materials to facilitate child and staff learning and development.

9.A. Indoor and Outdoor Equipment, Materials, and Furnishings

9.D. Environmental Health

*Soft, hard, intrusion,*
*Seclusion, open, closed,*
*Simple and complex*
I arrange the furniture and activities in my classroom to provide different types of learning spaces. Providing different types of materials enhances and broadens learning. In the art center, basic materials are always there but I rotate other materials like pipe cleaners, yarns, paint, chalk, paper clips, toilet paper rolls, and empty boxes. I alter materials in the dramatic play center by changing the theme. For example, it might be a post office one month and a restaurant the next. Adding paper, crayons, and tape to the block center encourages writing and the development of in depth play. Students make signs, maps, or other details of their play while practicing writing. Beanbags, a child size rocker, and child size sofa in the listening and reading centers add softness to the classroom. The sand and water become more complex by adding a garlic press and other kitchen utensils or funnels and cups.

On the playground and during P.E. students develop large motor skills like running, skipping, climbing and throwing. Swings, a jungle gym, balance beam, and balls encourage movement. Hula-hoops, jump ropes and Frisbees also provide for active play that develops large motor skills.

Equipment, materials and arrangement directly effect learning. I provide an environment with many types of material arranged by noise and activity level. I consider safety and individual needs when arranging furniture and spaces. A quiet space for an individual is one space I always include.

The following work sample demonstrates my understanding of this standard and UAS SOE Goal 8: Professionalism - ED 644 Standards Paper I explain how I create a learning environment that engages all students in my ED 644 Standards Paper.
NAEYC Early Childhood Standard 10: Leadership and Management

The program effectively implements policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program management so all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

10.A. Leadership

10.B. Management Policies and Procedures


*Goals and objectives,*
*Policies and procedures,*
*Healthy and happy*
Students experiencing growth and learning in social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development identifies one goal. Supporting and nurturing families in raising and educating their children names another goal. I facilitate these goals through scheduling and planning activities, assessing individuals, and collaborating with staff and families. I scaffold and guide students in resolving conflict, large and small motor activities, speaking and writing explorations, and constructing new understandings. Working along side them, I guide families helping them understand how children develop and informing them of additional agencies and programs that may provide additional assistance.

Policies and procedures, which dictate the school’s daily routines and how they operate, touch every area of education. They delineate appropriate ways of providing a healthy and safe environment for students and staff. I arrange furniture, disinfect toys, and provide healthy snacks. I know evacuation procedures and we practice them.

I work as a team member with staff and families to ensure students receive the highest quality program for learning and development. After collaborating with other teachers, support staff, and families, I develop an individualized learning plan for each student.

The following work sample demonstrates my understanding of this standard and UAS SOE Goal 8: Professionalism

ED 628 Plants Unit

ED 653 Standard 4 Paper

My ED 628 Plants Unit demonstrates family involvement in student learning. My ED 653 Standard 4 Paper exhibits collaboration with another teacher.
Section Two
ED 610 Standard 1

A teacher can describe the teacher’s philosophy of education and demonstrate its relationship to the teacher’s practice.

Early Childhood Education Guidance and Discipline performance indicator:

I am able to demonstrate consistency between the constructivist theory of socio-moral development and my actual classroom practice.
Four basic concepts are central to the constructivist theory. First, a relationship of mutual respect between a child and me is foundational for developing moral autonomy, self-determined, responsible behavior, reflecting concern for the good of others and for oneself. It is just as important for me to treat the child with respect as it is for the child to treat me with respect forming mutual respect. Second, I will strive to help children understand why a behavior is desirable or undesirable. Third, providing age appropriate choices and supporting children in their problem solving helps them to develop their thinking and understanding. Fourth, when undesirable behavior occurs discipline deals with the reasons why the behavior occurred. I put much energy into finding the cause of the problem behavior. I believe that children will construct knowledge from their interactions with their physical and social world. (Fields & Fields, 2006)

By spending time with and listening to students, I foster a relationship of respect. One goal for my classroom is to work towards “achieving a sense of community entails that children understand that they are a part of a larger group and that being thoughtful and cooperative with others benefits themselves and the entire group (Howes & Ritchie, 2002).” “The teacher’s attention to the classroom as a community -including the children and their families, the curriculum, and the physical environment –contribute to the children’s social behavior and development (Katz & McClellan, 1999).” I can help to build a community by setting up routines and times to experience things together such as singing, cooking, writing and performing a play, and making cards for a sick classmate. “However, the teacher’s role in ensuring that every child feels a part of the classroom community is of major importance. It is the first and most crucial step in helping children gain social confidence and social competence (Katz & McClellan, 1999).” One way that I will build community is through a class meeting where we will discuss how we want our classroom to be and then check back in to see how we are doing. Other ways
that I will build community are through table groups, other groups for activities, routines, and procedures that we use in the class. I plan to end each day with a story and the goodbye song.

Respect is a big part of building a community and developing moral and intellectual autonomy. The best way to teach respect is to treat children with respect in the way we talk to them and in letting them be a part of the decision making process. Children are individuals that have different interest and abilities. These will guide curriculum and instruction with the whole group, small groups, and individuals, which is another way of showing respect. For example, in science we learn about the sky, if a student shows particular interest in this topic s/he is challenged to extend her/his learning through reading and looking for further information and to share her/his findings with the class. The physical environment is also important to creating a sense of community. I plan to have a place where we can all sit on the floor and see each other to discuss classroom matters. The arrangement of tables and centers and the availability of materials all contribute to classroom environment. Providing enough space for the block center and a different space in the room for the kitchen center is important so that the students can explore. The pathways for movement can facilitate learning and wise use of time just as consistency in daily schedule and routines can.

Conflict resolution is a large part of kindergarten. The steps of identifying the problem, brainstorming solutions, choosing a solution, implementing the plan, and evaluating the plan help children to categorize what to do next. This is a difficult process for young children to understand so they may need me to model or scaffold it for them for quite a while. The following actions will help me to guide students in matching problems to solutions to support their progress towards autonomy. First, I need to help them identify the problem and whose problem it is. Then I need to find out what caused the problem. I need to ask the student questions and myself about
the problem to help find a solution. Working with other professionals and families will provide the best situation for the child. The first few days of school, I will be doing many role-playing and discussing situations that might arise where there could be conflict. I will role-play playing with the different toys in our learning centers and how to ask for a toy, how to respond to a yes and a no answer. I will role-play touching a teacher on my arm if they need help with a conflict and the teacher is busy with another person. Then I will be walking around during center time and give children the words to say when they do not remember. When conflicts arise, I will ask the student questions to help her/him brainstorm solutions and follow through with what s/he decided to do. Finally, at a later time I will help her/him to think about how well the plan worked.

The backbone of my philosophy of education is that all children can learn. As the teacher it is my responsibility to provide instruction and learning through a multitude of avenues. The goal is to reach each student where he/she is and to challenge him/her to reach his/her potential not only intellectually but also in his/her character and values. The key is “keeping long-term goals firmly in mind (Fields & Fields, 2006).” By providing guidance in social experiences, students will develop and progress towards moral autonomy in a classroom that has respect as the foundation. As a constructivist teacher, I will strive to build a relationship with each of my students in order to help them to begin developing autonomy. As they develop, they will construct the ability to make wise decisions about what is desirable and undesirable and how to find a solution for a conflict.
References


ED 610 Standard 2

A teacher understands how students learn and develop and applies that knowledge in the teacher’s practice.

Early Childhood Guidance and Discipline performance Indicator:
Accurately identifying and addressing maturational development causes of behavior problems.
Young children are constantly growing, changing and learning. “As their physical and intellectual abilities increase rapidly, they try out new and more challenging skills. This stage is like a bridge that children may continually move back and forth across trying out being a “big kid” and then moving back into the security of their dependency on caregivers (Fields & Fields, 2006).” I am there to guide and facilitate this process to bring children to their next level of development. I offer children many opportunities to practice developing skills through activities for the whole group, small groups, pairs and individuals.

Following is an interaction I had with a child during whole group time; this sample interaction demonstrates how I supported Anna in maturing in her confidence and feeling safe to participate in a group activity.

It was the fourth day of school. Students were sitting on the floor and we were singing a “get to know you song”.

Where is____? Where is ___?
Hello to you, ____. We are glad to see you.
Take a bow. Take a bow.
We sang the song together a few times to learn the words. I asked students to stand and act out the bow when it was their turn so others could see them and start to learn the names of their classmates. Then we sang the song for four or five students, some of which sang and did the motions and some of which just said the words. I received both responses as acceptable. It was Anna’s turn. She said she did not want to stand up. I told her that was ok. She did not sing her response. I started singing and she joined me; singing with her hand in front of her mouth looking down at the floor. I took a bow for her. She continued singing when we sang for other students.
Anna is a confident and bright little girl (when doing academic activities she answers eagerly) but when it came to singing and acting in front of the group, she was shy. She did not know the students very well and did not want to risk doing something wrong or sounding/looking funny in front of the class. I supported her by allowing her to remain seated and singing with her. A few days later, we did the song again and Anna sang and acted out her part by herself. Through this and other activities, she had begun to know the other students. She was beginning to know that the classroom was a safe environment and that it was ok to take a risk because she knew that I would help her.

Behavior problems with young children are often caused by lack of understanding, skills, or perspective taking. Young children see things from a “me” point of view and have a hard time understanding how what they do affects another person.

Following is transcript of a conversation I had with two children during puzzle time; this sample conversation demonstrates how I encourage children’s communication and social skill building.

Aisake and Grace had eaten their lunch and Aisake had chosen a puzzle of a boy and girl. Grace asked if she could help him and he said no. Grace came to me and said Aisake would not let her play. I asked her if she told Aisake how she felt. She said no. I walked with her over to Aisake.

Me: (to Grace) Tell Aisake how it made you feel when he said no.

Grace: bad

Me: like how bad, sad maybe?

Grace: yes
Me: Aisake what can you do to help Grace not feel sad? Remember when you felt bad yesterday when Luke told you no to helping do the puzzle with him and Aidan?

Aisake: yes

Me: What can you do to help Grace?

Aisake: She can help me (gesturing to the puzzle).

Me: Tell her that.

Aisake: (to Grace) you can help me (gesturing to the puzzle).

Grace lacked communication and social skills to enter play. I supported Grace by going with her to Aisake. I had Grace and Aisake think about how Grace felt. I had Aisake remember how he felt the day before when Luke had told him no. This helped Aisake to connect his feelings to Grace, guided him in de-centering and began to build his understanding of perspective taking. As Grace and Aisake are provided more chances to interact with other students and as they grow older, I will help build their communication and social skills so they can enter play successfully. I will scaffold students as they practice entering play to help them build their understanding. For example, at center time I am watching students as they choose where they would like to play and moving around the room providing words, questions, or support by being nearby.

Pair work, choral answering, small group work, and center time all provide opportunities for building communication and social skills. Routines are another important part of my daily schedule to help provide students with supports for being confident and safe in kindergarten so they can take risk to learn new skills. Students like knowing what to expect throughout the day. For example, my students know that after recess I will read them story and then they get to choose a book and find a place somewhere in the room to read it.
Role-playing situations that could arise allows students to think about how to respond without being in the emotions of the moment. Waiting for a turn is difficult for kindergarteners. I role-play with them what to do if they are waiting on a turn. Then when they are waiting for a turn, they can use what they learned from the role-play.

Young children are developing and changing at a rapid pace. They need guidance and teaching to be competent learners and skill builders. “The way teachers plan their program and arrange the environment influence children’s opportunities to acquire new social knowledge and understanding as well as practice and polish their social skills (Katz & McClellan, 1999).” I provide a safe environment rich in opportunities to build social, emotional and physical understanding and skills.
References


ED 652 Standard 3

The Teacher teaches children with respect to individual and cultural characteristics.

Performance Indicator for early childhood social emotional development:

Respectfully accepts diverse social/emotional responses and identifies strategies and resources that will foster child success in the school environment, while promoting understanding of differences among all children.
By spending time with each student, I show them that they are important and what is important to them is important to me. “A trusting and supportive teacher-child relationship is the foundation on which a nurturing relationship is built. Achieving such a relationship with all our students requires that we see each of them in appositive light, learn enough about them and their lives to be able to understand their unique ways, and convince our students that we can be trusted to care for them no matter what—three huge tasks (Watson, 2003).” Grace has difficulty trusting adults and other children. She is back and forth between Anchorage and Glennallen every other week. I have continued to develop our relationship by showing her I am interested to know what she likes through asking her about her writing and being interested when she shares about what she does outside of school. Snack and lunch are times to share about anything. I make it a point to have at least one special talk during these times with each child throughout the week. “A central part of helping children learn to trust involves helping them believe that they are worthy (Watson, 2003).” Grace goes to her grandmother’s house after school so she often tells me about watching TV there. Grace also likes to tell me about playing with her friends when she visits her dad in Anchorage. “In an emotion-centered program, teachers value and encourage individuality as well as children’s cultural distinctive “collective identities” (Hyson, 2003).” Writing time is another time I have a few minutes of individual time with students and get to know what they like and do not like. Grace likes to write about horses. Another student that likes to write about butterflies and a third student likes to write about trains. Writing is often one of the more difficult things for kindergarteners however, using the information I know about each student’s interest I can help them to take a chance and begin to write. Over time with guidance and scaffolding, each student becomes a better writer and is secure to try new things in their writing.

By playing get to know you games, partner activities, and whole group discussions, I
facilitated the class starting to become a community. “A predictable environment builds security by letting children know how people are likely to behave and how events are likely to unfold (Hyson, 2003).” Routines such as what to do when arriving at school, morning meeting, phonics and math times, center time and the end of the day provide a secure environment for students and continue to build community. The first month of school students would ask me often what we would be doing that day. I would reply, “Today is (the day of the week) and on (Mondays) we ____.” Students are starting to remember what day it is and what special we have on that day. Students like knowing what to expect next. At the beginning of the year, Grace would constantly ask me, “What are we going to do after?” I would respond to her by saying, “What did we do yesterday after (whatever we were currently doing)?” At first, she would shrug her shoulders but after a few days, she began to tell me what would come next in our daily schedule. Other students also began knowing what would be next and would sometime answer with Grace. Now at different times throughout the day and week Grace will say today is ___ and we are going to ___.

“Establish a foundation for communication through a respectful, reciprocal relationship with every family (Hyson, 2003).” Parents are an important part of the classroom community. I send weekly emails to families to let them know what we will be doing that week in class. Four moms volunteer in my room on a weekly basis and other help on special occasions. By making an effort to get to know the families of the students in my class it helps me to understand my students better, it helps the families to feel more comfortable about their child’s school experience, and it helps families to be more involved in their child’s school experience. The Friday before Thanksgiving a dad of one of my students brought in their live turkey to share with the class. I also make phone call to parents about both positive and difficult things that their student
experiences at school. Glennallen is a small town so there are many times that I will see parents in the grocery store, at the post office or bank. Grace’s mom brings her to school during the early drop off time each morning because she has to go to work. I talk with her often about Grace and school. I have made it a priority to get to know Grace’s mom and more about Grace’s home life. She shared with me that Grace has always had two homes (mom and dad never live together since Grace was born). I talked with her about Grace having difficulty making friends and entering play. She said that the friend Grace sees in the gym at lunchtime is a teenager. Grace’s mom does not want Grace to go over to this “friend’s” house because Grace is six and does not need to be doing what the teenager is doing. I supported her in that decision and suggested Grace could invite a classmate over to play sometime.

Being special and having different strengths, weakness, likes and dislikes is a discussion that is ongoing with my class. We talk about it often especially when beginning a new skill. Students begin to talk about it among themselves saying things like Sophia is a good reader, I am good at math or Anna your picture is colorful. Respecting each other is an important part of my kindergarten classroom.
References


ED 653 Standard 3

A teacher teaches students with respect for their individual and cultural characteristics.

Early Childhood Performance Indicator:

Incorporating characteristics of the student’s culture and community into instructional strategies that support children’s healthy development
Introduction

In order to incorporate characteristics of each student’s culture and community into instructional strategies that supports that student’s healthy development a teacher must know those characteristics. Healthy development encompasses many topics; such as, Hygiene (body, hair, hands, clothes, teeth), body parts and senses, rest, nutrition, feelings, safety (rules, water, bike, seat belt), and preventive strategies (immunizations, vitamins & medicines, education). When students understand that what they think and do as related to these topics, is part of their culture they can develop respect for their culture and the differences and similarities it has with other cultures.

Hygiene

Kindergarten is the first school experience for many students. The first month of school we discuss, I model, and the students practice (first in the classroom pretending and then in the bathroom) the steps in washing hands. This is a very basic task but many students do not know how to wash their hands so the germs are gone. Students need to learn when they should wash their hands (after toileting, before eating, after sneezing, and before preparing food) and why they should wash their hands (to get rid of germs and stay healthy). I continue through out the rest of the year to review the steps for washing hands.

Smith, Hendricks, and Bennett suggest, “Using a baby bathtub and doll, show how to bathe the baby. Talk about the water temperature, soap, lathering each body part, rinsing, and drying. Ask children why it is important to bathe babies. Provide bathing materials and dolls for children to use for role-playing.” Following this activity the teacher could ask why it is important for children and adults to bathe. Limited available water or no running water in the homes of some students makes bathing regularly difficult. The teacher could help these students problem
solve to find solutions. Some options for these students could be to use a wash clothe and soap to wash without filling the tub but be sure to rinse well, or to see if there is a local Laundromat that has showers, or if the school has a shower that could be used before or after school.

Hair care is closely associated with bathing, so the same students that have difficulty with bathing usually have a hard time taking care of their hair. The teacher could do the same rather demonstrate as mentioned above with the doll to show how to wash hair. Getting your haircut is also part of keeping it healthy. Provide students with an opportunity to talk about different hair colors and styles and cultural ways of wearing hair. Lice is a problem each winter so we have frequent discussions on the importance of washing, combing and keeping your hair cut; as well as not sharing things that are used on your head.

The hygiene discussion continues in my class with the next topic being clean clothes. Role-playing is a great way to teach because children are actively involved in their learning. Provide a clothesbasket with a few items of clothing. Discuss why and when to put clothes in the basket. Ask children if they have a special place at home to put their dirty clothes. Talk about the tag in clothes that gives the washing instructions then have children locate the tags for the clothes in the basket. Demonstrate hand washing, rinsing, wringing, and hanging up a piece of clothing. Allow the children to try it (Smith, Hendricks, & Bennett). Wearing warm clothes in winter is a part of a healthy life.

Our school nurse visits our class to teach dental hygiene. She talks about the basic parts of teeth, explains what causes cavities and how to prevent them. She demonstrates with a big set of teeth and toothbrush how to brush your teeth, gums, and tongue. Then students are giving a chance to practice. Next, the school nurse demonstrates flossing your teeth using an upside down egg carton and a piece of floss followed by the students getting to practice flossing. She talks
about the importance of fluoride and visiting the dentist regularly. We have a fluoride program in our school and once a week we swish for a minute. This provides a good opportunity to reinforce taking care of our teeth. Good nutrition is another part of good dental hygiene.

*Nutrition*

Hendricks and Smith (1995) say, “A fundamental goal of nutrition education is to foster awareness of different types of foods and to promote exploration and inquiry into food choices….Children ages 3 to 4 years can recognize different types of foods and understand that different types of food are better for your body than others. By age, five or six, children can select the more nutritious foods and may be more interested in how foods help their body grow and develop…By age, seven or eight, children are more capable of making healthy food choices. In the early primary grades, children generally are able to categorize foods in different food groups. At this age children should be able to plan a simple, balanced daily diet.” Students bring their own snacks to school, which provides many opportunities throughout the year to discuss: “What is the more nutritious food to eat?” and “Why do we want to eat nutritious foods?” At lunchtime, we talk about the parts of the meal or food groups.

It is also important to have direct instruction and a more in-depth study of nutrition. This unit begins with a discussion about the new food group pyramid using the poster of it from [http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html](http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html). First, I asked students to tell me what they saw on the poster. Students noticed the different kids playing (being active), the colors and the pyramid shape (we have talked about pyramids in math), and foods. Next, I talked about each food group: the name of the group, what foods were included in each group, why the sections on the pyramid were different widths, and how much food students should eat from each group daily. We continued our talk thinking about how eating healthy and exercise work together to help us have
healthy bodies. Finally, I would say a food and students would name its food group.

Activities provide practice. One activity is a blank pyramid for students to color and label the groups using our classroom poster as a guide. A second activity will be to put pictures of foods into the right food group. Students could bring in containers or packaging from foods they eat to put in the right food group. To help connect exercise as part of a healthy life, students could draw a picture of an activity they like to do on an index card. The students act out each for 60 seconds. (We talked about children needing to have at least 60 minutes of each day.)

The next step would be to discuss where foods in each food group come from, which foods in each group are better choices and why those foods are better. Students could keep a journal of what they eat for a 2 or 3 days and then share what they learned about their personal eating habits.

I was amazed to find my first year teaching and it remains true now, that at parties or special school events when food is present children choose fruits, cheese, crackers, Jell-O, and raw vegetables over sweets. They eat sugar foods too but it seems overwhelmingly that they come back for seconds of the more nutritious foods when they are available.

In kindergarten, cooking is a wonderful way to encourage nutrition as well as many other skills for a healthy life. Cooking on Friday mornings becomes one of the highlights of the week for my kindergarteners. We go to the kitchen where they read a recipe, measure and mix ingredients, and bake or cook on the stove. Before we go we wash our hands and talk about keeping them clean (germ free) to cook. We talk about where we get the ingredients and how they need to be stored. Learning how much of each ingredient to use leads to understanding about measuring cups and spoons. During different holiday seasons, we make and talk about traditional foods. This develops respect for the traditions of other cultures. I usually try to tie
what we cook to the letter sound we were learning that week or something else we have read or learned in class.

*Body Parts and the Five Senses*

I teach a unit “All About Me” in which we learn about body parts and their functions, the five senses, where we were born, family members, and special interests. We celebrate differences and similarities throughout this whole unit. During the body parts section we learn about the basic systems of the body, internal organs, muscles, bones, and skin. Next, we learn the five senses, what body part we use for each. Through explorations and experiments, we learn how our senses help us live a healthy life. There are many occasions to talk and experience other cultures through our senses. Family history and the people in our families are fun topics for kindergarteners. They enjoy hearing about when they were “little” and other stories about their families. This can be a sensitive area so it is important for the teacher to know about the families of the students so the topics and discussions will remain thoughtful of the feelings of all students. The conclusion of this unit begins with a time for each student to share with the class special interests and abilities.

*Feelings*

Verbalizing feelings in an appropriate way is a skill we work on all year in kindergarten. Students come to school from countless different emotional environments and backgrounds. Walking the fine line between respecting cultures and what is healthy presents a challenge to a teacher. One way we work on expressing our feeling is by using this sentence “I feel ____ when you ____.” We talk about and act out situations for several different feelings. Who is safe to talk to about your feeling is another topic we cover.
Safety

There are many different areas in which children need to know about safety. As mentioned above we list examples of people of who are safe to talk to about different situations. We also discuss not talking or going with strangers. Rules at school, on the bus, and at home are to keep children safe. Road safety includes where to ride your bike (always with your helmet), when and how to cross the street, and wearing your seat belt. Once a month we have a fire drill. Before the first drill, we talk about what to do if there is a fire, practice it in our classroom and talk about where we go. We also talk about what to do at home and to talk with family members to come up with a plan. A discussion on fire alarms should be included in fire safety. As a school, we have other discussion such as snow machine and water safety. Personal safety includes personal boundaries and what is appropriate and inappropriate touching of their bodies.

Preventive Strategies

Smith, Hendricks, and Bennett say, “Disease prevention focuses on preventing the spread of all communicable diseases, regardless of whether a child or adult has a cold, diarrhea, head lice, or HIV/AIDS. Disease prevention includes hand washing and taking precautions to avoid contact with blood or bloody fluids…Teach children to avoid touching blood or bloody fluids and help them to understand that germs can be carried through these fluids.” Bredekamp and Rosegrant say, “Helping children learn to cover their mouths when coughing and their noses when sneezing encourages good personal hygiene.” This prevention method when followed by hand washing produces the ultimate disease prevention. The school nurse talks to students about germs and the need to wash your hands well. She has a lotion from http://www.glogerm.com/ for students to put on their hands to see how well they wash their hands. They look at their hands under a ultra-violet lamp after they put on the lotion to see the germs. Then students wash their hands as they
normally would. Again, they look at their hands under the ultra-violet lamp to see the germs that are still there. This is very eye opening for students and really helps them to understand the importance of washing their hands well. For more activities to prevent the spread of germs go to http://www.henrythehand.com/.

Conclusion

Through a multitude of activities and lessons, students should develop their knowledge of a healthy life. The topics covered in this paper should be included in the curriculum. Teaching children ways to develop a healthy life will give them the tools they will need to continue a healthy life as an adult.
References


ED 644 Standards Paper

Alaska Teacher Standard 3: A teacher teaches students with respect to their individual and cultural characteristics.
Performance Indicator: Identifying and adapting classroom dimensions to meet the unique needs of individual students.

Alaska Teacher Standard 5: Teacher facilitates, monitors, and assesses student learning.
Performance Indicator: Mastery is demonstrated through a teacher work sample and accompanying analysis. A video of teaching practice is part of this documentation.

Alaska Teacher Standard 6: A teacher creates and maintains a learning environment in which all students are actively engaged and contributing members.
Performance Indicator: Identifying and adapting classroom dimensions to establish and maintain an environment that supports student learning.
The classroom environment including the materials, structure and teacher all affect the learning of students. For students to reach their potential the teacher must take into consideration the individual needs of students. These needs include but are not limited to the dimensions of a classroom. Teachers have to consider the softness/hardness of the physical room and of the interactions between the teacher and students and between students, open/closed activities, simple/complex activities, intrusion/seclusion caused by the physical arrangement of the classroom, and high/low mobility of activities. Teachers also have to consider the cultures represented in the classroom and individual interest. The first section of this paper will address how I adapt the dimensions of the classroom to meet the needs of students with respect to their individual and cultural characteristics. The second section of this paper will focus on how I facilitate, monitor and assess student learning. The last section of this paper will concentrate on how I establish and maintain a classroom environment that supports student learning.

Early childhood curriculum guideline seven says, “Curriculum respects and supports individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity” (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 20). The following are examples of respect shown in my classroom. Six of my students have a great need for movement, so I try to have many activities where they are moving and learning at the same time. For example, I have them make the shape of a vegetable with their bodies and tell their neighbor what vegetable they are, or we clap the names of the food groups. This provides movement (meeting individual needs) while students are still learning the curriculum. Another example of meeting individual needs is allowing one of my students to wear a headset during reading time. She likes it to be very quiet when she reads so she puts on the headset during decodable books reading time. This provides her with the quite she needs to concentrate and not become frustrated with the other students who are sounding words aloud. I have adapted my
thinking about requiring students to sit in their seats to do table work. Several students this year prefer to stand beside the table to do their work or to have one leg in the chair and one foot on the floor. As long as the activity or task at hand is being accomplished, I no longer require students to be seated in their chairs because the goal is “focused participation…children attending to the learning task not just by passively listening (although listening is important in certain context) but with a high level of participation and attention” (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 75). In other words, it is far more important for students to be actively participating than sitting a certain way.

The following examples are ways I adapt learning for students. During writing time, two students dictate their sentences to me and then trace them while other students are writing their own. A few students are writing several sentences. Students need help with spelling on various levels; what letters makes /ch/ and the student says and writes ch, or tell me the sounds in that word and the student tells me the sounds and then I support with write the letters that make those sounds, or I tell the student the sounds and he/she write the letters. Students that have difficulty forming letters practice with more tactile activities like writing letters in salt, in shaving crème, or with chalk; other students respond better to making letters with their bodies, while some just need a pencil and paper. One final example of how I adapt classroom dimensions for individual students is by respecting language and the role it plays in learning. “It [The primary program] recognizes the social nature of learning and the essential role of language in mediating thought, communication, and learning” (Guiding Principles, n. d.). Two of my students have languages other than English spoken in their homes. Since language greatly affects understanding concepts and learning new skills, I provide visual supports and supplemental explanations for these students.
The following are examples of learning being facilitated, monitored, or assessed. Groups of four students worked together choosing four categories of food and drawing their favorite food for each of the four categories. This activity generates open discussion about foods and to which group they belong. I observed students working together and helping each other choose a food that would fit in the category their group was working on. After doing two categories some groups needed help deciding on a third category so I would ask which one they had already done. Then I would ask what foods groups or eating times where left that they had not done. In some cases if a group needed guidance, I would have them refer to the food pyramid poster or the bulletin board with groups list with food pictures. “Assessment and evaluation support the child’s learning; they assist the teacher in making educational decisions (Guiding Principles).”

Throughout this unit, I observed and recorded informal data on mailing labels, a checklist, and gathered data that are more formal by interviews of questions during class discussions. I adjusted lessons to facilitate students when they were having difficulty understanding or grasping a concept or skill. “Transformational curriculum is based on the assumption that not only does such curriculum change the learner but the learner also affects and changes the curriculum….The child remains at the center of the curriculum, transformed by the interaction with the curriculum but influencing and transforming the curriculum in return” (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992). For example, at first the grains group was confusing to several students so we spent extra time listing grains and looking at pictures of grains and pictures of foods made from grains.

I made other adjustments in the dimensions of the classroom to meet the needs of individuals and the class as a whole. “Making the environment as inviting, comfortable, and attractive as possible is an invitation to children to come in and learn (Warner & Sower, 2005).” The play dough center was becoming boring. Warner and Sower state, “Eventually, the learning that
children are doing in specific centers wanes unless challenges pique their further intellectual development (Warner & Sower, 2005).” Adding cooking utensils made the center more complex and drew the students’ interest once again. Now they were trying out the garlic press, potato masher, muffin tin to see what they could make and do with these new parts yet one student was happy and involved with just a ball of play dough to use to make foods. “The presence of “loose parts” which can be combined by imaginative children or teachers as the need arises, contributes greatly to the potential richness and complexity of any learning environment (Jones & Prescott, 1992).” I changed the open/closed dimension of the classroom. “The open/closed dimension is concerned with the choices offered by an environment and the materials in it, as well as by the teacher (Jones & Prescott, 1992).” In the art center I provided a bigger variety of materials. Watercolor paints, beads, pipe cleaner, and yarn, as well as paper, glue, scissors, crayons, and markers were all choices providing open activities as well as an open storage arrangement. Usually only one kind of art material is out at a time because of a lack of space but by providing choices, some different students were interested in being in the art center. I made the new items available in by the sink to be used at the art table or at one of the student tables. Therefore, the students that are often in the art center making similar project were now interacting with other students using different materials and their projects began to grow and change. Other centers were available that were relatively open like, Tinker toys, blocks, and Lego’s. Closed activities included puzzles and a food group matching game.

I have shown how I adjust the classroom to meet the needs of individual students by changing the curriculum, materials, or the physical arrangement of the classroom. This provides the best opportunity for students to reach their individual potentials. I have shown how I adapt the dimensions of the classroom and how I use assessment to facilitate each student’s learning. As
the teacher, I am a crucial piece in the learning process for the students in my class.
References


ED 653 Standard 4

A teacher knows the content area and how to teach it.

Early Childhood Performance Indicator:

Creates, selects, adapts, and uses a variety of instructional resources to enhance children’s physical skills.
Introduction

In order to create, select, adapt and use a variety of instructional resources related to physical skills a teacher must know the content (what are the physical skills young children should develop?). By adjusting the content in these ways, the teacher shows that she can enhance children’s physical skills development. Locomotion, manipulation, and stability are the fundamental movement skills that children need to develop through a multitude of experiences. This paper defines physical skills, how they can develop in children and gives numerous examples of activities for teachers to use to facilitate the development of these physical skills.

Definitions

What are physical skills?

Physical skills include the development of locomotion, manipulation, and stability movements. Locomotion skills include walking, running, leaping, jumping, hopping, galloping, sliding, skipping, and climbing. Manipulation skills comprise throwing, catching, kicking, trapping, punting, striking, volleying, bouncing, and rolling. Stability skills consist of bending, stretching, twisting, turning, swinging, upright balancing, inverted balancing, rolling, starting, stopping, and dodging. The acquisition of these skills happens over time in phases and stages, as the child develops.

What are the phases and stages of development?

Phases of development occur, as the child grows older while stages of development transpire as opportunities for physical experience and practice are given. Characterized by involuntary movements and progresses to the beginnings of voluntary movements such as reaching, grasping, rolling over, sitting, and crawling the reflexive phase begins prior to birth and continues until around 2 years of age. Two year olds to seven year olds are in the fundamental phase, which is the
best time to develop basic locomotion, manipulation, and stability skills. Movement skills progress through stages. Gallahue in *Transforming Physical Education Curriculum* defines these phases as initial, elementary, and mature. The mature phase begins around 7 years of age and continues through adolescence. The child in the mature phase combines basic movements to create specialized movements. The degree of specialization depends on the environment and the individual.

**Educational Strategies**

The teacher’s responsibility is to provide examples, guidance and opportunities for each student to progress in his/her physical skill development.

**Locomotion Examples**

**Example A:**

At my school, each grade has two 30-minute PE times a week. I teach my kindergarteners PE. We have a gym that we go to for PE and it has all the equipment that we need to do the activities. We also have a 30-minute recess everyday but it is unstructured. Some children are highly mobile while others are not. On the playground, there are monkey bars, 2 big playground sets that have sides, poles to slide down, tires to walk through, and swinging monkey bars, we have swings and a field where they play soccer or football and sleds that they pull around in the winter. In my classroom, I have opportunities for them to move every 15 or 20 minutes (we stretch or do a locomotion movement from one area of the room to the next for the next activity). We do the exercise I call “high knees/low knees” (the children ask to do it often). We lift our knees up so they are perpendicular with our trunks and alternate feet quickly. Then we just pick them up a little similar to a fancy marching step. Action songs are also a big hit in kindergarten.

For this experience during PE on Wednesday, I had students in four lines and had them move across the gym one set of children at a time doing the locomotion movements. We have not done
jumping from a height but I would like to try it with them. When doing jumping we have just been jumping (exploring) and doing different activities, but I would like to focus on jumping for height and distance. Most of my students were in the initial stage of jumping but it seems like there is a great range of skills even in that stage. During my observations, I found that the older kids were not necessarily further along with these skills. I think interest has a lot to do with skill level. One little boy has difficulty with many movements but if given a choice of what to do, he would choose something stationary. He is just starting to run and play at recess. In PE, he gets frustrated easily and sometimes does not even want to try. His birthday is in September so he is six. At recess, I will pair him with another student to work with him.

Hopping was interesting to watch because as long as they were concentrating they could keep their foot back in the elementary stage form but after a while, the foot would begin to come back forward in the initial stage form.

We have practiced skipping and galloping skills the most. I found that all but two students were at the elementary stage, within that stage there is great variance in development of the skill. I could work with the students that have a hard time doing these activities at recess.

Leaping and the slide step seem to be more difficult movement skills. Students were doing more of a gallop than turning sideways and sliding. Taking a big step was what they did for leaping and then it would turn into jumping. I will have them do the slide step across the lines that are painted on the gym floor. To help students progress in leaping, they need time to explore the movement followed by more structured demonstration and practice. Running for 3 minutes is one activity that our curriculum suggests. At first, this might not seem like a long time but it is for most students. Therefore, we work our way up to that amount of time and students count how many laps they make around the gym.
In the future, I will do more formative assessments during the grading period. Another approach I would like to try is having an older student demonstrate the skills and maybe even working in pairs for practicing. Skill development is important but we have to remember, the physical development of the child is part of development too. A child’s physical body has to be developed to meet the requirements of practicing and learning skills.

Practicing skills from Native American games would be one way to incorporate their culture. They do a ball toss laying flat on their back with their arm stretched straight above their head and toss the ball by bringing their arm forward towards their body. The other culture in my class is Tongan; we could do the same things and learn some skills for a Tongan game. The locomotion movement skills will be helpful to build off for any new movements.

*Example B:* Students use poly spots (colored spots on the floor) as their home base and have plenty of personal space around them for exploring a variety of movements. I ask a series of questions. Can you:

- step forward off your home base and return?
- step backwards off your home base and return?
- step to the other side and return?
- jump (2 feet takeoff and landing) forward off your home base? jump all around your home base?
- stand behind your home base; jump over your home base?
- jump backwards over your home base? Try it 3 times.
- How else can you move around your home base?

These movements can be connected to science by asking students to name animals that move forwards, backwards, or sideways; and to social studies by asking students to name items in the community that they could go around, over, or under.
After this initial exploration of personal space, the teacher would follow with more activities to practice movement skills. The teacher gives clear boundaries for a general space in which all students move about after each skill is explained. Music could be played while students are practicing when the music is turned off students should return to personal space.

First, the teacher would give a clear explanation of the movement skill, followed by a demonstration and student practice time in the general space. After the practice time is over the students return to personal space (poly spot) while the teacher explains and demonstrates the next movement skill. The movement skills are:

1. **walk**- Point toes straight ahead; swing arms easy, hold tummy in and chest up.
   
   Stand tall and show your good posture.

2. **run**-(slow) Land on heel rolls to balls of feet. Carry hands near waist height,
   
   Relax shoulders, head, and wrists. Head not bouncing; elbows in; arms not crossing midline of body.
   
   (Fast) land on balls of feet; lean forward.

3. **jump**- two feet takeoff two feet landing.

4. **hop**- one foot (Hop on one foot then the other; changing feet quickly.)

5. **gallop**-step-together-step; same foot leads (stays in front) lead with the other leg.

6. **skip**-step-hop; step-hop; switching leading leg (right leg is first then left).

7. **Side-slide**- move sideways, step-together-step; same foot leads until change of direction, then other foot leads. Like a sideways gallop.

8. **leap**- A long step; like jumping over a puddle. One foot take off; one foot landing.

   Second, the teacher would provide more modeling, guidance, and practice for individuals or
small groups as needed. Lastly, challenges may be provided for students as needed such as combining 2 movements, seeing how many times in a row a child could do a movement, or by trying to go higher/lower, farther or faster/slower with each movement. The teacher could read Move with Me by Charlene Schade & Steve Pileggi (December 1988) to integrate Language Arts.

Example C:

The following games facilitate the development of motor skills. Using music adds to the learning experience.

1. Building Bridges: A few students are bridges (hands and feet on the ground) while the rest are travelers. The teacher says, “Explore”, travelers move within the general space over, under and around bridges. After a few minutes, the teacher can give directions for which motor skill to use. For example, skip around as many bridges as you can in a minute or how many time can you gallop around one bridge in a minute.

2. Here Comes the Fox: Students are all rabbits. Home base is their rabbit hole. When the teacher says, “start”, jump around the forest (general area). When you hear, “Here comes the fox”, jump back to your rabbit hole.

3. Follow the Leader: The teacher or a student leads the class around the room changing locomotion skills every few minutes. The leader can go in a zigzag, curvy, straight or whatever path they decide.

4. Obstacle Course: Cones, hula-hoops, and hurdles placed around in the general area and students practice locomotion skills while going through the obstacle course.

5. Back to Back: Students move around the general area either in their own chosen locomotion or in a teacher directed locomotion until the teacher says back to back. Then students get back to back with any other student as quickly as they can. After everyone has a partner, the teacher gives a new
locomotion skill and the students move again.

6. Tag: Students practice a skill, not necessarily running. One or two students chase and try to tag the other students at which time that student becomes a chaser until all students have a turn.

During each of these games, the teacher is modeling and guiding students as they develop the locomotion skills.

*Manipulation*

*Example A*

*Setting:*

Using cones, I divided the gym into 4 sections. Each section had objects for throwing practice (beanbags, fluffy balls, small round Nerf type balls, and medium round Nerf type balls), three 5th grade students and four kindergarten students. I demonstrated for the fifth graders throwing and catching then they were to help the kindergarteners with improving their skills. The 5th grade teacher facilitated the activity while I observed. The marks on the following two charts indicate the stage at which each student was throwing or catching.

*Data:*

*Throwing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Level</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Trey</th>
<th>Shyana</th>
<th>Emily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feet stationary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball held near ear and pushed straight out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No hip rotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No step as ball is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal rotation to side opposite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball behind head, cocked in hand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step forward to foot on same side as throwing arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steps to opposite foot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunk rotation to opposite side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight shifted from side with ball</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To opposite side as child steps with throw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball released with whip-like motion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Follow-through with hand in direction of target

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Trey was concentrating and looking at his fifth grade partner to aim.</th>
<th>Shyana said she did not want to at first but then began to participate.</th>
<th>Emily seemed unsure, but willing to keep trying as her partner explained &amp; demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;This is fun!&quot;</td>
<td>lots of laughing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Catching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Level</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Trey</th>
<th>Shyana</th>
<th>Emily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms held straight out, palms up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traps ball against chest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clasp at ball</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses vise grip on ball</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head turned to side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leans away from ball</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Stage 2
Arms in front, elbows bent  
Arms encircling ball at chest, robot-like

### Stage 3
Ball bounced on chest, then controlled with arms

### Stage 4
Hands positioned according to flight of ball  
Gives way to force of ball by bending at hips and knees  
Continues to give way by moving in same direction as path of ball

**Comments**

Madison, a 5-year-old petite little girl, was having a great time “playing” with her 5th grade partner. She was throwing beanbags and laughing. Madison seems to understand what she should do when throwing. She would benefit from time to practice and perfect her aim.

Trey, a six-year-old boy, seems to be concentrating and giving much effort to the process. He seemed to have the arm part down but needs to practice rotating his body and stepping with his foot.
Trey was using a medium size ball. He could practice just the rotating motion a few times and then try doing it with the ball. Then later he could add stepping with his foot.

Emily, a five-year-old little girl, was unsure and shy with her 5th grade helper at first. She was not throwing the beanbag; she was chucking it to when she began. Her partner and the 5th grade teacher demonstrated for her and had her go through the motion step by step. She was reserved with them as they tried to get her to rotate and step. As she continued to practice her confidence seems to grow and it appeared she was more willing to risk trying to rotate and step. Again, more time for practicing would benefit Emily.

**Conclusion and plan**

Having the 5th grade student as peer teachers was a great experience for everyone involved and I plan to schedule with the 5th grade teacher to do this again. All of the students would benefit from more practice, I could increase the distance and have different targets (some flat on the floor and some like a hoop in the air). Combining their throwing skill into a game activity will further challenge and prepare them for games like baseball, kickball, and dodge ball. Explicit teaching and time to practice has definitely given all the kindergartens better, and more controlled throwing skills.

**Example B**

The teacher would provide a variety of the other opportunities to practice throwing and catching.

The student could practice throwing different size balls at a target on the floor or on the wall with teacher demonstration and guidance. The distance away from the target could be increased or decreased to assist students or provide challenge.

The student could practice throwing different items (scarves, balls, or balloons) up and catching them. The student could try to throw the item higher and still catch it or throw it high and clap
before catching it. The teacher would provide guidance through modeling and explaining.

The student could practice throwing for distance by placing a beanbag where the ball lands the first time and throw again to see if he could throw it farther. Again, the teacher would provide support through modeling and explaining.

*Example C*

The teacher would provide a variety of opportunities to practice kicking, dribbling, and trapping. The teacher would explain that trapping means to stop the ball with your foot and control it (one foot on top of the ball), followed by a demonstration. The students would practice stopping the ball with their foot and having control. For more practice the students would listen for whistle cues, 1 whistle would mean to trap their ball, two whistles would mean to pick up their ball and run to the teacher. Many repetitions would need to occur until the students were easily trapping the ball. The teacher should tell the students that they should not be putting all of their weight on the ball. Other ways to trap include using the inside of your foot, using with both feet with your heels together, and using the outside of your foot.

Dribbling is controlling the ball using the insides of your feet with your toes pointing down. Keep your head up and watch for other. Demonstration follows teacher explanation. Students practiced while the teacher helped individuals or small groups with more modeling and directions. Students would practice walking and dribbling using one foot and then the other and using different paths (straight, curvy, zigzag). While practicing walking and dribbling the student should also practice trapping and starting again. Jogging and dribbling would be one way to challenge students and walking and dribbling through a maze would be another.
When kicking with the right foot, put your ball on the line and face the wall. Look down at your ball. Step with your left foot, and swing your right leg forward to contact the ball with the instep (inside) of your right foot. The directions are exactly opposite when kicking with your left foot. The teacher would explain and model. Students would kick on the “kick” cue and wait for the “go” cue before retrieving their ball. Students could also practice kicking with their shoelaces (the top of their foot). Kicking can be practiced from a standing start or a jogging start. The same kinds of supports and challenges can be given as were given above.

*Stability*

*Example A*

Setting: There were eight or nine students in the kindergarten classroom. They started on their squares (I have a set of foam squares that connect together-each is about 15 inches square.). We stretched up to the ceiling, bent down, and touched our toes a few times followed by reaching out for the walls and bending backwards. We continued bending and stretching with the following challenges:

- Can you be as long as if you were lying on your stomach?
- How wide can you stretch?
- Can you stretch one arm high and the other arm low?
- Can you reach both arms to the right? To the left?
- On your hands and knees, stretch one leg out behind you and one arm in front of you?
- Can you lie on your back and stretch one leg out long and the other leg up towards the ceiling?
- Can you touch your knees?
- Can you touch your toes with your knees bent and straighten very slowly?
Touch your toes and straighten halfway?

Next, we played hopscotch. I explained that you toss your beanbag to a square and then hop with one foot in each square and then I demonstrated. Students took turns tossing the beanbag to each number and hopping to pick it up.

Data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hopscotch</th>
<th>Siosiuia</th>
<th>Miguel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First turn</strong></td>
<td>Put other foot down to balance as he bent to pick up the beanbag.</td>
<td>Paused rocking on foot to keep (get) balance when started to bend after gained balance bent over and picked up the beanbag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second turn</strong></td>
<td>Hand down when bent over picking up the beanbag with other hand.</td>
<td>Bent over and went down on other knee when picking up beanbag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third turn</strong></td>
<td>Rocking on foot to keep balance after hopping, bent and picked up beanbag.</td>
<td>Put other foot down when bent over.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Siosiuia and Miguel both need more practice balancing and bending while standing on one foot. They seem to be unstable on one foot. They could practice at recess hopping and bending to pick up little rocks on the ground. They could also do other activities to strengthen their core (twisting, bending forwards and backwards, and bending side to side).

Example B

Dancing or moving to music uses stability skills.

The Bunny Hop is a dance where you tap your right toe out to the side and bring it back to your side twice then you do the same with your left foot, followed by jumping forwards once, jumping backwards once, and jumping forwards 3 times. These movements to the music use balance strength.

The Chicken Dance moves are:

1. When the music starts, hold your hands out in front of you and open and close them like a chicken beak four times.
2. Put your thumbs in your armpits and flap your wings four times.
3. Twist down to the floor four times.
4. Clap four times.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 four times.
6. Skip around in a circle when the music changes.
7. When the music changes back begin with steps 1-4 again.

The Hokey Pokey words and moves are:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You put your right hand in, you put your right hand out, you put your right hand in, and you shake it all about,</th>
<th>“You put your right hand in…” extend right hand in front of your body, behind your body, then shake it in front on your body.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You do the hokey pokey and you turn yourself around.</td>
<td>“You do the Hokey Pokey…” turn around in a circle, hands next to ears, wiggling fingers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That what it is all about.</td>
<td>“That’s what it’s all about!” tap upper legs 2 times, clap hands 2 times, clap neighbor’s hands in a high five fashion one time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You do the hokey Pokey, You do the hokey Pokey, You do the hokey Pokey,</td>
<td>For each “You do the Hokey Pokey,” walk forward several steps raising hands high and backwards several steps lowering hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That is what it is all about!</td>
<td>The same as above. “That’s what it’s all about!” tap upper legs 2 times, clap hands 2 times, clap neighbor’s hands in a high five fashion one time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Verses**

Left hand

right foot
left foot
Right elbow
Left elbow
Right hip
Left hip
head
backside
whole self

Example C

Over/Under is a game were students pass an item over their head backwards and through their legs from front to back. The students stand in a circle (or a straight line) and each student passes the ball over his/her head until the children are able to do it with ease. Next students stand with their legs apart and pass the ball through their legs under their body until this is done with ease. Finally alternate between the two moves. The first student passes the ball over his head, the second student passes the ball under their body, the third student passes the ball over her head, and the ball continues around the circle in this pattern. In this activity, the student is practicing and strengthening their ability to bend and stretch.

Conclusion

When children are given direct instruction followed by guidance and opportunity to practice their physical skills will develop. Teachers will explain and demonstrate locomotion, manipulation, and stability skills for students and provide many and various opportunities for students to explore and develop each skill. Developing physical skills is a process that happens in due time through instruction and development.
References


A teacher creates and maintains a learning environment in which all students are actively engaged and contributing members.

Early Childhood Education Guidance and Discipline performance indicator b:
Creating a learning community that assists children’s development toward moral and intellectual autonomy so that they can take intellectual risks and begin to assume responsibility for their own behavior.
As a kindergarten teacher, one of my goals is to guide children to be autonomous, to be able to make choices that take into consideration the well-being of all involved. I scaffold my students’ skills so they can learn to look beyond their own feelings and wants to the feelings and wants of others. “Autonomy means being governed and guided by your own beliefs and understanding. The moral autonomous person is kind to others out of personal feelings of respect for other human beings. Moral autonomy is the ability to make decisions for oneself about right and wrong, independent of reward or punishment, by taking relevant factors into account (Fields & Fields, 2006).”

The noise level in the classroom was bothering three of the students in my class. We had a class meeting to discuss this problem and how we could fix it. Safety, hurting ears, and hearing announcements from the office were reasons generated by the students to keep the noise level down. Students decided by reminding the classmates they were playing with and by being careful with the toys that they could keep the noise level quieter. The stop light in the classroom that is on green when the noise level is ok, yellow when it is getting louder, and red when it is too loud, helps students to monitor themselves. They check the light and then remind their classmates that they are getting to loud. We tried this out and it worked. Students used the stop light to help them know when it was getting louder. Some 5 and 6 years are so into what they are doing that do not notice how loud it is on their own; the stoplight is a tool students can use so they can monitor the noise level. We have had follow up class meetings to discuss other ways to keep the noise level at a level that is good for everyone. We discussed activities that might be louder than others might and activities that might be quieter than other might. We decided we could use the loud ones on one side of the room and the quieter ones on the other. Through these and other classroom meetings, my students have the feeling of being an important part of a
community. They feel safe to ask a question or make a suggestion for a solution. “The teacher’s role in ensuring that every child feels a part of the classroom community is of major importance. It is the first and most crucial step in helping children gain social confidence and social competence (Katz & McClellan, 1999).” Becoming socially confident and competent will lead students to be autonomous.

“Creative thinking, intellectual problem solving, and reasoning all develop children’s ability to manage social interaction challenges. As you teach children to think critically, you create intellectual autonomy, the necessary partner to moral autonomy (Fields & Fields, 2006).” A boy in my class, Justin, used his problem solving skills when he had a problem in the library while waiting for school to start. Justin was jumping, kicking and then following to the floor. When the library told him he had to stop, Justin got in a huff. I asked Justin what the problem was and he shrugged his shoulders. I realized he was not in a place emotionally where he could discuss what had happened. I told him to think about it and when he was ready to tell me about the problem, he could come to me. Then I asked him to put his snow gear away and get ready for the day. Later, Justin came and told me what he was doing and that he got mad when he was told he could not do it. I asked him why he thought he was told not to jump, kick and then fall down. I also asked Justin if he did this with his brother at home. I asked him if he wanted to talk with the librarian about what happened and he said he wanted to tell her he was sorry. We talked about his new house and how it had been hard because his mom and dad had been working on it a lot. I later let his mom know what had happen and suggested she and dad spend some special time with Justin.

I guide students in their development of moral and intellectual autonomy through classroom routines, class meetings, and a personal relationship with each student. Perspective taking,
“considering the needs and feeling of others (Fields & Fields, 2006),” and I messages are other ways I help students to become autonomous.
Reference


Section Three
ED 605 Play is Crucial
Throughout history, people have studied and categorized in many different ways the influence of play on children. Nevertheless, the results show that children construct knowledge through exploring and experimenting with objects and through interacting with peers and objects at the same time. Play is how children simulate what they know about the world around them as new information is presented to them. “Play is essential, vital, critical, and fundamental to a child’s social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development (Butler, n.d., p. 1).” Play is crucial for the overall development of children.

A Historical Look at Play

In the early nineteen hundreds, there were four theories of play. The first was the Surplus Energy Theory, “That the child builds up an excess of energy, and that active play is necessary to get rid of the surplus (Tomlin, n.d., p. 1).” Curtis’ (1916) explanation of this theory was that energy was expended in taking care of everyday needs like food and shelter but if energy was leftover then it was used for play (as cited in Tomlin, p.1). The second play theory was the Recreation Theory. Mitchell and Mason (1948) state that play restores energy and provides more benefit than idleness (as cited in Tomlin). They believe that by playing children’s energy was replenished; play was a way to recuperate from hard work. Rousseau proposed the third theory, the Instinct Theory; a child will participate in activities naturally, as an instinct that is inherited (Tomlin). He believed that children instinctively engage in behaviors and activities of play because they were born with these predispositions. The fourth theory, the Recapitulation Theory; is explained by Curtis as a child reenacting savage man’s activities during hunting and gathering. For example a hunter might hide in order for an animal to come closer this would be reenacted by a child playing hide and seek. All of these theories touch on the need of children to be actively engaged by moving and doing.
Following these theories, others began coming up with theories about play. A system of classifying participation in play was developed in 1932 by Mildred B. Parten (Tomlin, n.d., p.2). Though her system is not hierarchal, participation in the more social types happens more frequently in older children. Parten’s system includes onlooker behavior, solitary independent, parallel, associative, and cooperative types of play (Fox, pp.2-3). Piaget held that through the stages of play teachers and parents could see development as children practice “emerging symbolic play” (Fox, n.d., p.2). Piaget believed new cognitive structures were not developed in play, but children simply tried to fit new experiences into what they already knew (Tomlin). “In contrast, Vygotskian theory states the play actually facilitates cognitive development (Fox).” While children do practice what they have already learned it has been my experience that children also construct new knowledge while playing.

**A Current Look at Play**

In the late nineteen hundreds early childhood, educators and child development experts have continued to study the connection between play and the development of children. According to Fromberg, “Play is the ultimate integrator of human experience (as cited by Fox, n.d., p.1).” Fox goes on to explain that Fromberg “means that when children play, they draw on their past experiences-things they have done, seen others do, read about, or seen on television-and they use these experiences to build games, play scenarios, and engage in activities (Fox).” Therefore, Fromberg and Gullo point out that “play enhances language development, social competence, creativity, imagination, and thinking skills (as cited by Fox).” Frost agreed with them saying that “play is the chief vehicle for the development of imagination and intelligence, language, social skill, and perceptual-motor abilities in infants and young children (as cited by Fox).” These experts begin to build the case for the importance of play in early childhood.
According to Reynolds, “intelligence develops as a child incorporates the outside world into his internal system of thought (Reynolds, n.d., p.1).” When children play they “use their senses, explore their environment, solve problems, symbolize, and improve their vocabulary (Reynolds).” Play also causes social development to advance as children learn to take turns, share, cooperate, and negotiate. Emotional development progresses as children learn through play to tolerate other personalities and navigate temperaments in order to express feeling and still keep friends (Reynolds). Dramatic play or role-playing is one type of play that provides opportunities for children to experience many of these developmental processes and advances. Language is encouraged, emerges as a child takes on a role, begins to interact with objects, and peers connected to the scenario. When the center changes to a different scenario, language develops even further as new vocabulary related to the new scenario is experienced. By labeling and adding print to objects, literacy skills are being encouraged. Depending on the themes of centers; science, social studies, math and other vocabulary and knowledge can be developed. Bredekamp and Stone explain, “Through pretending children develop the ability mentally to represent the world (as cited by Grossman, n.d., p. 1).” Grossman goes on to explain that “reading requires a child to look at symbols or representations (i.e., letters and words) and extract meaning from them (Grossman).” This means that children need many opportunities to play with real objects, to gain the ability to represent them with less concrete objects, and finally to represent them abstractly. For example, a pretend phone in the dramatic play center could later be represented by a block a child is holding to their ear and finally by the child holding their hand by their ear pretending to hold a phone. Stone continues to explain, “Sufficient practice using concrete objects as symbols is a necessary prerequisite to the use and comprehension of print (as cited by Grossman).” With this knowledge curriculum for preschool through second
grade should be developed to include great amounts of playtime. It is my experience that this information about the great significance of play during early childhood is available to and known by early childhood educators and others in child development fields, but it is not available to or known by the public at large and specifically to those in positions to make policies and laws.

Play is not a significant part of most programs because of time, test requirements, adopted curriculum, school and state polices. It has also decreased in children’s lives in general over the past decade. The Alliance for Childhood reports, “over scheduling, emphasis on academics in preschool, too much sedentary screen time, lack of safe play space, and violent TV/movie-based toys all threaten healthy playtime, putting play at risk (Butler, n.d., p. 2).” Dr. David Elkind, noted child development expert, says an acceleration of life because of the digital age has lead people to think they can do more, therefore they commit their children to do more; it has also lead to the push down, or earlier is better idea (Butler). Wardle concurs by saying, “As more academics and computer instruction is pushed on young children; as we observe many of our children’s homes become dominated by passive TV watching and computer games; and as we see many of our publicly funded early childhood programs become downward extensions of public schools, we need to advocate for children’s right to play (Wardle, n.d.; p. 1).” As we face this dilemma of the disappearance of play in early childhood, we as early childhood educators need to advocate and educate others about the value of play.

*Future Direction of Play*

There are two possibilities for the future of play, it will continue to disappear, or it will become an important part of early childhood programs. With the issuance of laws and policies encouraging more academics at an earlier age, it becomes increasingly difficult to have enough time in a kindergartener’s day to complete the paper and pencil activities and still have time for
play. “No Child Left Behind” is one of the biggest proponents of this downward push of curriculum. Computer instruction is another factor in the disappearance of play. While “playing” a game on a computer to practice a skill such as initial sounds is not in and of itself bad, it is not the creative free-play that is so crucial. For play to gain its needed place in early childhood programs, state and local policy makers, need to understand how crucial it is to the total development of a child. Early childhood educators, child development experts, the American Academy of Pediatrics and other professionals need to promote this concept by educating policy makers on the importance of play. Once policy makers are supportive then play can be the primary method for learning in early childhood programs.

Conclusions

Play indisputably is the catalyst for healthy child development. Throughout history, play has been the avenue for synthesizing learning in all areas. As an early childhood educator, it is my responsibility to advocate for and support play in my local school and district. I will also continue to look for new ways to incorporate play in my kindergarten curriculum. I now have specific examples of how play influences learning and these can be used to defend class activities to administrators, peers, and parents. When children play, they advance in physical, social, and logico-mathematical knowledge. “Play provides the natural integration between all critical brain functions and learning domains that are often missing in discrete teacher instruction (Wardle, n.d., p. 2-3).” Play is undeniably crucial for the overall development of children.
References


ED 644 Thematic Unit
I. Theme Overview

**Theme:** Healthy Body

**Subtopics:**
- Body parts and their functions
- Nutrition & exercise

II. Length: 3 weeks

III. Foundational Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-emotional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students will: develop a positive self-concept and a desire to have a healthy body.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students will: develop and enjoy exercising and being active.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students will: be able to name body parts and show how they move.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be able to sort foods by food group</td>
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<tr>
<td>be able to tell why eating breakfast that contains foods from different foods groups’ everyday is important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>be able to identify the names of at least 2 breakfast foods and recognize how the names are spelled.</td>
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<tr>
<td>be able to show the location of their heart and explain its function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be able to explain what the doctor does during a physical.</td>
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</table>

IV. Communication with Parents/Caregivers

Dear Caregivers,

We are beginning a unit called Healthy Bodies. We will be learning about external (outside) and internal (inside) body parts called organs. We will also be learning about foods groups and healthy eating. Look for more information in future emails.

Sincerely,

Miss Finn

V. Cultural Integrations and Special Needs

Culture views about the body and its organs will be respected by how they are talked about and
treated. Children needing extra help can have a friend to help them and/or longer to complete activities. Some activities may need to be altered to meet the needs of some children.

Children will be encouraged to share foods for the different food groups that are from their culture. Food allergies will be taken in to consideration and other foods will be used for taste test. Families will be invited to bring cultural foods to share with the class.

VI. Activities for Group Meetings, Circle Time, Class Meetings

Students will be able to:

- explain the function of bones, joints and muscles.
- explain the function of at least three internal organs.
- name the food groups and tell one food for each group…
- identify healthy foods and unhealthy foods.
- Name two things needed for a healthy body.

Books and songs for the unit:

- The Busy Body Book by Lizzy Rockwell
- What is Inside My Body by Angela Royston
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
- Pancake, Pancake by Eric Carle
- Walter the Baker by Eric Carle
- From Head to Toe by Eric Carle
- My Big Busy Body Activity Book by Roger Priddy
- My Hands by Aliki
- Kinds of Food by Hap Palmer on Learning Basic Skills Through Music: Vocabulary
- Posture Exercises by Hap Palmer on Learning Basic Skills Through Music: Health and Safety
- Exercise Every Day by Hap Palmer on Learning Basic Skills Through Music: Health and Safety

First Week: Body Parts –external body parts, bones, joints and muscles

- Bones- give your body structure or shape, a frame called a skeleton. Bones also protect your organs: skull –the brain, rib cage- heart and lungs. Have students feel their skull and rib cage. Teeth are the only part of your skeleton that you can see.
- Joints- connect bones so you can move. Elbow and knee are a hinge joint like on a door (show) and students can bend their elbow and knee. Ball and socket joint are in your shoulders and hips, have students rotate their arm around in a circle to demonstrate how the ball and socket joint works. Have students compare the hinge, ball, and socket joint and ask what would happen if we only had one kind of joint or different kinds in different places. Display chart with picture.
- Muscles-help to move bones when they contract and relax. Have students contract and relax their arm muscles. Without muscles you could not run, bend, smile, or kick a ball.
- Students list external body parts and what that part does. After we have, a list display chart with diagram and see if we missed any. Each student can find that part on his or her body. Play Simeon says put your finger on your ___.
- Do exercises and have students identify what bones, joints and muscles they are using. Let students choose the movements.
Second Week: Body Parts – internal body parts: location and function

- Anatomy apron- a different student wears it each time we discuss a new organ
- Color and cut out each organ to glue on their traced body.
- Each organ has a song to help students remember the function.
- Heart- listening to a partners’ heart with an empty toilet paper roll before and after running in place for 1 minute. Listening to own heart with a stethoscope.
- Lungs- blow up two balloons but do not tie them. Ask how balloons are like lungs? What makes balloons get bigger? What makes balloons get smaller? Let air out of lungs to demonstrate exhaling. Blow up the balloon again to demonstrate inhaling.
- Liver-pretend one of the students got a small cut. Say the liver starts to work to stop the bleeding. You can help by cleaning and bandaging your cut. Choose a child to show how to take care of a small cut. Wash with soap and water, have class pretend to wash hands as the helper really washes the cut. Then your mom, dad, grandmother, or grandfather will wipe something on the cut to clean off any germs left after washing (demonstrate by wiping with apiece of gauze and hydrogen peroxide). Then demonstrate how to remove the backing from a bandage without touching the gauze part. Talk about keeping it clean, dry and taking the bandage off when it gets a scab.
- Stomach-analogy stretchy bag- let students put pieces of a banana and crackers and a little water in a Ziploc bag; seal the bag and squeeze until ingredients turn into a pulpy liquid. This is what happens when you eat.
- Intestines-small and large- Using a nylon-stocking cut at both ends squeeze oatmeal through to simulate how liquid food passes through the walls of the intestine to the blood. The small intestine digests most the food and then passes the waste to the large intestines. Waste is the part of food that your body does not need.
- Kidneys-have students hold up two fists, this is the size of your kidneys. Kidneys have many jobs but the most important one is cleaning your blood. Blood flows through your kidneys and when it leaves the kidneys, it is clean. The part that the body does not need it sent out of your body. Drinking water helps the kidneys to do their job.
- Brain-analogy of a computer. It is the control center. Messages are sent to and from the brain from all the different parts of your body through nerves.

Third Week: Healthy Body – nutrition, exercise, sleep

- Display the food pyramid. Ask children to tell what they see in the picture. Discuss the food groups and the people exercising.
- Use the school lunch menu to put food in food groups.
- Sort foods (real, play, or pictures) into foods groups.
- Discuss healthy and not healthy foods. Sort foods (pictures or play food) into healthy and not healthy.
- Go fish food groups or healthy and unhealthy.
- Plan a menu for a day together then let students make their own healthy menu for a day.
- Lead the class in a few exercises. Discuss why exercise is important and how often children should exercise. Make a list of exercises.
- Give each student a food picture and let him or her find students with foods in the same
• Taste-discuss bitter, salty, sweet, and sour. Let children taste foods from each category and see if they can identify them.
• Taste foods from each food group and make a graph of like and dislike for these foods.
• Children will keep a food journal for a week of all the foods they eat and then write or tell about what they learned from their journal.

**Student Evaluation**

• Is the student interested?
• Does the student understand how muscles, bones and joints work together?
• Can the student identify bones, joints, and their function? Organs and their function? Foods and their groups?
• Can the student choose healthy foods to eat? A balance meal?
• Is the student starting to identify connection between eating healthy and exercising and having a healthy body?

Student learning will be continuously evaluated by asking these questions of the students. Through participation in class and group discussions and through hands on demonstrations and activities I will observe and document the progress and learning of students. I will have a checklist with these questions and a place for comments for each student.

**VII. Sample Lessons**

**Content Area:** Language Arts

**Activity Name:** From Head to Toe by Eric Carle

**Standards/Benchmarks:**

- **Reading 1.10.1** making relevant connections between text and personal experience
- **Writing 1.1.1** writing to express personal ideas using drawings, symbols, letters, or words

**Activity Objective(s):** Introduce external body parts and movements they can do. Students will be able to name body parts and show how they move.

**Materials:** The book, paper, pencils, crayons or markers

**Resource(s):** Eric Carle website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recall &amp; Hook</th>
<th><strong>Song/exercise</strong> Where Are You? (It is similar to Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective Overview</strong></td>
<td>We are starting a unit about our bodies. First, you will learn external and internal body parts and then you will learn about healthy foods and exercising. Today we are going to read this book (show front cover) by Eric Carle. What do think we will read about in this book? Let several students respond.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Details:** | • Let the students do the movements as you read the book and respond with the children in the book...“I can do it!”
  • Have children retell the story—using cut out shapes of the animals on a flannel board.
  • Have each child create a page following the pattern in the story: I am (name) and I can (movement) with my (body part). As they are illustrating their words, take photos with a digital camera of each child acting out the movement, and publish a collaborative class book with |
their words and photos.

- Have children think about something they could do that they do not think anyone else could do. Have students write a sentence and illustrate. This activity can be done with the lesson or as a center.

**Active learning strategies:** Students are moving like the animals in the book as it is read. Then they get to make their own movement with their choice body part for the class book.

**Cultural Integration & Special Needs:** Assistance will be given to children as needed to be successful thinking of an idea and in making their page for the book. Animals in the book are from all parts of the world. Respect will be shown to students having beliefs special about animals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Can students name body parts and tell how they move? Observation of students during activity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum-it-up-</strong></td>
<td>Today you learned about external body parts and how they can move. Let us sing the song Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Close-it-up</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Content Area: Math, Health, Writing
Activity Name: Breakfast Foods
Standards/Benchmarks: MEA 1 Comparing attributes & F & R 2 identifying, sorting, and classifying objects
W1.1.1 & W 1.1.2 -Writing to express ideas related to a topic
Activity Objective(s): 1-The student will be able to sort foods by food group
2-The student will be able to tell why eating breakfast that contains foods from different foods groups’ everyday are important.
3-The student will be able to identify the names of at least 2 breakfasts foods and recognize how the names are spelled.
Materials: 11x14 construction paper (1 for each letter of the alphabet), breakfast food pictures, sentence strips, chart paper with questions, food pyramid poster, glue stick, markers
Resource(s): Kindergarten Nutrition Lesson Plans, 2005 CSC Brands L.P., Food Pyramid

**Recall & Hook**
We have been learning about the nutrition and food groups. Show a bagel. Give each student a piece of bagel. Ask, “At what meal do we usually eat bagels?”
Breakfast Write the word breakfast on the board. Ask, “What does the word breakfast mean?” Build on their response by saying, “Breakfast is a meal that we need to eat everyday. Eating breakfast gives your body energy and nutrition to learn, think, grow, run, play and do all things you like to do.” Display pictures of breakfast foods.

**Objective Overview**
Today you will learn that eating a variety of breakfast foods is important so your body can get the vitamins and minerals (nutrition) it needs to learn and grow. You will also learn how to recognize and spell at least 3 breakfast foods.
**Procedure:**

1. Point to the breakfast food pictures on the wall and discuss the different breakfast foods shown. Write the names on sentence strips and attach to the bottom of the picture. During the discussion, encourage students to use words to describe the different foods in terms of how they taste, feel, smell, look, and sound when they eat them.

2. Ask students if they can find breakfast foods that begin with the letter "a". Glue pictures beginning with "a" on the construction paper. "You will be gluing the pictures for the other letter on their paper later."

3. Here are some questions we are going to answer: "What do you think of when you hear the word breakfast? What kinds of breakfast foods do you like to eat? Why? What might happen if you only ate your favorite food for breakfast everyday? Why is it important to include foods from the different food groups each morning?"

4. Explain that it is important to eat foods from different food groups everyday so we have energy and nutrition to play, think, learn, and grow.

5. Review the food groups. Use food pyramid poster on display in the classroom. Explain that food from each group helps our bodies in different ways. If we ate the same foods repeatedly, we would not get the vitamins and minerals that our bodies need for us to learn and grow.

6. Write the names of each food group on chart paper. List the names of breakfast foods under each group (student write them on the chart). Give each student 2 of the remaining food pictures to sort by food group. Have each student attach two pictures under the right food group name.

7. Handout alphabet list of breakfast foods for students to take home and share with their families.

8. Next time we have health you will glue the pictures for one or two letters on to the construction paper with that letter.

Active learning strategies:

9. Breakfast food word necklaces. Handout necklaces with part of a breakfast food word on the card attached to the necklace. Students find their partner to spell the breakfast food. When they have found their partner, they should sit down beside each other.

10. When all words have been correctly made partners work together to draw a picture and write at least one sentence describing why eating this food for breakfast is a good thing to do. Partners share their papers.

Cultural Integration & Special Needs:

Foods from cultures represented in the classroom are included in the pictures and discussion.

---

**Evaluation:**

Tell me two breakfast foods what food group they are in and spell their names. Tell me why eating breakfast is important and why you should eat breakfast foods from different food groups.

**Sum-it-up/Close-it-up:**

Today you learned that eating a variety of breakfast foods is important so your body can get the vitamins and minerals it needs to learn and grow. You also learned what food group certain breakfast foods are in so you can choose foods from different food groups when you eat breakfast.

---

**Content Area:** Science

**Activity Name:** Heart

**Standards/Benchmarks:** Science- naming body parts

**Activity Objective(s):** The student will be able to show the location of their heart and explain its function.

**Materials:** Anatomy Apron, empty toilet paper rolls (1 for each pair of students), Stethoscope
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Recall &amp; Hook</strong></th>
<th>Show students the stethoscope. What is this used for? Students discover that it is used to listen to your heart.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective Overview</strong></td>
<td>Today you will learn where your heart is and what it does.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Procedures** | **Details:**  
  - Make a fist. Your heart is the size of your fist. Put your fist on your heart. Demonstrate and check students to see if they have their fist in the right place.  
  - Have a student wear the apron and put the Velcro heart in the right place.  
  - Put your hand on your heart again. Do you feel your heart beating?  
  - You are going to use these toilet paper rolls to listen to your partner's heart. Divide class into partners. Put the roll on your partner's chest and your ear on the other end. What do you hear?  
  - The heart has an important job. When your heart pumps, it pushes blood to all parts of the body. It works all the time without stopping. When blood goes in and out of your heart, it makes the beating sound that you hear.  
  - Let's see what happens when you make your heart work harder. Let us all run in place for a minute. Listen to your partner's heart again. What do you hear?  
  
  **Active learning strategies:** Students make a fist, listen to partner's heart, and run in place.  
  **Cultural Integration & Special Needs:** Alternative activity will be provided for students who cannot run. Cultural beliefs about the heart will be respected. |
| **Evaluation** | Student will show where their heart is and tell what it does? |
| **Sum-it-up** | Sing (Tune: "Farmer and the Dell")  
The heart is like a pump, the heart is like a pump! Pumping blood to help you grow, the heart is like a pump! |
| **Close-it-up** |  |

**Content Area:** Physical Education (Creative Arts)  
**Activity Name:** movement skills  
**Standards/Benchmarks:**  
**Activity Objective(s):** The student will be able to skip, gallop, hop, jump, and side slide and show bones, joints, and muscles being used.  
**Materials:** music  
**Resource(s):** CD’s from SPARK PE Curriculum
We have been learning about our bones, joints, and muscles. Today we are going to use our bones, joints and muscles to move. Review kinds of joints.

**Objective Overview**

Think about what bones, joints, and muscles you are using for each movement.

**Details:**
- Play music with a lively beat. Have students skip, gallop, hop, jump, and side slide around the room as you call out the skill. What were you using to skip, etc?
- Have students move freely around the room. Ask students to show a partner what they did and tell what they were using.
- Allow student to use PE equipment (ropes, hula-hoops, various kinds of balls) as they move around the room.

**Active learning strategies:** Student is moving around the room in different ways.

**Cultural Integration & Special Needs:** Students may use cultural dance moves. Alteration will be made, as needed for special needs students.

**Evaluation**

Observe: Can students show which bones, joints and muscles are being used for a specific movement?

**Sum-it-up-Close-it-up**

Bones, joints, and muscles help us move.

---

Content Area: Social Studies
Activity Name: What does the doctor do when you get a physical?
Standards/Benchmarks Identifying community helpers and their jobs
Activity Objective(s): The student will be able to explain what the doctor does during a physical.
Materials: Stethoscope, thermometer, blood pressure cuff, tongue depressor
Resource(s): Local nurses and PA

We used this (stethoscope) a few days ago. Who remember what we did with it? Right, listened to our hearts. This is one of the things a doctor uses when you get physical. You are going to learn about other tools the doctor uses when he examines you for a healthy check up.

**Objective Overview**

The student will be able to explain at least three things a doctor does doing a healthy check up.

**Procedure s:**

- Show and discuss- a thermometer, a blood pressure cuff, and a tongue depressor.
- Pass around the tools and let children try them.
- Doctor check you weight, vision, temperature, blood pressure, heart
beat, lungs, throat and ears. Discuss why doctors check these things and the importance of having healthy check ups.

- Have a doctor or nurse visit and demonstrate what they do during a healthy check up.
- Write a sentence about something you learned about what doctors do during healthy check ups. Then illustrate it.

**Active learning strategies:** Students participate in discussion and explore the tools.

**Cultural Integration & Special Needs:** Beliefs about doctors will be respected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Can students tell three things a doctor does during a healthy check up?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sum-it-up</td>
<td>Healthy check ups are an important part of keeping your body healthy. What are other ways we have learned to keep you body healthy? Healthy eating and exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-it-up</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### VIII. Possibilities for Visits and Outings
- Doctor
- Clinic
- Grocery store
- Gymnasium

### IX. Bulletin Board Idea
X. Activity Centers

Block Building Center

Learning Objectives
Students will: build and manipulate structures including hinge and ball and socket joints using Tinker Toys or Lego’s.

Student Evaluation:

Resources: Tinker Toys, Lego’s

Activities: Building structures/frames like our skeleton is the frame of our body.

Teacher's Role: Ask questions to provide guidance and extend play.

Creative -Art Center

Learning Objectives

Students will: experiment with function of organs.

Student Evaluation: Can the student explain how the project relates the function of an organ?

Resources: Supplies listed in the Group Activities section.

Activities: Refer to list in the group activities section

Teacher's Role: Assist and guide students in understanding the functions of organs. Observe students as they try experiments. Demonstrate and explain for clarification.

Imaginative Play Center

Learning Objectives
Students will: make a menu and serve food.

Student Evaluation: Can the student choose a variety of foods from different foods groups to have on the menu?

Resources: paper, markers and pencils, play food and/or empty real food containers, aprons, chief’s hat, pots, pans, cooking utensils, plates, eating utensils, cups, etc.

Activities: making a menu for a restaurant, take food orders and serve the food

Teacher's Role: Scaffold learning to help student think of what needs to be done to operate a restaurant. Ask questions and demonstrate to guide thinking and learning.

Listening / Book Center

Learning Objectives
Students will: retell books.

Student Evaluation: Can the student retell the story using good details?

Resources: Books about the body and food

Activities: read books, draw a picture about what read, or make puppets or some other visual to
explain the story.

**Teachers' Role:** Help students sound out words they do not know. Listen to students read and/or retell a book they choose. Ask question about the story.

### Physical Activity Center

**Learning Objectives**
Students will: strengthen their muscles by exercising.

**Student Evaluation:** Teacher observes student exercising and moving.

**Resources:** small weights, work out mats, music, jump rope, diagram with picture of exercises.

**Activities:** lifting weights, moving to music, jump roping, exercising

**Teacher's Role:** Demonstrate exercises and watch to students to help prevent injury. Allow students to try new and different movements. Question to guide further exploration.

### Water Table

**Learning Objectives**
Students will: practice measuring and pouring water

**Student Evaluation:** Can the student accurately measure water using a one-cup measuring cup?

**Resources:** Measuring cups, pitchers, bowls, spoons, ladles

**Activities:** measuring and pouring; pretending to cook or make something

**Teacher's Role:** Question to cause further exploration, measure and play with students to extend play.

### Culminating Activity

Planning and making a healthy lunch and invite caregiver to join us.

**Student Evaluation at the End of the Theme**
Teacher will review checklist discussed earlier and add a summary of the development for each student. The students will draw or write about something they learned during the unit. Both the teacher’s and the student’s response will be placed in the student’s portfolio.
ED 611 Case Study
Literacy begins at birth if not before. “It may seem strange to think of learning to read and learning to talk as happening at the same time. It may be a new insight to realize that babies and toddlers begin this process of learning to read as soon as books and print become part of their lives (Fields, Groth, & Spangler, 2008).” A multifaceted phenomenon occurs. As a teacher, it is my privilege to instruct, scaffold and guide this process as it pertains to literacy and young children (standard 4). I believe that instruction in phonics; modeling, scaffolding and guiding skills in reading and writing; and building on the skills that a child has already developed are the basic pieces of my literacy program. In order to be able to do this, I assess as an ongoing process. I use assessments to guide whole class lessons and individualized instruction and guidance. The following case study shows how I develop a literacy plan of action for students in my class. The following standards are addressed:

Standard 2: Teachers understand how students learn and develop and apply that knowledge in their practice.

Standard 4: Teachers know their content area and how to teach it.

Standard 5: Teachers facilitate, monitor and assess student learning.

Laylah is the student that I chose for my case study. Laylah lives with her mom, dad, 3 sisters and a male teenage cousin in Gulkana, AK. One of Laylah’s sisters graduated from high school and now has a job cleaning the Gulkana Hall; another sister is in 6th grade and the last sister is 3 years old. The cousin that is living with her drinks, has been kicked out of schools, and has been in jail. Her mom works in the office at Gulkana and her dad works for the Native Association. Laylah is Athabascan. She attends kindergarten at Glennallen Elementary School.

Although Laylah entered school with many skills emerging such as letter names and
sounds, rhyming recognition and application, distinguishing between same and different the following skills were not showing development print concepts, initial sound identification, distinguishing between one and two syllable words, and blending sounds to make words. There is a lack of support at home and she is rarely read to or sees others in her home reading. My concern is for her to be exposed to the many parts of reading in a positive way and to have plenty of opportunities to practice.

I conducted my case study by assessing Laylah’s skills using multiple types of assessments; collecting data, analyzing the data, and developing a plan of action to meet Laylah’s needs. I believe that literacy development includes language (speaking and writing), reading, comprehension, and spelling. My performance indicator for standard 2 is I accurately identify and teach literacy with awareness of the developmental abilities of my students by applying learning theories into my practice. This is explained in further detail throughout the study. Phonological awareness and phonics are two important parts to understanding the makeup of words. Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds and phonics is the ability to identify and write the letter or group of letter that makes the sound. Through songs, poems and games you can practice rhyming, syllable segmentation, identifying beginning, middle and ending sounds. Once a child is looking at the written word, you can call attention to the letters and compare like words or sounds in words. In order to know more specifically what skills a child has mastered, is developing and has not yet begun to develop a battery of assessments can be used along with observation and anecdotal notes or you can chose to do an individual assessment to check a particular skill. My performance indicator for Standard 5 is that I gather, analyze, and utilize authentic, performance-based assessment data to plan for and encourage student development as readers and writers. “Because simply looking at children does
not guarantee seeing, systematic observation calls for identifying a particular behavior, situation, problem, or progress toward an identified goal we are interested in assessing in a child (Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty, 2005).” As a teacher, I am constantly observing, assessing and evaluating where a child is and what needs to be done to help that child make progress. “The most important reason for assessing young children is to maximize instruction and help them learn (Fields, Groth, & Spangler, 2008).”

Assessments:

- **K-1 Comprehensive Phonological Awareness Inventory** - to identify if a child can distinguish and manipulate sounds
- **Kindergarten Test of Print Concepts** - to identify if a child sees individual words, left to right and top to bottom directionality
- **Kindergarten Test of Letter Names and Sounds** - to identify what letter names and sounds a child knows
- **Kindergarten Comprehension/Retelling Assessment** - to identify if a child can retell a story in sequential order containing a beginning, middle, and end.
- **Brigance** - identify basic skills: personal information, colors, complete 1 and 2 step directions, picture vocabulary, copying shapes, fine and gross motor skills
Level 1

*Whole Word Discrimination

Sample: Let’s see if you know what “same” and “different” mean. Is the word duck the same as the word moose or are they different words? (Student responds) Yes, they are different words. (Correct if student errors.) Moose and moose are the same words. Fish and duck are different words. Are rabbit and salmon the same word or are they different words? Are caribou and caribou the same word or are they different words? Test: (circle correct response)

Ready, you tell me if these words are the same word or different words?

bat-bat met-mitt dip-him grip-grip

(4) #correct ___ 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____

*Phoneme Identity

Sample: Now I’m going to have you say some words. Then I want you to tell me the sound you hear in the beginning of all the words. For example, (teacher pauses after each word for child’s response) say: dip (pause), say: dime (pause) say: doll. What sound do you hear in the beginning of all these words? Yes, the sound in the beginning of all these words is /dl/. Test: (circle correct response)

Ready, let’s do some more.

Say: fix, fall, fun. What sound do you hear in the beginning of all these words? /f/
Say: tip, time, tape. What sound do you hear in the beginning of all these words? /t/
Say: sat, sing, side. What sound do you hear in the beginning of all these words? /s/
Say: goose, game, gum. What sound do you hear in the beginning of all these words? /g/

(4) # correct ___ 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____
*Rhyming Words-Recognition
Sample: Rhyming words are words like: log, bog and hike, bike. Listen to these words and tell me if they rhyme: sat, mat. Do these words rhyme? (Do they sound the same at the end?) Yes, they rhyme. Listen: flip, run. Do these words rhyme? No, they do not rhyme, they sound different at the end.
Test: (circle correct response)
Ready, remember you are going to tell me if these words rhyme.
< Happy-sappy >  (sip-fun)  < sad-mad >  girl-paper

(4) # correct 3, 1, 2, 3, 4

*Rhyming Words-Application
Sample: Now can you tell me a word that rhymes with cat? (If student errors, give a good example. Hat rhymes with the word cat.) bat
Test: (record response on all)
Ready, let's do some more. Tell me a word that rhymes with:
Sock  cock  bake  cake  see  gee

(3) # correct 3, 1, 2, 3, 4

*Distinguishing between one and multiple syllable words
Sample: Now I'm going to have you say two words. Then tell me which word is longer. Say: box  Say: computer Which word is longer? Yes, the word computer is a longer word than the word box. Now, say: motorcycle  Say: car Which word is longer? Yes, the word motorcycle is longer than the word car.
Test: (circle correct response)
Ready, remember you are going to tell me which word is longer.
Say: dinosaur  say: tree  Which word is longer?
Say: kite  say: caterpillar  Which word is longer?

(2) # correct 1, 1, 2, 3, 4

*Syllable counting
Sample: Now I want you to tell me how many parts you hear in a word. (Using names as examples, clap the syllables.) Your name is , it has parts. Now let's do Matt. Matt has part. (Do more words if needed: take, teacher.)
Test: (record response)
Ready, now you tell me how many parts you hear in the word:
picnic  elephant  napkin  pot

(4) # correct 3, 1, 2, 3, 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#correct</th>
<th>20-21</th>
<th>19-17</th>
<th>14-16</th>
<th>13-0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency Level</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total correct for level 1 13
Proficiency Level 1, 2, 3, 4.
The Phonological Assessment shows that Laylah is making progress. At the beginning of the year, she had started developing the skills of distinguishing between same and different words, recognizing and applying rhyming words, and counting syllables in words. Laylah was just emerging the skill of distinguishing between one and two syllable words and had not yet begun to develop the skill of phoneme identity (initial sounds). By the end of the first nine weeks, Laylah was becoming proficient in phoneme identity. Because Laylah developed this skill after
exposure and practice, I believe that she just had not experienced this skill prior to school. At the end of the first nine weeks, Laylah was able to hear blended sounds to make words when the sounds were given to her orally. Laylah was not able to segment syllables in words. Counting syllable and segmenting syllables is the area on phonological awareness that Laylah needs to develop. “The reason that segmenting appears to be so important in literacy is that in order for children to be able to figure out how to read and write new words, they must be able to segment the sounds of language (Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty, 2005).” Through further practice of hearing words separated and clapping to count syllables or holding up a finger for each sound, I believe Laylah will develop this skill without any problems. “Bradley and Bryant (1985) found that the phonological awareness that young children acquire before learning to read has a powerful influence in their eventual success in learning to read and spell (Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty, 2005).” Acquiring the oral skills of segmenting and counting syllables will be an important part of Laylah is reading and writing development.
Laylah is emerging in her print concept skills, she knows the big picture of books but has not yet begun to see groups of letters as words; she sees the entire line of letters as a word. “Following the same progression as auditory training, children need to become aware that sentences are made up of words, and words are made up of letters, which, in turn, stand for sounds (Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty, 2005).” Anecdotal assessing needs to be done to see if Laylah knows what terms first, last and capital mean; in other words is it a lack of understanding or a lack of knowing the terms used to ask the question.

### Scoring Guide

**End of first quarter.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Correct</th>
<th>14-10</th>
<th>9-8</th>
<th>7-6</th>
<th>5-0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency Level</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Laylah started school-knowing most of her letters names and the sounds they make. She has made progress in knowing more letters and their sounds since school started through phonics, reading little readers, and seeing print around the room. Continuing these means of exposure and through beginning to write words and phrases I believe Laylah will learn the rest of the letters
and their sounds.

Book Title: “Where’s My Teddy?” Author: Jez Alborough

Circle the student’s proficiency level and transfer to report card.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>4 Above Prof.</th>
<th>3 Proficient</th>
<th>2 Below Prof.</th>
<th>1 Not Prof.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># correct</td>
<td>13-11</td>
<td>10-7</td>
<td>6-4</td>
<td>3-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directions: Show the student the cover or selected pictures from the story. Ask the student to predict what the story will be about. (R.K.8)

Student made meaningful predictions.

1. Yes [✓] No [ ]

Read the story to the student. Ask the student to retell the story and record the order (using numbers) in which the following events are stated. (R.K.1, R.K.7)

2-8. Child sequence

1. Eddie is looking for Freddy
   Eddie got scared
2. Eddie finds a giant teddy
   Big bear stomps in
3. The teddy bears were switched
4. They each take their own teddy and run home
5. Each goes to bed with his own teddy.

9. Say, “Who is this story about?”
10. Say, “Who else is in this story?”
11. Say, “Where were the boy and the bear?”
12. Say, “What problem were the boy and the bear having?”
13. Say, “How was the problem fixed?”

[Handwritten notes: tiny teddy fell, Big teddy didn’t fall, little kid +, big bear +, in forest +, switched teddy +, teddy +]
Laylah has enjoyed listening to stories though when in a whole group setting she does get distracted. These retelling assessments were conducted one to one; I read the story to Laylah and
then she retold it to me and answered the questions. As Laylah begins to read, anecdotal notes will be made about her comprehension. Guidance and teaching will be driven by her development of skills or lack of development. Laylah was able to retell the stories with detail and answer the questions. “In a general sense, comprehension means finding and making meaning from information. It includes using modeling comprehensions strategies, Such as figuring out words from context clues, predicting what comes next, asking questions, thinking about what is being read, making connections between what is read/heard/seen and personal experiences, and summarizing and evaluating (Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty, 2005).” Laylah has participated in class discussions about books through using the previously mentioned skills; Laylah’s comprehension continues to make progress.

After collecting and analyzing the data the following plan of action for instructing and guiding Laylah was developed. Performance indictor for Standard 4 is that I understand the purposes of a wide variety of instructional materials and strategies and I am able to select those, which are appropriate to the instructional goals. Pointing to each word as Laylah reads would be encouraged for a while to help her see the individual words. Underlining individual words in a sentence and counting the words, or naming the beginning and ending letters of words in a sentence are other ways of helping Laylah to see individual. As she writes, she could use two colors and write every other word in a different color. Practice with counting syllables by clapping or standing and sitting as each syllable is said would be part of Laylah’s plan to help her with breaking unfamiliar words apart in the future as she reads. Laylah could do unscramble words where she has a blank for each letter to help with beginning, middle and last in words. She could circle all the first (or last) letters in words in a sentence to help her give attention to these pieces. As Laylah approached becoming proficient in scanning for initial letters, she could scan
for initial sounds she knows and then move on to looking for end and middle sounds she knows.

When writing Laylah will be encouraged to use known sounds, spacing to show individual words, and left to right directionality. At first a star or symbol of some kind could be placed on the left side of the paper to help her remember. When she is trying to spell new words, known words will be used to help her thinking about spelling. Continued observation and evaluation will occur as Laylah makes progress so her plan can be changed to continue to meet her needs.

Because of this case study, I have been reminded and become more aware of the importance of analyzing data and ongoing anecdotal notes for guiding instruction. In the daily work of my classroom this goes on but I have become more intentional in looking at the pieces (individual students) and the whole (the class) when thinking about activities and planning lessons.
References


A Phenomenological Study
Introduction

The Context of the Study

I am interested in finding out more about technology in a kindergarten classroom and specifically computers as they are becoming more of a necessity in daily life. Computers are used for everything from shopping, to communicating with friends, to researching information on any topic, to networking, to paying bills, to learning a new skill. As a teacher in early childhood what is my ethical responsibility to my kindergarteners in the way of teaching technology skills and understand? I believe this self-study will make me more aware of the possibilities for using computers and technology to unfold curriculum and understandings across the content areas. Being more skilled and knowledgeable about the technology that is available will help me to provide a more inclusive education to my students and provide me with skills and knowledge to share with colleagues and parents.

I taught kindergarten for 6 years at Glennallen Elementary School (GES) in Glennallen, Alaska. I had between 12 and 23 students in my class. I had a half-day classroom aide in my class most years. Glennallen Elementary School enrolled students from five communities in the Copper River Basin. Copper Center is one of the communities where students at my school lived. The Ahtna people have occupied the Copper River basin for the past 5,000 to 7,000 years. They had summer fish camps at every bend in the river and winter villages throughout the region. Copper Center was a large Ahtna Athabascan village at one time. A federally recognized tribe is located in the community -- the Native Village of Kluti-Kaah. Copper Center is located along the Richardson Highway between Mileposts 101 and 105. It is on the west bank of the Copper River at the confluence of the Klutina River. It lies just west of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. The population of the community, which is about 337, consists of 50.6% Alaska Native or part
Native. Athabascan Indians represent the primary Alaska Native group. There are two distinct settlements, a Native village and a non-Native area. Copperville, another community where GES students lived, is approximately 5 miles south of Glennallen on the Richardson Highway, between the Tazlina and Copper Rivers. This area was developed during the Trans-Alaska pipeline construction. The population of the community, which is about 158, consists of 21.2% Alaska Native or part Native. Copper River is traditional Ahtna Athabascan territory; the community is primarily non-Native. Gakona is another community where students at GES lived. Gakona is at the confluence of the Copper and Gakona Rivers, 15 miles northeast of Glennallen. It lies at mile 2 on the Tok Cutoff to the Glenn Highway, just east of the Richardson Highway. Gakona served as a wood and fish camp, and later became a permanent village. A federally recognized tribe is located in the community -- the Native Village of Gakona. The population of the community, which is about 236, consists of 17.7% Alaska Native or part Native. The community has a commercial district, a non-Native residential area, and an Athabascan village. Mendeltna is another community that has students at GES. Mendeltna is an Indian name first reported by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1915. Mendeltna was originally a stop on the trail used by Natives from Lake Tyone to Tazlina Lake. Gold in the creeks draining from the Chugach Mountains brought prospectors to this area in the late 1800s. The Eureka Lodge was built to serve miners, and the Nelchina area offered several trails into the mountains. The population of the community, which is about 68, consists of 7.9% Alaska Native or part Native. The community of Glennallen, which is the fourth community represented at GES, lies along the Glenn Highway at its junction with the Richardson Highway, 189 road miles east of Anchorage. The population of the community, which is about 518, consists of 12.1% Alaska Native or part Native. The area has historically been occupied by the Ahtna, although Glennallen is currently a
non-Native community (Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, 2009). Students come from up to 45 miles from any direction to go to school at Glennallen Elementary School.

*The Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this phenomenological self-study is to describe the beliefs and practices of an early childhood educator who uses technology to engage young children in a variety of learning opportunities.

**Research Questions**

1. What are my beliefs about how computer should be used in a kindergarten classroom?
2. What are my beliefs about what skills kindergarteners should develop in the area of technology?
3. What are my beliefs about other technology kindergarteners should be able to use?

**Review of the Literature**

*Selection Criteria*

The eight articles selected for this review of the literature: (a) examined technology integration in the kindergarten classroom, and/or (b) described computer uses in the kindergarten classroom, and/or (c) explored other technology that kindergarteners should be able to use. These articles were published in professional journals related to the field of education and published between 1997 and 2008.
Search Procedures


Emergent Themes

A number of themes emerged from this body of literature. Five of the eight articles noted that teacher knowledge and the implementation procedures the teacher employs for using computers in the class affect the benefit (Chang, Mullen, & Stuve, 2005; Clements, & Sarama, 2003; Finegan & Austin, 2002; Gullo, 2000; Pastor & Kerns, 1997). Five articles recognized that the kinds of software influenced the usefulness for kindergarteners (Buckleitner, 2008; Clements & Sarama; 2003; Finegan & Austin, 2002; Pastor & Kerns, 1997; Wang et al., 2008). Four articles stated that opened activities were most age and developmentally appropriate (Finegan & Austin, 2002; Gullo, 2000; Wang, Jaruszewicz, Rosen, Berson, Bailey, Hartle, Griebling, Buckleitner, Blagojevic, & Robinson, 2008; Wright, 1998). Four articles addressed integrating computers in the curriculum in a meaningful way (Clements & Sarama, 2003; Finegan & Austin, 2002; Gullo, 2000; Pastor & Kerns, 1997). Three articles stated that social development benefit of computer use (Clements & Sarama, 2003; Finegan & Austin, 2002; Gullo, 2000). Three articles described student-using computer for documentation (Pastor & Kerns, 1997; Wang et al., 2008; Wright, 1998). Three articles explained how language development was encouraged through computer use (Clements & Sarama, 2003; Finegan & Austin, 2002; Gullo, 2000). Two articles explored the use of digital cameras and microscopes in the kindergarten classroom.
(Pastor & Kerns, 1997; Wang et al., 2008).

Methods

Data Generation Activities

I participated in a number of self-reflective activities developed by the educator and researcher Valerie Janesick (2004) to generate data for this self-study. I wrote haiku, created an autobiographical collage, constructed a quilt patch, and kept a reflective journal.

Data Analysis Activities

The Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method is highly reductive method of data analysis frequently used by researchers working within the phenomenological tradition of qualitative inquiry to systematically distill essential concepts, issues, and themes from text (Creswell, 2007). I used a modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method described by Brown and Duke (2005) and McCarthy and Duke (2007) to organize the data into a series of word tables.
Results/Presentation of the Data

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Statements: Computer Use in the Kindergarten Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Computers can facilitate creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Story writing without being encumbered with mechanics of pencil and paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Revising and editing developed without dread of having to copy over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Making pictures for illustration, scanning in hand drawn pictures to make student stories and books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Used across the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Varied group size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Practicing math skills and fosters problem solving and spatial concept development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Researching topics-explore and seek information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Listening to stories for fluency and comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Social development-converse more than doing puzzles or play dough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Language development-sharing ideas, negotiating skills, cooperating, turn taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teacher training to use software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Software chosen to meet the various needs of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Use with interactive boards and digital cameras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Construct new knowledge as well as practice skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Safe use of computers by students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Brings excitement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Bound by teacher knowledge, technical support, and equipment availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Use in a meaningful way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Location important to effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Email for communicating with parents and experts on topics of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Requires considerable planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Statements: Technology Skills Kindergarteners Should Develop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Turn on and shut down the computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use a mouse to select icons and words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Take, download, and edit digital pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Begin learning to type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Use a stylus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Operate a CD in the computer/CD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Save a doc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

#### Significant Statements: Other Technology Kindergarteners Should be Able to Use

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Digital camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interactive boards, Activboards, Activote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Leapster, Leappad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CD Player/recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Microphone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4

#### Common Themes: Computer Uses in the Kindergarten Classroom

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. A computer can be integrated into all academic areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Social and language development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. In conjunction with other technology like digital cameras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Interactive boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Whole group activities on the interactive board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Lesson planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Communicating with parents and experts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5

#### Common Themes: Technology Skills Kindergarteners Should Develop

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Computer skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Turn on, shut down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Manipulate a mouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Correct fingering for typing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Save a doc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Use CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Using types of technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Take, download, edit digital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. CD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stylus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

Common Themes: Other Technology Kindergarteners Should be Able to Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Technology used with a computer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Digital camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Interactive boards, Actiboards, Activote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Technology used without a computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Leapster, Leappad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. CD player/recorder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

Essence: Computer Use in the Kindergarten Classroom

Computers should be used in the kindergarten classroom to enhance and excite student learning in academic and developmental processes. Digital camera and interactive boards as well as other technology should be used in conjunction with computers to maximize learning for all students. The kindergarten teacher should use a computer for lesson planning, communicating with parents and experts, and for meeting individual student needs.

Table 8

Essence: Technology Skills Kindergarteners Should Develop

Kindergartners should be able to turn on and shut down a computer, as well as, manipulate a mouse, begin to use correct hand position for typing, be able save a word document, and use a CD. Other types of technology kindergarteners need to know how to use are digital cameras for taking, downloading and editing picture and CD players and a stylus. These are the basic skills kindergarteners should be developing.

Table 9

Essence: Other Technology Kindergarteners Should be Able to Use

Kindergarteners should be able to use several different types of technology. Digital camera, interactive boards, Actiboards, and Activote are types of technology they should be able to use with a computer. Leapster, Leappad are stand alone types of technology that kindergarteners should be able to use.
Discussion

In this self-study, I set out to explore: (a) my beliefs about how computers should be used in a kindergarten classroom, (b) my beliefs about what skills kindergarteners should develop in the area technology, and (c) my beliefs about other technology kindergarteners should be able to use. Through participation in a variety of self-reflective activities and analysis of the data generated through these activities, several themes have emerged.

*Teacher Knowledge and Implementation procedures*

The first theme centers on the teacher’s part in how technology is used in the classroom that is teacher knowledge of hard, software, and the way the teacher implements computers in the classroom. Both location of computers and procedures for how and when to use computers affect the classroom environment. “Place computers close to each other to facilitate sharing of ideas among children. Locate computers centrally to invite other children to stop, pause and participate in computer activity (Clements & Sarama, 2003, p. 37).” However, Pastor and Kerns (1997) found that children with limited computer use were less likely to use the computer in a central location where someone looking over their shoulder might witness their inexperience, so they moved one computer to a quiet corner. When deciding where to locate classroom computers the teacher needs to consider where would be the best place to meet the needs of the students. Finegan & Austin (2002) site that the teacher is central to the successful integration of computers in the early childhood classroom and that technology is useless unless the three million teachers holding the software know how to use it effectively. Teacher training is a key factor in how effectively computers are used in the kindergarten classroom.
**Open Ended Activities**

Activities that cause students to explore and construct are open ended, they do not have one correct answer or one way of being done. Finegan & Austin (2002) recommend that computers should be used less for drill and practice and more as open-ended thinking tools. Computer usage should allow students to explore, seek out new information, experiment and problem solve within a meaningful context according to (Wang et al., 2008). For example, writing a story, researching a topic, or making a picture would be open-ended activities in which students could use a computer.

**Meaningful Integration**

Well used, computers can make a unique and substantial contribution to the education of young children (Clements & Sarama, 2003). Computers should be thought of as a social activity according to Gullo (2000), where students learn turn taking, negotiation skills, cooperation, collaborative problem solving as well as the content of the activity. Computers should be used as a tool to help students construct learning in the content areas.

**Software**

The kind of software used impacts the effectiveness and benefit. Open-end software provides the most flexibility in use and needs that can be met. Clements & Sarama, (2003) advise teachers to pick high quality, research based computer applications that make unique contributions to children’s learning, and referred teachers to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (www.nctm.org) and International Society for Technology in Education (www.iste.org) to check software ratings. Finegan & Austin (2002) refer to survey commissioned by The Milken Exchange on Education Technology, reporting that although more educators had computers in their classrooms, 57% of teachers who use software for instruction
admit that it is “somewhat” or “very” difficult to locate software to compliment their curriculum. However, Buckleitner (2008), states that the 5-year software drought has ended and a glance at the 625 titles released in 2007 revealing new ways to learn, create, and in some cases jump around the room proves it. These titles though are spread across ten platforms instead of two, meaning not all of them are for computer use. Teachers must think twice when selecting, implementing software, is it developmentally appropriate, and is it beneficial to this particular student.

Social and Language Development

According to Finegan & Austin (2002) with creative and dynamic use of computers in the classroom, researchers have consistently observed high levels of spoken communication and cooperation as young children interact on the computer. It was thought that computers were detrimental to social development at one time and they still can be if only used in isolation but working in pairs or groups of three can be extremely beneficial to social and language development. Socially, young children cooperatively plan, and discuss spelling, punctuation, spacing, and text meaning and style when working in a small group on a writing project on the computer (Clements & Sarama, 2003). The important thing for teachers to remember is provide open-ended projects or activities that provide opportunities for groups of students to interact and communicate.

Digital Cameras

Digital cameras are versatile, in expensive and can be very kid friendly. The choice of technology tools should be based on how well they support and service classroom learning experiences. The teacher or the students, to explore and remember activities in a unique way, can use digital cameras for documentation. “Because many kindergarten activities do not require
paper and pencils, digital cameras gave us a quick and easy method of saving special moments and documenting experiences (Pastor & Kerns, 1997, p. 42).” Pictures students have taken can be used as a potent stimulus for writing, and students and teacher can use them to share classroom experiences with parents. Students can take a closer look at things by zooming in or cropping a picture.

Areas of Further Study

In my research, I did not locate articles on all types of technology; there are many other types that could be researched for use in the kindergarten classroom. Also further research could be done on how the computer, digital cameras and interactive boards could be used.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this self-study suggest using computers and other technology in a meaningful way is a vital part the kindergarten experience. Teacher knowledge and the implementation procedures the teacher employs for using computers affects the benefit. Open-ended activities on the computer are most age and developmentally appropriate. Computers should be integrated into the curriculum in a meaningful way. The kinds of software utilized impacts the usefulness for kindergarteners. Social and language development benefit through interaction with computers in the kindergarten classroom. Digital cameras and interactive boards are other types of technology that kindergarteners should know how to use. Technology is an important tool that should be utilized in all kindergarten classrooms.
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research say? *Young Children, 58*(6), 34-40.

Finegan, C., & Austin, N. (2002). Developmentally appropriate technology

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102.


curriculum: A constructivist approach. Developmentally appropriate practice. *Journal of


reflection process: Preparing early childhood educators to teach in Alaska Native


Technology Unit
Plants

Abstract
In this kindergarten plant unit students will explore similarities and differences in plants, edible plants and not edible plants, uses for the plants. Students will go on a plant walk, sort pictures of plants and non-plants, and participate in discussions. To show their understanding students will create graphic organizers. Students will use digital cameras and computer software to complete this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title:</th>
<th>Plants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Designer:</td>
<td>Amy Finn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Levels:</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Areas:</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Synopsis:</td>
<td>Students will prove their understanding that plants can be grouped in different ways (observable features, edible/not edible, and uses).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 1: Desired Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards:</th>
<th>Science Standard C:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A student should understand and be able to apply the concepts, models, theories, facts, evidence, systems, and processes of life science. A student who meets the content standard should:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. develop an understanding of the structure, function, behavior, development, life cycles, and diversity of living organisms; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology Standard A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A student should be able to operate technology-based tools. A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>student who meets the content standard should:</strong></td>
<td>2. use technological tools for learning, communications, and productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enduring Understanding:</strong></td>
<td>Plants impact our lives in many ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential Questions:</strong></td>
<td>How do plants impact our lives?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Essential Unit Questions:** | How can plants be so different yet so alike? How are plants similar and different?  
What are the parts of a plant?  
Why are plants important to me? |

### Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Culminating Performance Task</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal:</strong></td>
<td>Your goal is to show how plants differences and similarities in a real world scenario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role:</strong></td>
<td>You are a junior scientist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
<td>The members of the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation</strong></td>
<td>You are a junior scientist visiting an island with no people. Some people want to move to the island but you need to decide if there are plant on the island that can be eaten. There are several different types of plants that need to be sorted and placed into groups by their similarities and differences (color, shape, size, appearance). You will work with a partner to discuss how to place your plants in groups (which can be eaten and which can not). You will decide what other things plants on the island could be used for.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Production, Performance, Purpose

You will construct a graphic organizer to show how the plants are alike and different by grouping edible plants according to what part of the plant can be eaten. You will construct a second graphic organizer to show uses of plants. You will present your findings to your classmates. You will think about how plants are important to people.

### Standards and Criteria for Success

Your product will be measured by the following criteria. Your presentation needs to include:

- a graphic organizer that shows how plants the plants that are edible are alike and how plants are different.
- a graphic organizer that shows other ways plants can be used.
- an explanation of how you made your decisions to group your plants.
- a self-reflection of how plants important to you. you can decide how you want to represent your thoughts visually.

### Facets of Understanding this Performance Emphasizes:

**The student will demonstrate understanding by**

**Explanation:** describing the similarities and differences of plants.

**Interpretation:** showing the uses of plants by their appearance.

**Application:** creating a graphic organizer of similarities and differences & a second graphic organizer of plants that can be eaten and plants that can not be eaten.

**Perspective:** evaluating the how plants are important to people.

**Empathizing:** showing that differences are not always negatives.

**Self-Knowledge:** reflecting on why plants are important to people.

### Dipstick Assessments (Formative):

- whole group and small group discussions
- teacher observation
- work samples, digital photos

### Student Self-

Reflective writing and art.
### Assessments:

- **Group and partner work**
  - **Emerging**: I had a hard time listening and sharing ideas with my classmates.
  - **Developing**: I sometimes listen and shared ideas with my classmates.
  - **Proficient**: I usually listen and shared ideas with my classmates. I used these ideas to do my work.

- **Work samples**
  - **Emerging**: I did not finish my self-reflection.
  - **Developing**: I finished my self-reflection but it did not show how plants are important to me.
  - **Proficient**: I finished my self-reflection and it showed how plants are important to me.

- **Used a computer to make graphic organizers.**
  - **Emerging**: I made a graphic organizer but did not use a computer or I used a computer but did not make a graphic organizer.
  - **Developing**: I used a computer and attempted to make graphic organizers.
  - **Proficient**: I used a computer and made graphic organizers.

- **Graphic organizers**
  - **Emerging**: I did not show how plants are alike and different. Or I did not show which plants can be eaten and which plant can not.
  - **Developing**: I mostly showed how plants are alike and different & which can and can not be eaten.
  - **Proficient**: I showed how plants are alike and different & which can and cannot be eaten.

- **Presentation**
  - **Emerging**: I did not present to my classmates or I showed my organizers but did not explain them.
  - **Developing**: I showed my organizers and explained them to my classmates with help from the teacher.
  - **Proficient**: I showed my organizers and explained them to my classmates.
### Stage 3: Learning Plan

**Know and Do Lists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students need to know:</th>
<th>Students need to be able to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K1 Plants can be grouped together by observable features.</td>
<td>D1 sort plants using senses, observation journal, graphic organizer, school nature walk drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K2 Similarities and differences of plants.</td>
<td>D2 group plant, graphic organizer, group book of drawings, make a list,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K3 Plant parts.</td>
<td>D3 identify and explain root, stem, leaf, flower, label a picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K4 Fruits and vegetables are plants.</td>
<td>D4 make a graph showing which plants are fruits and which are vegetables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Resources</th>
<th>Student Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. variety of plants</td>
<td>1. variety of plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. variety of plant pictures</td>
<td>2. variety of plant pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. chart paper, markers</td>
<td>3. flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. the book <strong>Planting a Rainbow</strong> by Lois Ehlert</td>
<td>4. herbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. flowers</td>
<td>5. art supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. herbs</td>
<td>6. paper, pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. computer</td>
<td>7. computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. books about plants</td>
<td>8. graphic organizer templates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>9. books about plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. digital camera</td>
<td>10. magazines with plant pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Kidspiratio n</td>
<td>11. fruits and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. digital cameras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. Kidspiratio n</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sequence of Teaching and Learning Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Essential Unit Question, Focus, &amp; Strategies</th>
<th>WHERE TO</th>
<th>Know &amp; Do</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Days 1-3</td>
<td>I would start with a KWHL (know, want to know, how to learn, learned) chart to introduce the unit. <em>I would have several plants (checking for allergies first) and/or pictures of plants displayed around the room for the length of the unit.</em> <strong>How can plants be different yet so alike?</strong> Then I would show students a tree, a flower, grass, a fruit tree or fruit plant, and a vegetable plant and ask them to tell how these things could be related but are very different. <strong>What are the parts of a plant?</strong> A discussion of the parts of a plant with pictures showing different plants with the same parts labeled (roots, stem, leaf, and flower). Next students would work in groups 2-4 to compile a group book of drawings and/or pictures of plants from magazines such as grass, trees, flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Books should include labels to tell the kind of plant and should identify which can be eaten. One picture should have the plant parts labeled. Books would then be available for classmates to look at and read. Show task exemplar. Discuss what kinds of plants would be needed.</td>
<td>WHERT</td>
<td>K1/D1, K2/D2, K3/D3</td>
<td>teacher observation, group book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days</td>
<td>I would ask for ways they might place plants in groups. I would guide the discussion to include the following ways plants are used; food, building, clothing, and for beauty. The discussion would continue with attributes that could be used to place plants into different groups (flower, no flower, green, not green, food plant, non-food plant). Working in groups students will sort fruits and vegetables using their senses of taste, smell, look, and touch and record their findings in their observation journal. <em>How can plants be different yet so alike?</em> (Again allergies would be checked for before class.) Students will graph their findings by one of the following attributes: color, texture, taste (sweet or sour), or smell. We will revisit our KWHL chart. Discussion will include which of these plants would be good to have on the island.</td>
<td>WHERE</td>
<td>K1/D1, K4/D4</td>
<td>teacher observation, fruits and vegetable graph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days</td>
<td>Groups would be provided with a variety of plant pictures. They would make observations and sort the pictures according to color and graph their results. <em>How are plants similar and different?</em> Review plant parts. <em>What are the parts of a plant?</em> Then groups would be asked, &quot;Can you sort the pictures a different way?&quot; Groups would share with the class how they sorted their plants the second time (size, appearance (stem are alike), habitat, use). Using the same pictures groups would be</td>
<td>WHERE</td>
<td>K1/D1, K2/D2, K3</td>
<td>teacher observation, plant sort graph</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
challenged to sort them a third way and then to share with the class their results. Revisit KWHL chart and task exemplar.

| Days 9-10 | Read *Planting a Rainbow* by Lois Ehlert. I would put out a variety of flowers and encourage students to touch and smell the flowers. After giving plenty of time for students to explore and discuss the flowers; I would ask, "Can these flowers be sorted?" Students would sort the flowers. **How are plants similar and different?** I would ask how they sorted the flowers (smell, color, size, use). I would introduce herbs at this time (have fresh herbs to show) and let students discover that herbs are other plants that smell. | WHERE T | K2/D2, informal questioning, teacher observation |

| Days 11-13 | Groups would be provided a wide variety of plant pictures. Groups would work together to observe and identify how the plants are alike. **How are plants similar and different?** Using chart we would make a class list of how the plants were similar. Next the groups would observe and identify how the same plants are different. On the same chart paper in a new column we would make a class list of how the plants were different. Revisit KWHL chart and task exemplar. | WHERE T | K2/D2, teacher observation, contributing ideas |
### Days 14-15

I would take the class on a school nature walk. Student would be encouraged to make care observations and identify anything they see that they believe are plants. Students would be in small groups to use digital cameras to take pictures of plants. Students will choose 2 very different plants and draw their similarities and differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHERE</th>
<th>K1/D1, K2/D2</th>
<th>students drawings &amp; observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Days 16-18

Revisit KWHL chart. Students will make a graphic organizer to show how plants are alike and different. Students will make a second organizer to show plants we can eat and plants we can not eat. Students will make a visual to reflect thoughts of how plants are important to people. **Why are plants important to me?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHERE</th>
<th>K1/D1, K2/D2, K4/D4</th>
<th>graphic organizers, visual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Days 19-20

Students will explain to the class their findings including 2 graphic organizers and a visual of their thoughts or how plants are important to people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHERE</th>
<th>K1/D1, K2/D2, K3/D3, K4/D4</th>
<th>presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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**Accommodations**

Students struggling with concepts in the core curricular areas (*reading, writing, math, social studies, science*)

Work in small groups and with partners to meet individual needs. Utilize parent volunteer and/or high school student assistant so each group has a "teacher". Rotate the groups to work with each. Meet with student at another time. Provide different activities such as computer programs, books on tape, and games that teach the concepts that the student is struggling to understand.
### Students struggling with academic skills (handwriting, writing mechanics, reading decoding, rote memorization, etc.)

Struggling with handwriting is sometimes caused because of poor fine motor skills so I would provide activities to strengthen finger and hand use and coordination. Examples are play dough and pegs, and string beads. For memorizing things memory match is a good game to play or help the student come up with mnemonic device that works for him. Individualized scaffolding from the teacher.

### Varying learning styles of students

Provide a variety of learning activities such as paper and pencil, body movement, arts or crafts, and visual and sound. Have students work with a partner, small group or whole group. Provide a variety of tools for learning such as computer, books, paper & pencil, magazines, music, art supplies, blocks or play dough.

### Students struggling with language (i.e. ESL) or language skills (i.e. language development delays)

Provide student with a buddy to talk with during activities or projects. Books on tape or computer program. Provide individualized teacher assistance through conversation and use of pictures.

### Students with physical challenges

Provide technology available to maximize student participation, involvement and inclusion in the classroom. Provide a buddy that can assist as appropriate.

### Students needing more academic challenge

Provide computer or other technology that will stretch the student. Guide student in researching further.

### Students needing frequent changes in activities

Allow movement in the classroom. Provide hands on activities and active learning.

### Students with varying levels of previous technology experience

Provide whole group and small group activities to meet the level of experience. Partner students up to work either with equal experience or varied experience depending on the activity.

### Other areas of accommodations your unit addresses

Emotional: Provide a quiet, safe place that student can go. Provide a classroom
The Plant Unit will help to create an ethic of excellence by continuing to value and build community. “The key to excellence is this: It is born from a culture….A culture of excellence transcends race, class, and geography; it doesn’t matter what color, income, or background the children come from. Once those children enter a culture with a powerful ethic, that ethic becomes their norm (Berger, 2003, p. 6).” Through group work, hands on activities, and creating the project student will develop a greater since of whom they are and what they are capable of doing. “Even at the Kindergarten level….the projects are original and carefully guided to ensure each student grows and is successful (Berger, 2003, p. 71).”

I hope this unit will develop the students’ knowledge as well as social skills. I want students to begin to develop ideas about why plants are important to people. I have a little concern that students might get involved in the details and not think about the bigger idea.

Using computers as a tool to find information and to create graphic organizers facilitates social interaction and communication. Computers should be thought of as a social activity according to Gullo (2000), where students learn turn taking, negotiation skills, cooperation, collaborative problem solving as well as the content of the activity. Computers should be used as a tool to help students construct learning in the content
areas. It will provide a means for skills to develop; not only the content of the project but also language and social skills. According to Finegan & Austin (2002) with creative and dynamic use of computers in the classroom, researchers have consistently observed high levels of spoken communication and cooperation as young children interact on the computer.

Students will be engaged in various group activities doing hands on, engaging work. Students will be moving and talking and active. Computers and digital cameras will be part of the unit that will keep the students excited to learn and participate in the project as they take a closer look at plants. “Because many kindergarten activities do not require paper and pencils, digital cameras gave us a quick and easy method of saving special moments and documenting experiences (Pastor & Kerns, 1997).” Pictures students have taken can be used as a potent stimulus for writing, and students and teacher can use them to share classroom experiences with parents.

Students will understand and apply concepts, theories, evidence and functions of plants. Through this unit students will begin to understand why plants are important to people and how plants are different and similar. Student will participate in whole group and small group activities. Various methods and tools will be used to maximize learning, including technology and hands on learning.

This is a good unit because it addresses a higher level thinking skill in a developmentally appropriate manner. Students are encouraged to come to their own conclusions while addressing the essential questions with evidence. The students are given opportunities to explore and research to come to conclusions through age-appropriate activities and a plant walk. It is also a good unit because it allows students
to prove understanding through a variety of methods, one of which is technology.
References


