

thereof. Please indicate the name and location of your school or program and describe which units you would like to use and how you intend to use them.

Let's Play!

A Relationship-Based Curriculum for Family Child Care



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Introduction

Welcome to Let's Play! A Relationship Based Family Child Care Curriculum. Let's Play! is specifically designed for mixed-age family child care programs as a way to support children's development through responsive caregiving and play-based learning. Family child care providers are well positioned to develop longstanding, supportive relationships with children and their families, siblings may attend the same program and many children who begin care as infants often continue for after school care. In addition, as children interact with older and younger peers, they have enhanced opportunities to engage in more complex play and problem-solving together. By creating these rich and nurturing learning environments, family child care providers can support children's growth across all learning domains as well as lay the foundation for resiliency.

Let's Play! recognizes that learning happens throughout the day and is embedded in all aspects of the daily routine. Let's Play! offers suggestions for making the most out of each day's routines and transitions, through conversations, songs and games. For our youngest children, warm, predictable caregiving routines serve as the foundation for building trusting relationships. Once children feel safe and secure they can then engage in the process of learning about the world around them. This learning process is enhanced when children have opportunities to freely explore and to choose activities and materials based on their own interests, making Choice Time a key part of the day. A child who is deeply engaged in meaningful play will learn to focus, persist when encountering difficulties and come up with creative solutions, especially when there are caring adults who can offer support

along the way. In Let's Play! we encourage family child care providers to join in children's play by observing them, following their interests, engaging them in back and forth conversations and intentionally planning activities to expand their learning. While this might look different for infants, toddlers and three year olds, this approach puts interactions at the center of the learning process and allows for more individualized support (Copple C. & Bredekamp, 2009). It also lays the foundation for children to develop confidence in their own abilities and the dispositions needed to become lifelong learners (Katz, L., 2015).

The Let's Play! curriculum covers three broad themes: Our Community, Our Environment, and Our Impact. Over the course of these 10 months, children learn about themselves and others within the family child care home, observe and explore the surrounding environment and then discover how their actions can impact themselves, others, and the world around them. Each theme can be explored over the course of several months, with the Sample Weekly Planners offering a set of more specific topics for hands-on learning. The open-ended nature of most of the suggested activities makes them suitable for all ages. Some specific adaptations for infants and toddlers are included as well as ways to support inclusion for all types of learners. Further developmentally appropriate adjustments to the activities and timing can be made to meet the needs and interests of the children and families.

Let's Play! features a set of sample weekly planners that are filled with activities designed to promote learning through play. Since each family child care provider and group of children are unique, we have designed the planners so that family child care providers can choose which interest areas and activities to highlight over the course of the week in order to tailor the curriculum for their own groups. Each weekly planner also includes two small group explorations that can be expanded on throughout the week. Some of these small group explorations come

with a lesson plan that outlines the developmental goals as well as how to prepare and facilitate the activity. Each lesson plan includes questions to guide observations and to plan for next steps. Blank planning templates are included so that family child care providers can further customize the curriculum. Let's Play offers three full weeks of sample plans for the first month with a blank planner for the fourth week. The blank planner can be used to repeat high interest activities, to try

different activities or to develop additional activities based on children's interests. For the remaining nine months, sample planners are available for the first and third weeks. Blank planners are included for the alternate weeks. Depending upon children's interests, providers could use the blank planners to expand the curriculum for a full 12 months. For extended day and year programs, additional choice time and gross motor activities should be included each afternoon.

Let's Play! Scope and Sequence

Theme One: Our Community	Theme Two: Our Environment	Theme Three: Our Impact
Month One: Our FCC Home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building Relationships ● Hellos and Goodbyes ● Caregiving 	Month Four: Listening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sounds All Around Us ● Music and Rhythm 	Month Eight: Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Caring for Ourselves ● Caring for Others
Month Two: Self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our Bodies ● Our Feelings 	Month Five: Investigating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making Music ● Observe and Test Ideas 	Month Nine: Grow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Things That Grow ● How Things Grow
Month Three: Us <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our Families ● Our Group 	Month Six: Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Homes, Buildings and Neighborhoods ● Buildings and Construction 	Month Ten: Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Things That Change ● How I Can Make Things Change
	Month Seven: Moving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation ● Noticing Things That Move 	

Our Foundation

What Does It Mean to be an Infant/Toddler?

Please remember:	You can support my development by:
Emotional connection is my primary need. Relationships are vital to my development. My Emotional Development is critical to my overall development	Being caring, patient and attentive. Keep me emotionally and physically safe and secure.
My learning evolves through relationships and responsive caregiving.	Making every experience a learning experience by being present and responsive to my cues.
I am learning throughout the day with every interaction I have with the people and objects in my environment. Predictable daily experiences help my need to feel safe and secure so that I am willing to explore and engage with my environment.	Paying attention to my focus and interests. Expose me to activities and experiences that are age appropriate. Provide me with a safe space that I can move around in freely. Providing me with a consistent daily routine.
I communicate via cues, movement, sounds, and words. Behavior is communication.	Responding to my cues, movements, sounds, and words using the vocabulary I need to learn how to communicate effectively. Read and sing with me.
My temperament and personality are unique.	Individualizing my experiences using my interests and preferences.
As an infant, I am learning by using all of my senses. As a toddler my play will be the principal way that I learn.	Allowing me to use my sense of touch and taste when I am examining objects in my environment. Stimulating my curiosity by providing me with experiences and materials that demonstrate cause and effect.

References: National Infant & toddler Child Care Initiative: Module 1 I/T Curriculum and Individualization; ELOF; NYS Early Learning Guidelines

What Does It Mean to be Three?

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

Stages of Play

Stage of Play	Description
Unoccupied	The child is not playing, just observing
Solitary	The child plays along and is uninterested in what others are doing (common under three years of age)
Onlooker	The child watches others but does not engage (common in 2-3 years of age)
Parallel	The child plays separately but close to others and often mimics actions of others (common in 2.5-4 years of age)
Associative	The child is interested in playing with others and interacts with others during play but is not organized (common in 2-4 years of age)
Cooperative	The child is interested in playing with others and cooperates in organized activities (common in 2.5-6 years of age)

Guiding Principles of the Early Learning Outcomes Framework

Let's Play! is grounded in research on developmental expectations as described in the [Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five](#) (ELOF) which outlines the skills, behaviors and concepts programs foster as they engage with our youngest learners. By using Let's Play! as written, family child care providers will ground their practice in the expectations and expertise of the ELOF. Family child care providers should refer to the ELOF and to their authentic assessment system when implementing Let's Play! in order to connect their observations of each child with ELOF goals and to guide their planning as they work to meet the needs of all of the children in their care.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Early Learning Outcomes Framework Domain Organization

Central Domains					
	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Literacy	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
Infant / Toddler Domains	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
Preschooler Domains	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	

Interest Areas

Play is the pathway to learning for infants, toddlers and threes. Adequate time to engage in unhurried, child led play allows children to follow their interests, build skills in meaningful ways and exercise creative thinking. Children should be playing for at least a third of the day. To support play-based learning, Let's Play! includes the following Interest Areas: Art/Writing, Blocks/Construction, Dramatic Play, Library, Math/Manipulatives, Sand/Water/Sensory, and Science/Discovery. Interest Areas should be arranged so that children can: easily navigate the space, play without crowding and freely access materials based on their ages and abilities. Advance planning and careful supervision will enable providers to create an environment that is safe for infants to freely explore, while offering opportunities for age appropriate experiences for older children.

When Interest Areas are well supplied, well organized and carefully introduced, children are more likely to use them appropriately and evenly distribute themselves around the room rather than clustering in one or two areas. Consider how you will introduce each Interest Area every day. What do the children need to know in order to use the center productively? How will children know what materials are available and what to do with them? How can you display materials so they are inviting and encourage children to explore them thoughtfully? What strategies or tools will you use to help children cleanup? Label containers and shelves with pictures of the materials to assist all children in being independent in finding and putting away materials. Keep the attention span of the various age groups in mind and remember that particularly at the beginning of the year, children will likely move from one area to another rather quickly and may explore many materials across several Interest Areas in a short period.

At the beginning of the year, offer basic supplies and allow children to acquaint themselves with the materials. Guide children as they explore and model how to clean up when finished. Show them where each

material is stored and encourage their clean-up attempts. Infants, toddlers and three year olds should not be expected to share materials as they are just developing the ability to consider the needs of others. Provide multiples of items that will likely be very interesting to children to minimize conflict. Offer enough items so that several children can play in an Interest Area and each have their own. Rotate materials as children lose interest and according to the topic being explored.

Remember that while adding materials to an area can inspire children's play, much of the learning that happens at this age is based on the relationships between adults and children. Sitting at their level, allowing them to explore independently and then come back to you to share their experience and demonstrating excitement over their discoveries will help children feel safe and secure in the classroom and increase their ability to take in new information. As children develop and their interests change, opportunities to extend their learning will arise. Consider how materials and activities can support this. When children express interest in specific ideas, add relevant materials to support their play. For example, if children are very interested in taxis, add toy taxis to the center. Observing children's play and narrating their actions shows children that their play matters and that you are interested in what they are doing. Using open-ended questions can also extend children's play by helping them to think further. By engaging in back and forth conversations with open-ended questions, providers can encourage children to share details about their play, thought process, and plans and minimize the risk of misunderstanding children's play. Consider using open-ended questions as you play with children, even if they might not yet be able to answer. As children become more familiar with this process, develop an increasingly sophisticated vocabulary, and become able to plan and share thoughts, they may begin to respond to open-ended questions or engage in more advanced conversations.

The following pages outline materials and strategies to support play-based learning and responsive instruction. Based on topics being explored and the interests of the children and families in the program, additional materials should be added. Each Interest Area section begins with a developmental overview of how children might engage with the

specific Interest Area. To support rich interactions between the providers and the children, there are suggestions for language adults can use to further the learning process, a suggested text, a list of suggested materials, a suggested activity related to the topic being explored and ideas for family engagement. In addition, each page features a planning template that begins with observation prompts, provides connections to the ELOF, and encourages teaching teams to reflect on their observations as they plan. This template can support your observations and reflections as you document children's learning for the authentic assessment system.

Art/Writing

"Our task, regarding creativity, is to help children climb their own mountains, as high as possible. No one can do more." -Loris Malaguzzi

IN THIS INTEREST AREA, infants and toddlers will likely be interested in exploring materials in a physical way. They may be more interested in exploring the properties of art materials and how they work, than the end result. For example, some children may want to dump paint and put their hands in it, while other children may want to explore how the paint moves off the brush as they move their arms. Additionally, children may explore drawing by making marks on paper, without intentionality or representation. As their fine motor skills strengthen, they may move from holding the crayon or marker with a palm grasp to a tripod grasp. **Three-year-olds may** work quickly, focusing solely on exploration. As they gain physical dexterity, children will work for longer periods and become more intentional about their work. As intentionality unfolds, children often decide what they are making after completion. Children's art builds in complexity as they are able to hold an increasing number of characteristics in mind. When children explore a new medium, the marks they make may appear random as they prioritize possibility over effect but will become increasingly deliberate as they gain mastery over materials. As this mastery develops, children will also shift from producing seemingly unrelated components to more connected elements (Epstein, 2014). In addition, children will likely use a variety of materials to explore writing and communication. Let children experiment with making marks on paper to express ideas as they are ready. Accept all marks children make. Children typically begin to prewrite using pictures and scribbles. As they develop they may begin to make horizontal lines, then letter-like forms and later make some letters, especially those in their own name.

NARRATION, OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

- It seems like you enjoy using _____.
- You are watching _____.
- You are making (curvy, zigzag, straight, etc.) lines.
- I noticed you are using _____, what would you like to create?
- When you _____, _____ happened.

SUGGESTED TEXTS: *Little Blue and Little Yellow* by Leo Lionni and *The Crayon Box That Talked Book* by Shane Derol

Planning

OBSERVE: What are the children doing/saying in this area?

- Exploring the properties of the materials
- Working with a purpose
- Engaging in representative art
- Engaging very briefly
- Engaging for a longer period of time
- Seeking sensory experiences
- Avoiding sensory experiences
- Making marks to represent their thinking
- Other:

What interests or play themes are emerging as children play?

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

- Goal IT-ATL 8. Child uses creativity to increase understanding and learning
- Goal IT-PMP 8. Child adjusts reach and grasp to use tools.
- Goal P-ATL 12. Child expresses creativity in thinking and communication.
- Goal P-PMP 3. Child demonstrates increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscles.

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

DRAWING MATERIALS

- Non-toxic crayons (variety of sizes and colors)
- Thick pencils
- Non-toxic washable markers (variety of sizes and colors)
- Oil pastels
- Dot markers
- Construction paper
- Large sheets of paper
- Coffee filters
- Foil
- Sand paper
- Butcher paper

PAINTS

- Non-toxic finger paint
- Non-toxic tempera paints
- Stamp pads
- Watercolor paint
- Non-toxic liquid watercolor paint

TOOLS

- Large paint brushes
- Smocks
- Stamps
- Glue sticks
- Spill-proof paint containers
- Child-safe scissors
- Drying rack or other place for artwork to dry
- Mirror
- Spray bottles
- Paint rollers
- Easel
- Sponges
- All purpose glue
- Masking, washi or colored tape

COLLAGE MATERIALS

- Sticky contact paper
- Colored tissue paper
- Feathers
- Large pom poms or cotton balls
- Stickers

RECYCLED AND NATURAL MATERIALS

- Large wood pieces
- Leaves
- Sticks
- Corrugated cardboard pieces
- Fabric scraps
- Ribbons
- Stems
- Thin or thick cardboard pieces
- Paper scraps
- Wallpaper samples
- Popsicle sticks
- Small and medium boxes

- Flowers

MATERIALS TO EXPLORE LETTERS

- Letter stamps and ink pad
- Name card

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

Cover the table with paper. Tape down paper so that it does not move. Provide different materials that can be glued onto the paper. Pose the question: How can we create something with these materials?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

Encourage the families to talk with their children about their creations. Suggest open ended questions like, "What are the different materials you used to make this?" "Where should we post this at home?" Remind them that art is about the process and not the product.

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

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Zero to Three: Learning to Write and Draw](#)

Blocks/Construction

"Play is the highest form of research." -Albert Einstein

IN THIS INTEREST AREA, infants and toddlers will likely explore the properties of blocks. They will use their senses to gain information by holding, feeling and looking. They may choose to carry blocks around or lay them side by side. Some children may choose to stack blocks and knock them down repeatedly. Additionally, they may use blocks for other purposes, such as pretending they are cars and pushing them around on the floor. At this age, children may choose to play alone or near their peers. **Three year olds will likely** move from exploring the properties of blocks to laying them side by side. Three-year-olds may play alone or near other children. Allowing children the opportunity to freely explore blocks and construction materials allows them to be introduced to concepts such as sorting, ordering, counting, one to one correspondence size and shape. Later, children begin to combine structures and build vertically. Additionally, their block play may become more social in nature.

NARRATION, OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

Note: show genuine interest in children's work and allow them to be creative and explore their own ideas. Use simple language to describe what the child is doing or ask open ended questions to support higher order thinking skills

- You are _____ the blocks.
- I notice you are _____ all of the long/small, etc. blocks.
- I notice you're trying to balance the block shape on top of the block shape.
- I noticed you put the block shape next to the block shape.
- What do you think will happen if you _____?
- It looks like you are working really hard with the blocks.

SUGGESTED TEXT:

- *When I Build with Blocks* by Niki Alling

Planning

OBSERVE: What are the children doing/saying in this area?

- Observing other children
- Holding and exploring shapes
- Carrying and moving them around the center/room
- Laying them flat
- Stacking
- Other

What interests or play themes are emerging as children play?

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

- Goal IT-ATL 6. Child demonstrates emerging initiative in interactions, experiences, and explorations.
- Goal IT-PMP 6. Child coordinates hand and eye movements to perform actions.
- Goal P-PMP 3. Child demonstrates increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscles.
- Goal P-ATL 13. Child uses imagination in play and interactions with others.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

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

MATERIALS

- Unit blocks
- Wood or plastic in a variety of shapes, such as rectangles, squares, triangles and cylinders
- Hollow cardboard blocks
- Foam blocks
- Soft cloth blocks
- ABC blocks that are larger than 2 inches in diameter

MATERIALS ACCESSORIES:

- Toy people
- Toy animals typical of children's environments or of high interest (farm animals, pets, dinosaurs, or zoo animals)
- Toy vehicles and trucks of various sizes

MATERIALS: RECYCLED AND NATURAL ITEMS

- Homemade blocks
- Empty tissue boxes
- Recycled containers

SETTING UP THE BLOCK AREA

- For wooden unit blocks it is helpful to label the areas where each type of block is stored; for example place a rectangle shape in front of the area for rectangular blocks, a square shape in front of the square blocks, an arch shape, etc. These shapes can be covered with contact paper for durability.
- For other types of blocks use a photo and the name of the type of block, such as soft blocks, cardboard blocks, etc.
- Matching and sorting by attribute allows children to extend their learning into the clean up process.

INVITATION TO EXPLORE:

Invite children to explore various types of blocks with you. Pose the following question: What can we do with these blocks?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION:

Invite families to share what they like to build with at home. They can certainly use commercially purchased blocks, but they can also use paper or plastic cups, canned goods, empty and rinsed ice cream, milk, or juice cartons, shipping or other boxes, playing cards and anything else they can think of. Take some photos of children's constructed creations in the classroom and share them

with families, and post them near the block area or on the parent board. Encourage parents to share photos of things they build at home. Would they like to incorporate people, animals, or vehicles? Glue or tape? Help families to see how limitless the building opportunities are.

Dramatic Play

"Let the child be the scriptwriter, the director and the actor in his own play" -
Magda Gerber

IN THIS INTEREST AREA, infants and toddlers will likely explore by feeling and touching fabrics and other materials. They may choose to observe how other children interact with materials. Some children may play alongside their peers and use materials in a functional way such as putting on clothing. They may mimic experiences from their lives, such as cooking or taking care of babies. Children may also use this center to explore themselves and learn about who they are. Additionally, they may be exploring the early stages of perspective taking by acting out situations such as the separation process. They may choose to take on the caregiver's role and give emotions to others. For example, they may decide a baby is sad or instruct an adult to be sad because they have to go to work (Galinsky, 2010; Stern, 1973). **Three year olds will likely** experiment with simple imitation, which will increase in complexity as they further develop the capacity to observe and recreate details. They will then explore role-playing and enjoy the opportunity to express their understanding of the world and recreate their experiences. Young children typically engage in independent pretend play, move to playing alongside others before engaging in increasingly social cooperative play (Epstein, 2014).

NARRATION, OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

Note: show genuine interest in children's work and allow them to be creative and explore their own ideas. Use simple language to describe what the child is doing or ask open ended questions to support higher order thinking skills.

- You are _____ with your baby.
- I noticed you _____.
- You have lots of _____ on/in your _____.
- You are _____ and _____ is _____.
- It looks like you are pretending you are _____. Do you know any _____?

Suggested Text:

- *My Friends* by Taro Gomi

Planning

OBSERVE: What are the children doing/saying in this area?

- Playing alone
- Observing peers
- Engaging in parallel play
- Engaging in associative play
- Engaging in cooperative play
- Using materials in a functional manner
- Engaging in symbolic play
- Other:

What interests or play themes are emerging as children play?

What emotions do the children appear to explore as they play?

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

- IT-SE 6. Child learns to express a range of emotions.
- IT-C 11. Child observes and imitates sounds, words, gestures, actions, and behaviors.
- P-SE 1. Child engages in and maintains positive relationships and interactions with adults.
- P-ATL 13. Child uses imagination in play and interactions with others.

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

SUGGESTED PROPS AND MATERIALS

- Pretend food
- Pretend Kitchen utensils (ex. Plates, cups, pots and pans)
- Dolls: cloth, plastic, vinyl and wood
- Materials for care, such as clothing, blankets and bottles
- Toy telephones
- Pictures of children's family members at home and work
- Open-ended materials, such as inch cubes or other materials children could use as pretend food or other household items

DRESS UP

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

FANTASY

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

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

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

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

Ask families to share a little bit of information about the cultural foods they eat. Do they use a specific kind of tool or pot to make these? Families can take a photo of the food or tool they use or bring in empty food containers that reflect their culture. Add these materials to the dramatic play area.

Library

"Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep continuing needs, is good for him." -Maya Angelou

IN THIS INTEREST AREA, infants and toddlers will likely interact with books in a physical way and focus on how books feel and move. They may explore books by putting them in their mouths, turning pages, or feeling books that have different textures. Others may be interested in exploring books independently to discover what is on the pages. Children are most likely to enjoy books and stories that match their interests, are active, engaging and include straightforward, yet interesting illustrations. At this age, children may prefer books with simple texts and clear rhythms. Children may also enjoy reading and rereading the same book multiple times and may demonstrate this by bringing it to an adult to read to them. **Three-year-olds** will likely explore the connection between images, symbols and words and spoken language. They may be interested in exploring books and story-telling materials independently, with an adult or a peer. Children are most likely to enjoy books and stories that match their interests, are active, engaging and include interesting illustrations. At this age, children may prefer books with simple texts and clear rhythms. Children may also enjoy reading and rereading the same book multiple times.

NARRATION, OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

Note: show genuine interest in children's work and allow them to be creative and explore their own ideas. Use simple language to describe what the child is doing or ask open ended questions to support higher order thinking skills.

- *For younger children:* label pictures or narrate what is taking place on each page..
- I notice you looking at that book.
- You are turning the pages on your own.
- Look there is a _____ on this page. Can you point to it?
- I see you are pointing to the words in the book.
- I noticed you are reading that book again. What do you like about it?

Planning

OBSERVE: What are the children doing/saying in this area?

- Independently
- With peers
- Exploring the physical properties of the book
- Exploring the illustrations and text of the book.
- Holding the book right side up
- Turning pages one at a time
- Sharing information about the book
- Reciting language from the book
- Other

What types of books and stories does the child seem to especially enjoy?

Other observations:

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

- Goal IT-SE 1. Child develops expectations of consistent, positive interactions through secure relationships with familiar adults.
- Goal IT-LC 10. Child handles books and relates them to their stories or information
- Goal P-LIT 2. Child demonstrates an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print).
- Goal P-SE 11. Child has sense of belonging to family, community and other groups.

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

BOOKS

- See suggested Book list Supplement content-related titles with other books that support the needs and interests of your children
- Infants/Toddlers: sturdy vinyl, cloth or board books
- Homemade books

MATERIALS

- Puppets
- Stuffed animals
- Throw pillows
- Soft rug
- Magnetic/felt surface and magnetic/felt pieces related to books children especially enjoy and can easily retell.

INVITATION TO EXPLORE:

Invite the children to explore the **All About Us** book with you. Ask them questions about who is in the book and what they can tell you about those children.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

Invite families to read the **All About Us** book that was created with pictures of the children in the program during Month 3 Week 3 during pick up or drop off. Invite them to ask the children questions about who is in the book and what the children are doing in the photos. Alternative: Send the **All About Us** book home with a different child each weekend to complete the activity at home.

Math/Manipulatives

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

IN THIS INTEREST AREA, infants and toddlers will likely explore mathematical concepts in a variety of ways. Children may explore shapes and how they fit together, mathematical concepts such as bigger/smaller or more/less, and some children may count either by naming number words or using one-to-one correspondence for a small amount of objects. Additionally, children are developing their sense of independence and may enjoy exploring fine motor activities such as stringing beads and practicing with snaps, zippers and Velcro. Children’s memory skills are improving and they may be able to participate in simple games that require two or three step directions (Bronson, 1995). Three year olds will likely be exploring mathematical concepts and using their imagination as they play with various connectors and manipulatives. Children may count with separate words, but not necessarily in the right order and will likely be able to count with some correspondence to 10 before being able to accurately count up to five objects and answer, “how many?” Children may also be able to identify typical shapes such as circle, triangle and square and be exploring the orientation and size of these shapes. They will likely be engaging in pretend play as they build structures with tabletop blocks and toy animals or vehicles. Through their work with these materials, they will also be developing fine motor skills.

NARRATION, OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

Note: show genuine interest in children’s work and allow them to be creative and explore their own ideas. Use simple language to describe what the child is doing or ask open ended questions to support higher order thinking skills.

- You are working hard to _____.
- You are holding a _____.
- I noticed you are using _____ and _____.
- I noticed this is _____ and this is _____.
- I noticed you used 3 _____. Let’s count them: 1,2,3.
- Would you like to tell me about what you’re working on?

SUGGESTED TEXT:

- *Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes* by Helen Oxenbury

Planning
<p>OBSERVE: What are the children doing/saying in this area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorting • Engaging in imaginative play • Exploring Shapes • Assembling puzzles through trial and error • Assembling puzzles with intention • Other <p>What does the child understand about the concepts of same and different? How is the child showing awareness of colors, sizes, shapes? How does the child use the fine motor materials?</p> <p>Other observations:</p>
<p>CONNECT: How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with ELOF goals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal IT-C 10. Child uses matching and sorting of objects or people to understand similar and different characteristics. • Goal P-MATH 9. Child identifies, describes, compares, and composes shapes.
<p>INFORM PRACTICE: What are my next steps in response to children’s skills and interests?</p>

COUNTING

- Objects to count such as counting bears, other animals, cars and/or trucks
- Peg boards and pegs
- Lids
- Large pom poms
- Coasters

MEASURING AND COMPARING QUANTITY

- Connecting cubes
- Egg cartons
- Small blocks
- Twigs and sticks of various sizes
- Muffin tins
- Large stringing beads and strings
- Nesting cups

RECOGNIZING SHAPES

- Shape sorter and shapes
- Shape puzzles with knobs
- Shape blocks

WRITTEN NUMBER AND LETTER

- Plastic numbers and letters
- Letter puzzles
- Number puzzles

SMALL BUILDING TOYS AND MANIPULATIVES

- Stacking cups/boxes
- Pop beads
- Table top blocks
- Pop-up toys
- Lock boards
- Plunker toys
- Pounding toys
- Blocks and cubes that can stack to various heights
- Magnatiles
- Containers and lids
- Pipe cleaners and colanders
- Interlocking blocks
- Gears
- Stacking rings
- Textured balls
- Snaps and zippers
- Diaper wipe boxes and scarves

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

- Peg puzzles
- Simple interlocking puzzles
- Floor puzzles

RECYCLED AND NATURAL MATERIALS

- Sticks
- Stones
- Wooden rings

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

Invite children to explore using different sized containers with lids and various items to fill, dump, hide and find items. How else can they use containers?

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Send home the lyrics to the song "Three Little Birds". Encourage families to make hand gestures that their infants may want to mimic, like holding up 1,2,3 fingers when the song says, "One, two, three, three little birds."

Music and Movement

"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything." -Plato

DURING MUSIC AND MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES, infants and toddlers will often respond to different types of music by moving to the rhythm of the beat or showing preferences for particular songs. They often want to repeat favorite songs and fingerplays multiple times. As they develop greater muscle control, they may also begin to mimic the actions of others, although some children may prefer to observe in group settings and then try out actions when in a quieter setting. Infants and toddlers may enjoy experimenting with vocalizations in response to music and may learn to sing some words before they can speak them. Infants and toddlers may also enjoy exploring cause and effect as they manipulate simple instruments. **Three year olds might enjoy** exploring sounds and the qualities and capabilities of their own voices as well as simple instruments. They enjoy experimenting with pitch, volume and the possibility of using their voices to convey emotion. They may also be developing the dexterity to use simple instruments and enjoy using them for the simple purpose of making musical sounds. Children may enjoy engaging in creative movements with one or two components. This type of movement provides an opportunity to use their bodies to represent their observations and experiences (Epstein, 2014).

NARRATION, OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

Note: show genuine interest in children's work and allow them to be creative and explore their own ideas. Use simple language to describe what the child is doing or ask open ended questions to support higher order thinking skills.

- You're banging the _____ on the table, that's a loud sound.
- I see you're using the _____, do you hear that sound?
- I see you _____. Let's do that again and listen to the sound that makes.
- I see you moving like this (mimic child's action).
- Do you want to try _____?

SUGGESTED TEXT: *I Got Rhythm* by Connie Schofield-Morrison

Planning

OBSERVE: What are the children doing/saying in this area? Consider the younger children (infants and toddlers) in your observations.

- How are the children listening and responding to the music?
- How are the children engaging with movement activities?

How did the children interact with the materials/activities?

Other observations:

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

- Goal IT-ATL 3. Child maintains focus and sustains attention with support.
- Goal IT-ATL 7. Child shows interest in and curiosity about objects, materials, or events.
- Goal P-ATL 6. Child maintains focus and sustains attention with minimal adult support.
- Goal P-ATL 11. Child shows interest in and curiosity about the world around them.

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

INSTRUMENTS

- Shakers
- Rainsticks
- Hand bells
- Small drums
- Tambourines
- Rhythm sticks
- Xylophone

LISTENING

- Device for playing music such as stereo/boombox

DANCE PROPS

- Scarves
- Ribbon rings

INVITATION TO EXPLORE Invite children to explore instruments with you. As you explore, pose the following question: What instrument do you like best? Why?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION:

Send home the lyrics of some of the children's favorite songs. Send audio or video of the children singing to the families of the songs so they can sing along at home with their children.

Note:

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

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: [Zero to Three: Beyond Twinkle, Twinkle: Using Music with Infants and Toddlers](#)

Outdoors/Gross Motor

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

Infants may first develop their motor skills by exploring their hands and feet. When placed on their backs and allowed to move freely, infants may begin to actively explore their surroundings and can develop their motor skills at their own pace. As infants learn to move their bodies through space, they may experience moments of frustration. When comforted and encouraged to continue trying to coordinate their movements to achieve their goals, infants can engage in early problem-solving strategies and develop feelings of competence. Toddlers may start to take more risks as they eagerly explore their environment and learn what their bodies can and can't yet do (Hammond, 2009).

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

NARRATION, OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

Note: show genuine interest in children's work and allow them to be creative and explore their own ideas. Use simple language to describe what the child is doing or ask open ended questions to support higher order thinking skills.

- You're_____.
- I noticed you_____.
- You are_____, what would happen if_____?
- What do you think will happen if_____?

Planning

OBSERVE: What are the children doing/saying in this area?

- Exploring freely
- Moving with caution
- Observing other children
- Engaging with other children
- Showing preferences for particular activities or areas
- Taking risks
- Seeking sensory experiences
- Avoiding sensory experiences

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

- IT-PMP 1. Child uses perceptual information to understand objects, experiences, and interactions.
- IT-PMP 3. Child demonstrates effective and efficient use of large muscles for movement and position.
- P-PMP 1. Child demonstrates control, strength, and coordination of large muscles.
- P-PMP 6. Child demonstrates knowledge of personal safety practices and routines.

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

PORTABLE MATERIALS

- Outdoor pads or blankets (for infants)
- Bubbles
- Balls
- Push/pull toys
- Ride-on toys
- Basket for collecting outside treasures
- Containers, such as buckets, empty clean food containers
- Various scoops, such as shovels, spoons and measuring cups
- Sidewalk chalk

PORTABLE LARGE MOTOR EQUIPMENT

- Small push toys
- Balls
- Tumbling mats
- Tunnels
- Crib gym for younger infants
- Wheel toys
- Parachute
- Beanbag

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

Invite children to explore the book, *I Love You Funny Bunny* by Zondervan with you. Pose the following question: What are some of the things you saw the bunnies in the book doing? Let's try and move like the bunnies did.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

Invite families to share photos of the family doing their favorite activities outdoors. Share photos of the children actively playing outdoors during program hours.

Sand Water/Sensory

*"The senses, being explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge."
Maria Montessori*

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

NARRATION, OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

Note: Show genuine interest in children’s work and allow them to be creative and explore their own ideas. Use simple language to describe what the child is doing or ask open ended questions to support higher order thinking skills.

- You are _____ with the _____.
- You are exploring _____ with your _____.
- How does the _____ feel?
- Look at what happens when _____.
- What happens when you pour sand/water in _____? Why?
- What would happen if _____?
- Why do you think _____?

SUGGESTED TEXT:

- *Wet* by Carey Sookocheff

Planning
<p>OBSERVE: What are the children doing/saying in this area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging• Avoiding• Dumping and pouring• Engaging in symbolic play• Using the materials for a brief period of time• Using the materials for a slightly longer period of time• Other: <p>How are children responding to the different sensory materials?</p> <p>Other observations:</p>
<p>CONNECT: How do my observations link to skills children are developing and align with the ELOF goals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goal IT-C 1. Child actively explores people and objects to understand self, others and subjects.• IT-ATL 7. Child shows interest in and curiosity about objects, materials, or events.• Goal P-SCI 1. Child observes and describes observable phenomena (objects, materials, organisms and events).• Goal P-ATL 8. Child holds information in mind and manipulates it to perform tasks. <p>What other ELOF goals do these observations support?</p>
<p>INFORM PRACTICE: What are my next steps in response to children’s skills and interests?</p>

POURABLE MATERIALS

- Sand
- Water
- Non-toxic water beads

TOOLS AND TOYS

- Nesting cups or measuring cups
- Assorted containers of different sizes and shapes, such as recycled containers, buckets, water bottles, etc.
- Various scoops, such as shovels, measuring scoops, measuring spoons, etc.

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

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

Notes:

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

Science/Discovery

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

IN THIS INTEREST AREA, infants and toddlers will likely explore the natural materials through their senses by touching, listening and looking. They may also experiment with the materials by dropping, tapping or squeezing. Exposing children to natural materials gives them the opportunity to learn about the natural environment (Hirsh, 2004). Three-year-olds will likely play with, observe, describe and categorize materials. As they become comfortable with materials, they will begin to experiment with new ways to use them. As they explore cause and effect, they may gradually begin to test out their ideas in a more systematic way and develop their own theories to explain what they experience. At first, their theories may not work. However, as children develop, they will begin to understand more and adjust their thinking. They will try different theories and create new ways of understanding based on their experiences (Epstein, 2014).

NARRATION, OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS, AND STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

Note: show genuine interest in children's work and allow them to be creative and explore their own ideas. Use simple language to describe what the child is doing or ask open ended questions to support higher order thinking skills.

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

SUGGESTED TEXT:

- *Eyes, Nose, Fingers, and Toes* by Judy Hindley

Planning

OBSERVE: What are the children doing/saying in this area?

- Looking closely
- Touching
- Listening
- Comparing
- Sorting
- Exploring cause and effect
- Other:

How are children responding to the different sensory materials?

Other observations:

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

- Goal IT-C 3. Child recognizes differences between familiar and unfamiliar people, objects, actions, or events.
- IT-SE 11. Child understands some characteristics of self and others.
- Goal P-SC 1. Child observes and describes observable phenomena (objects, materials, organisms and events).
- Goal P-SE 9. Child recognises self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions and interests.

What other ELOF goals do these observations support?

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

COLLECTIONS OF NATURAL OBJECTS

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

LIVING THINGS

*Place all living things where they are accessible to children so they can explore and investigate.

- Plants
- Gardens
- Classroom pet
- Window bird feeders

NATURE/SCIENCE BOOKS, GAMES OR TOYS

- Toy animals of varying types that are relevant to children's lives.
- Magnets and Magnetic surfaces.
- Discovery bottles that are carefully sealed (plastic bottles that are filled with water, glitter, beads, shells, sand, oil etc.)
- Homemade book with photos of the natural environment from neighborhood walks

NATURE/SCIENCE TOOLS

- Magnifying glasses/looking tubes
- Prisms
- Blank paper and writing utensils
- Plastic mirrors
- Sorting trays
- Clipboards

INVITATION TO EXPLORE

In Month Two: Invite children to create a nature display from items collected during outdoor nature walks. Children can use magnifying glasses, looking tubes and/or mirrors to explore each item. Pose the following questions: What is the texture of ____? How is it similar or different than ____?

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In Month Two: Families are invited to bring objects they find in nature while they are outdoors. Children can bring objects to the daycare program to use for their nature display.

Tips for Success

<p>Preparation/ Changes to Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up Cozy corner with books, soft furnishings, stuffed animals and sensory bottles. • Select books according to weekly focus. Offer additional books that reflect the children in your program as well as those based on children’s interests. Place books where children can explore on their own and with others throughout the day. See Book List. • Prepare or organize materials in advance to reduce wait time. • Opening Activities: Set up several interest areas with materials that are easy to clean up so children can independently choose where to play. Consider materials that reflect the children in your program as well as their interests and abilities. • Planning for Mixed Ages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infants: Create a space for infants to have floor time, while older children play - use a blanket or small quilt to section it off and have a small container nearby of infant teethingers, rattles, books, scarves, balls, safety mirrors, small metal bowls, etc. for infants to explore. Hang mobiles from the ceiling so that infants have something to look at while on their backs. Rotate selection based on interest over the course of the week. ○ Toddlers and Threes: Create invitations to play by attractively arranging selected materials in interest areas. Having multiple copies of high interest items helps to minimize wait time and reduce the need to share. Having two or three activities to choose from on the floor as well as one or two table top activities promotes independence and encourages small group exploration. Offering a sensory or art exploration each day supports learning across many domains.
<p>Greeting Routine/Opening Activities (20-60 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome families by warmly greeting each child and family member by their preferred name and ask families if there is anything you need to know to plan for their child’s day. • For infants use a chart or daily sheet to track sleeping, eating and napping. • Support children as they engage in arrival routines by using step-by-step directions (i.e. put belongings away, wash hands, mark attendance, etc.) • Encourage each family to develop a loving and predictable goodbye routine. • Consider designating one teaching team member to greet children and families and another to support children as they engage in arrival activities/breakfast. • Based on children’s interests, allow them to explore additional materials. Support them in putting away materials before moving onto a new interest area to reduce clutter. • Timing here is flexible, depending upon children’s interests and program needs.

<p>Morning Meeting (No more than 5-10 minutes, including transitions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing Hello Songs for the children to help bring their attention to morning meeting time. • Infants/toddlers: Invite them to join the meeting and offer a lap to sit on or a space next to a member of the teaching team to support their participation. • Allow children to move around and provide an alternative activity for those who are not yet ready to participate. • Use visuals and songs to take attendance and to go over the schedule for the day. • Over the course of the week, highlight different interest areas and show children sample materials from each. • Describe small group activities for the day and show materials as needed. • Tell children where each member of the teaching team will begin Choice Time. On the visual schedule, attach photos of the Interest Areas that are available or “open” each day. Let children choose where they want to play and accompany them to interest areas.
<p>Morning Choice Time and Small Group (60 minutes)</p> <p>Pick 3 interest areas for AM and 3 different interest areas for PM.</p> <p>Allow children to explore other areas or materials based on their interests or needs.</p> <p>Art/Writing</p> <p>Blocks/Construction</p> <p>Dramatic Play</p> <p>Library</p> <p>Math/Manipulatives</p> <p>Sand/Water/Sensory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose materials that reflect the children in your program as well as their interests and abilities. • Include some materials or activities that support the weekly focus. • See Interest Areas (see Introduction to Let’s Play!) for a list of suggested materials. Rotate materials regularly. <i>Note: check size of items to avoid a choking hazard.</i> • Consider starting with at least 3 interest areas and then choose different areas during afternoon choice time. Additional areas may be open depending on children’s interests and the available space within the FCC home. • Invite children to explore each interest area and introduce the materials available as well as the corresponding shelf space or bin where the materials are stored. Give children the opportunity to follow their own interests and explore materials freely. • Support children’s exploration by sitting alongside them and joining in conversations about their play. Look for opportunities to connect children’s play to the weekly focus and to their own lives. • Allow children to explore other materials and interest areas as desired. Younger children will move from one area to another more often than older children. • Support them in putting materials away before choosing additional materials to reduce clutter. • Add photos of the children to different interest areas for children to incorporate into their play. • Allow children access to books throughout interest areas for informal reading. In addition, the library area should be available throughout the day. • Infants/toddlers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide infants with time on the floor as well as high interest materials so that they can freely explore at their own pace. Observe their interests and engage them in play. Involve other children based on interests. ○ Infants and young toddlers may need to eat or sleep during Choice Time. • Include diapering and toileting during this time. Have children go in pairs or small groups to minimize wait time.

<p>Science/Discovery</p> <p>Small Group Exploration</p> <p><i>Note: Small Group Exploration takes place during Choice Time. Individual participation time will vary based on children's interests</i></p>	<p>Small Group Exploration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let children know that they can all have a chance to participate. Allow children to opt out of an activity and offer another opportunity to try it later on. • Give children enough time to thoroughly enjoy the experience so that they don't feel rushed. • Plan these activities when other adults are available to support the rest of the children. • Focus on the interactions and the process not the product. • Use simple language to describe what the child is doing (parallel talk). Allow children to be creative and explore their own ideas. • Adjust materials according to age. • Infants/toddlers: Allow young children to safely explore various ways to use materials (including how they taste, feel, and sound) since they need to understand how something works in order to then use it with purpose. Be sure to supervise at all times. Consider offering some sensory or other activities on the floor so that infants/toddlers can come or go according to their own interests or needs.
<p>Individual Diapering/Toileting Routine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diapering and toileting are key times to build relationships with children as you care for them and they increasingly learn how to care for themselves. • Talk to younger children throughout the process and allow them to participate as much as they can. For infants this might be in the form of you using self-talk as a means to prepare them for the transition and the process. • Use songs, fingerplays and games to create a playful learning experience and to practice Serve and Return interactions. See Song Cards for suggestions. • Keep all necessities within reach of the provider and/or child depending on his/her age. • If space permits, allow children who are being potty trained to be changed in the bathroom alongside their peers to promote peer modeling. • Say "goodbye diaper" to diapers as they are thrown into the trash can.
<p>Clean Up (5 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five minutes before clean up time, give children advance notice by singing a song, such as: "5 More Minutes", using a chime, or using another strategy so that they know clean up time is coming. • Use a "Clean Up" song to then engage children in helping each other put away materials. Adults should be cleaning up alongside children. • For toddlers and preschoolers, offer support by: taking containers off of shelves and bringing them to the children, showing the children where materials belong, offering choices to clean up one type of item or another, suggesting a specific number of items to put away, and/or asking if they want to do it themselves or would like help. • Model saying "goodbye" to toys as they are tossed in baskets or placed on shelves.

<p>Music and Movement (10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use song cards and add visuals if desired. Invite children to help choose songs and to take turns leading activities if desired. • Infants/toddlers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allow children to touch or hold cards to show choices. ○ Offer egg shakers, small drums or bells so children have an opportunity to participate before they are able to chant/sing along with the group. ○ Adults can dance with infants/toddlers so they can participate. • Encourage participation by having all members of the teaching team join in music and movement activities. • Allow children to observe or to choose another activity if they do not wish to participate. • End with a quiet song, fingerplay, or movement activity to help bring the energy level down before children transition to the next activity.
<p>Story Time (5-10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition children to story time with a song. • Choose books that support the week’s focus. Offer additional books that reflect the children in your program as well as those based on children’s interests. • Include books that you can sing to. • Consider introducing new books with a picture walk. • Children may want the same book read multiple times and may eventually want to help you read the book by repeating key words or phrases. • Involve children in conversations about the story as they make connections between their lives and the texts you read. Ask them open-ended questions (why, how, where...) and invite them to make predictions about what will happen next. • Invite children to act out stories and try different roles.
<p>Outdoor/Indoor Gross Motor Play (60 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go outdoors daily unless there is inclement weather. Give children the opportunity to engage in self-led activities. • Provide outdoor activities and materials that help develop the skills and learning concepts you are working on with the group. • When outdoors, ask questions about what the children notice about the environment (i.e. nature, seasonal changes, sounds, signage, new construction, etc.) • <u>Note:</u> For 3-K programs at least 60 minutes of gross motor time is required each day but this can be divided into two 30 minute time blocks. For infant/toddler programs two 30 minute time blocks for gross motor play are strongly recommended.
<p>Clean Up/Handwashing (10 min)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider designating one teaching team member to support children with and another to support children as they transition to lunch. • Engage children in singing or fingerplays during this transition. See Song Cards for suggestions.

<p>Family Style Lunch / Diapering/Toileting/ Hand Washing (40 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare meals in advance and maintain ratios while reheating food. • Serve lunch Family Style to model healthy eating and support socialization with the children in your program. • Feed infants according to their natural eating schedule or when they show signs of hunger. • Designate one teaching team member to support children who are still eating and another to begin transitioning children for diapering, toileting and handwashing. • Engage children in singing or fingerplays during this transition. See Song Cards for suggestions. • Postpone thorough cleaning until children are napping/resting.
<p>Story Time (5 minutes, transitioning to nap time)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support children in finding a book to look at or offer an alternative activity while waiting for others to finish lunch. • Read a bedtime story before naptime and allow children to look at books on their cots/mats as they transition to naptime. • Dim the lights to indicate the transition to nap/rest time.
<p>Nap/Rest Time (60-120 minutes, depending on age and need)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer flexibility depending on individual needs. Infants will be on their own nap schedule and toddlers may need an additional morning nap at the beginning of the school year. • Place cots/mats in a consistent location but adjust according to individual needs. • Involve children to help set up their own cots/mats. Offer assistance as needed. • Play quiet music or nature sounds and adjust lighting to set a peaceful tone. • Sit near children and pat their backs, or offer other comfort, as some may need help settling down. • For children who don't nap, offer a quiet activity, such as coloring in a notebook, felt board, stickers, magnetic storyboards, books, audio books, etc. • Once children have settled into nap/rest time, finish up any remaining cleaning, sanitizing tasks. Nap/rest time can also be used for breaks, planning and documenting, based on timing and staffing ratios.
<p>Afternoon Choice Time and Small Group Exploration (30-60 minutes depending upon length of opening activities.)</p> <p>Can begin while some children are still napping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce different areas than the ones chosen for morning choice time. • Based on children's interests, allow them to explore additional materials or interest areas. • Consider the needs of children who are awake as well as those who are sleeping. • Pick materials suitable for each age group. Consider using infant/toddler nap times as opportunities to offer fine motor activities that involve small items. • See Morning Choice Time and Small Groups (page 3) for more guidance. • <u>Note</u>: Children need at least 2 hours and 20 minutes of choice time during 3-K core hours or one third of the overall day.

	<p>Small Group Exploration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate which teaching team member will lead this activity and which will supervise children who are napping. Decide how to support children engaged in other choice time activities. • Give children enough time to thoroughly enjoy the experience so that they don't feel rushed. • Focus on the interactions and the process not the product. Allow children to be creative and explore their own ideas. • Use simple language to describe what the child is doing (parallel talk). • Build relationships by following children's lead and mirroring how they engage with materials. • Adjust materials according to age. • Infants/toddlers: Allow young children to safely explore various ways to use materials (including how they taste, feel, and sound) since they need to understand how something works in order to then use it with purpose. Be sure to supervise at all times.
<p>Snack Time (15 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See page 4 for meal time guidance. • Feed infants according to their natural eating schedule or when they show signs of hunger.
<p>Family Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Family Bingo Cards each month to encourage families to build on curriculum topics explored and extend children's learning. • Consider using a web-based platform for sharing photos, videos, newsletters with families. • Remind each family to share a photo of their child as well as a few family photos so that you can create a display or book for children. Offer to take photos for families as needed. • Allow families the opportunity to explore the environment and materials with their child(ren). • If a child has a difficult morning separation, offer to call, text, or email family once the child is engaged in play. Share a photo or short video, if possible, to reassure families. • Use information shared by families from the Funds of Knowledge tool to create and plan experiences and activities for children based on their interests. • Partner and consult with network support staff in addressing family challenges, needs, and goals. • Create ways to document and share the learning that happens at the end of each theme: Our Community, Our Environment, Our Impact. Consider using newsletters and hosting events such as an "art exhibit", potluck with documentation of children's learning displayed, or other culminating celebration to share children's work. These types of events can help families see the connections between play and learning.

Documenting Learning

Capturing the learning that occurs every day in an early childhood classroom is an important piece of authentic assessment and high quality instruction. Documenting this learning and making it visible can be a helpful way to share and connect with children, families, and other program stakeholders. Documenting provides an opportunity to highlight what children are saying and doing, what they do well, as well as their specific feelings, interests, and insights. Looking at a collection of documentation over time demonstrates how children have practiced skills and highlights how learning has developed. Documentation can take many forms, including digitally sharing photos and videos, as well as creating homemade books, portable display boards, bulletin boards and portfolios of children's work. Additionally, when documentation is displayed at children's eye level, children can review and reflect on their learning themselves which can be motivating and spark further learning. When learning is displayed in the program, all displays should:

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

In Let's Play! we encourage teaching teams to bring their observations of children's play into the curriculum planning process. While a variety of tools can be used to document observations, we include a sample template for pairing a photo or sample of a child's work with a brief written observation and authentic assessment goals. This template can be completed by members of the teaching team and displayed in the program to document evidence of active, play-based learning. See below for examples.

Let's Play Documentation Template (Example)

Child: Khmari

Pictures (optional)

When: October 12

Where and What:

- Blocks/Construction Area
- Exploring blocks

ELOF standards:

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

Observation Notes (what the child did and said):

Khmari was building in the Blocks/Construction Center. When he heard the five minute warning he said, "Soon it is going to be time to clean up. I'll put these blocks back on the shelf."



Let's Play Documentation Template (Blank Template)	
Child:	Pictures (optional)
When:	
Where and What: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	
ELOF standards:	
Observation Notes (what the child did and said):	

Supporting Research

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Appendix

Family Engagement

Practical Tips to Welcome New Families

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

Daily Communication Form

Use this form to communicate with families. Invite them to complete the top portion in the morning. Add notes about the child throughout the day and send the form home with the family when they leave. Whenever possible, use families' home language when communicating. Additionally, some families may prefer online communication.

Notes FROM Family			
<input type="checkbox"/> I ate this morning. I had: <input type="checkbox"/> I have not eaten yet.		Special information for today:	
Last night I slept: <input type="checkbox"/> Well <input type="checkbox"/> Ok <input type="checkbox"/> Not well I woke up this morning at _____		<input type="checkbox"/> I napped this morning from _____ to _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I have not napped this morning	
Notes TO Family			
SLEEP Today I napped... From: To: Nap notes:	DIAPERS/TOILETING Today I... At...	EAT Today I ate... <u>Amount</u> <u>Type</u> <u>At</u>	GENERAL NOTES Information, things I need, etc.
FEEL Overall, I seemed to feel...		PLAY Today I...	

Funds of Knowledge

Families have an abundance of knowledge, including culture, traditions, beliefs, values, and experiences. We call these bodies of knowledge and skills, accumulated across generations, “Funds of Knowledge.” By seeing the Funds of Knowledge that each family brings to the classroom, we strengthen our ability to engage families and support the learning and development of each child. You can read more about Funds of Knowledge and find a fillable template [here](#).

Name: _____ Date: _____

Funds of Knowledge	
Home Language	E.g., Arabic; Spanish; Navajo; Italian
Family Values and Traditions	E.g., holiday celebrations; religious beliefs; work ethic
Caregiving	E.g., swaddling baby; giving baby pacifier; co-sleeping
Friends and Family	E.g., visiting grandma; barbecues; sports outings
Family Outings	E.g., shopping; beach; library; picnic
Household Chores	E.g., sweeping; dusting; doing dishes
Educational Activities	E.g., going to the museum; taking a walk in the neighborhood
Favorite TV Shows	E.g., watching <i>Dora</i> ; <i>Sesame Street</i> ; <i>Sid the Science Kid</i>
Family Occupations	E.g., fishing; office; construction; policeman
Scientific Knowledge	E.g., recycling; exercising; health
Additional Funds of Knowledge	

González, N., Moll, L., & Amantí, C. (Eds). (2005). Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.



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<http://edc.org/ncclr/ta-system/culturalinguistic>



Tips for Transitions

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

Transition Tips for Teaching Staff:

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

Transition Tips for Families:

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

Tools of Autonomy

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

Criteria for Effective Tools of Autonomy

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

Recommended types of Tools of Autonomy:

Recommended types of Tools of Autonomy:

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

Daily Schedule

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

Best Practices

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

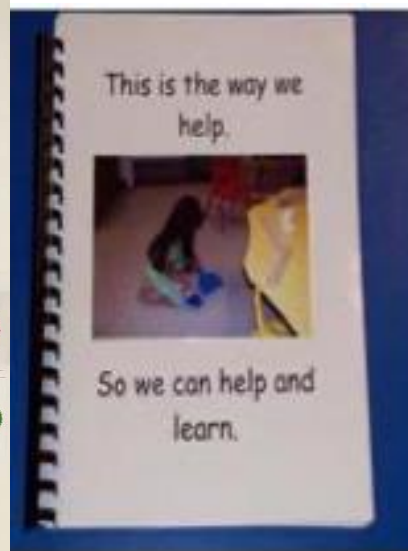
Community Expectations Tool

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

Best Practices

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

Community Expectations Tool Examples



Feelings Tool

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

Best Practices

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

Using a Feelings Chart

See below for instructions on making a homemade feelings chart or use a purchased chart. Be sure that any photos used reflect the diversity of the children and families in your program as well as the surrounding community.

The feelings chart can be used during attendance, giving children the opportunity to explain how they feel as they arrive at the family child care home. The feelings chart is a great way to engage children when they are upset. Children can use the chart to communicate how they are feeling, even if they can’t say the words at the moment. With adult support, children can gradually label, explain and understand how they are feeling and how their feelings can change over the course of the day.

Feelings Chart Example



Connecting with Feelings

Young children have big emotions and need the support of a responsive caregiver to learn how to identify and manage their feelings. When caregivers respond to children's emotions by demonstrating empathy and understanding, they can help children feel safe, accepted and respected. Talking about feelings by naming them, helps children to develop their emotional vocabulary while finding ways to appropriately express their needs and desires. Within a trusting environment, children will eventually recognize that others have feelings too and that their actions impact one another. Learning to live in community takes time and practice. When children have opportunities to make choices and engage in problem solving, they can build the skills needed to engage in positive interactions, cooperative play, and successful conflict resolution.

Share an article with families about how to teach children about their emotions and invite them to share the words they use (including in their home languages). For children who are still learning English, using words in both languages can help children to make connections and feel understood. Ask families how they help children manage their feelings at home and share strategies that work for children in your program. Here are two articles for families with young children: [Teaching Your Child About Feelings](#) and [Teaching Your Child to Identify and Express Emotions](#). See References below for more information on how to access these articles.

Below are some suggestions for ways to address feelings throughout the day.

Expanding Vocabulary

Read books about feelings and use a variety of words to label and identify children's feelings. Validate children's feelings by letting them know that sometimes you too may have the same feeling. Add new pictures and words to the feelings chart (see below) to expand children's emotional vocabulary, such as brave, shy, curious, calm, etc. See [Teaching Your Child About Feelings](#) for more vocabulary suggestions.

Managing Feelings

Share strategies to cope with feelings and model using them with children, such as taking a deep breath in and out, doing wall push ups, reading a , taking some time alone in the cozy corner, using a calm down kit, asking for a hug or some help, drawing a picture, etc. Give children time and space to process feelings. Make sure that children know that all feelings are valid but not all actions are acceptable. Support children in learning to tell others how they feel and in noticing how their actions affect others. With guidance, children can begin to develop communication and problem solving skills so that they become more independent in managing their own feelings.

Validating Children's Emotions

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

Strategies to use during separation	Strategies to use when children get hurt
<p>If children are missing their loved ones, you might say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your [loved one] will come back. I will keep you safe and help you until [loved one] comes back. • Do you want to look at the schedule with me so that you know when you are going to see [loved one] again? • Do you want to make something to give to [loved one] when you see them again? • I know you are missing your [loved one]. Here is what we can do... • Do you want to look at your family pictures with me? • Let's get your [transitional object]. <p>If children are missing their loved ones, you might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize their feelings • Try to engage them in play • Invite them to sit close to you • Play quietly together • Show them where they can find their family photos, notes from home, and/or transitional objects • Offer to read a book together 	<p>If children are feeling hurt you might say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ouch! That looked like it really hurt. • I bet that hurt! It will probably hurt for a little while and then it will start to feel better. • I'm sorry that happened. I wonder what we can do to make it better. • I'm sorry that happened. Do you want to do [choice] or [choice] to help you feel better? • I think that you feel [emotion] because [cause]. <p>If children are feeling hurt, you might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize their feelings and address what hurts in an appropriate way • Explore if they want to be close to you and/or if they need a hug • Give them something they can hug or squeeze • Sit with them until they feel better (maybe invite a peer, too!) • Get their family picture, letter from home, or transitional object • Help them reengage in play

Strategies to help children identify and manage big emotions:	Feelings and emotion children might experience
<p>If children are displaying big emotions, you might say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes we might feel [emotion] when [cause] happens. • It looks like you feel [emotion]. Do you feel [emotion]? • I'm sorry you're feeling [emotion]. Let's see what we can do to make it better. • I will help you if you need help with something. <p>If children are displaying big emotions, you might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to engage them in a different activity. • Sing a calming song to help sooth them • Bring them to a quiet area of the room • Give them something to squeeze or push • Read a book together • Give them a job to do with or without you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angry • Brave • Calm • Comfortable • Confused • Confident • Disappointed • Disgusted • Embarrassed • Excited • Exhausted • Frustrated • Happy • Hungry • Joyful • Lonely • Nervous • Overwhelmed • Patient • Proud • Sad • Scared • Shy • Surprised • Thirsty • Tired • Uncomfortable • Worried

Koplow, L. (2002). *Creating Schools That Heal: Real-Life Solutions*. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.

O'Bryon, E., Rivers, S. E., Shapses, S., Tominey, S. L., (2017). *Teaching Emotional Intelligence in Early Childhood*. National Association of the Education of Young Children. *Zero to Three*. (2018) [Developing Social Emotional Skills](#).

Beyond I'm Sorry: Helping Children Develop Empathy

During their three year, children are learning to understand their own emotions, as well as to read the emotions of others. They are beginning to understand the cause and effect relationship between actions and emotions, and that their actions can have an impact on others. When conflicts arise, children are often directed to say, "I'm sorry." Apologies can be powerful, and conflicts offer an opportunity to help children learn valuable skills. Taking an apology beyond "I'm sorry" provides a space for children to develop rich social emotional learning, empathy, and think critically. Strategies such as talking about feelings, actions, and emotional responses can be used to help build children's emotional literacy and develop empathy. Additionally, these strategies give children a chance to see how their actions can impact others.

Try using the following phrases and strategies to help children develop their ability to see and understand emotions in themselves and others, and how their own actions might affect someone else. Choose a phrase to help the child understand the situation then suggest a strategy that teaches them how to resolve their conflict (with support).

To support children in developing empathy...	
Encourage them to notice and use expressions to understand how people may be feeling...	And support them in finding and using an appropriate response...
"(Child) looks (emotion)."	"Let's check in with (child) and see if we can help."
"Look at (child's) face... I think (child) looks (emotion) because you (action)."	"What else can you do when you are feeling (emotion) and want to (action)?"
"It looks like (child) is feeling (emotion) because of (action)."	"What could we do to help (child) feel better?"
"I can see that you are feeling (emotion) because of (action)."	"Let's figure out how to help you feel better."
"Your face is telling me that you feel (emotion). I think you're feeling (emotion) because of (action)."	"What do you think might make you feel better?"

Daily Routines

Handwashing

Handwashing is required throughout the program day. Handwashing procedures should be a routine part of every day. Handwashing procedures should be explicitly taught.

Children must wash their hands:

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

Children should implement the following steps when washing their hands:

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

Strategies for teaching children to wash hands

- Reinforce handwashing and celebrate children's successes.
- Model handwashing throughout the day.
- Make handwashing fun by singing songs throughout the process. Also, sing songs about hand washing throughout the day. Share these songs with families so they can sing them together.
- Create student books about handwashing using student photos and classroom experiences.

- Display a handwashing visual schedule for students to reference as they wash their hands. Hand washing visuals should be accessible to children and placed at their eye level.
- Narrate your actions and those of children as they wash their hands to teach handwashing procedures.

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



Toilet Learning

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

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

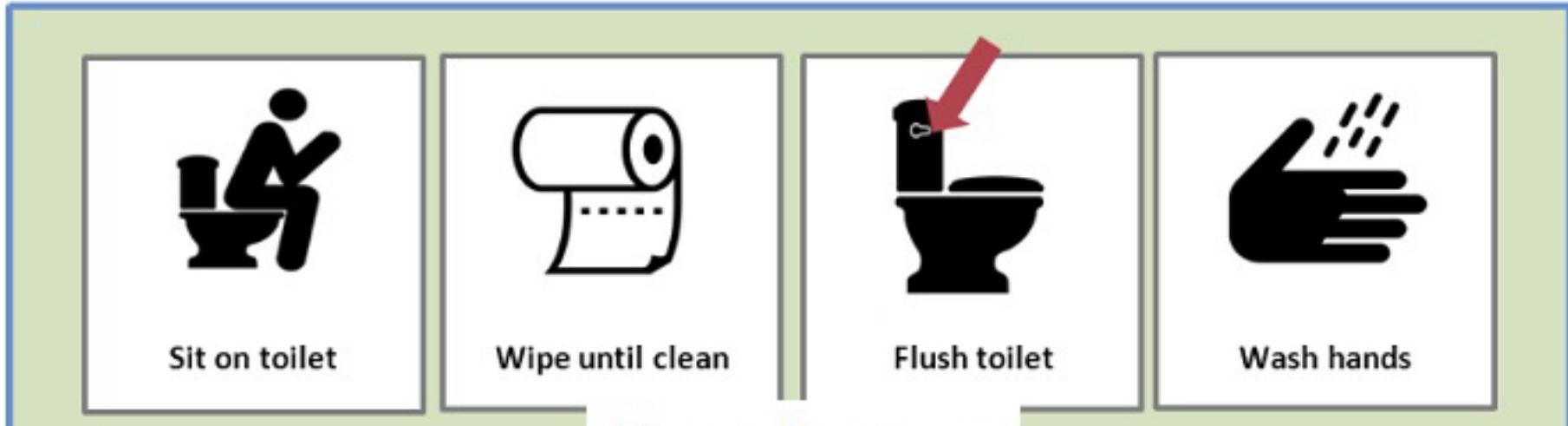
- Keep training directions simple.
- Establish a consistent routine.
- Practice dressing and undressing when not using the bathroom. For example, during play using dolls.
- Identify vocabulary words with families to provide continuity at home and at school.
- Praise students for their accomplishments,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

Strategies for toileting young children

- Read books about toilet training.
- Visit the bathroom and introduce it the same way you would introduce a classroom center.
- Name the items involved with toileting and discuss their use. For example, "I sit on the toilet when I have to _____".
- Model flushing the toilet and narrate actions as you or the child do them.
- Allow children who are beginning to use the toilet to practice flushing the toilet.
- Provide a verbal warning such as 1, 2, 3 flush for children who are fearful of flushing the toilet.
- Establish a bathroom schedule.
- Regularly ask children who are training if they need to use the bathroom.
- Use visuals and verbal directions to prompt students as needed.
- Practice wiping using a doll and wipes or cloth.
- Encourage children to communicate the needs to go to the bathroom using a simple word or signal.
- Consider the child's perspective when providing guidance and support. For example, what does the child like or dislike about the process? Use this information to create plans to meet each child's needs.

- Make it FUN!

Sample Toilet Learning Visual



Diapering Tip Sheet

Babies Often:

- Respond to smiles, touch, song, and gentle voices.
- Look at their hands or feet and put their hands in their mouths.
- Cry to communicate discomfort.

Adults Should:

- Talk to families about their diapering routines and beliefs. Whenever possible, align practices to the families' preferences.
- Let infants and toddlers know that you notice they need to be changed. Share that you would like to pick them up to change. Invite their cooperation by pausing before you pick them up and by giving older infants and toddlers the opportunity to come to the changing table themselves.
- Smile, chat lovingly, sing, throughout the diaper change.
- Narrate your own actions and babies' actions throughout the diapering process.
- Acknowledge babies distress and respond accordingly. Make modifications to the changing process if possible.

Children Will Be Learning:

- To trust you. Although babies will not respond with words, or even understand the words you are saying, they will understand your tone, pace, and affect. A soft, slow, and loving tone blankets babies with warmth and provides security.
- About their bodies as well as language and early communication skills. *I do, you respond*. This repetitive cycle supports babies' ability to develop secure relationships.
- To understand the world is a safe place to learn and that trusted adults are a resource to get their needs met.