



## **Young Children's Program**

# **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2020-2021**

College of Education  
James Madison University  
[www.jmu.edu/coe/ycp](http://www.jmu.edu/coe/ycp)



*Follow Virginia Department of Social Services Guidelines*

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The YCP inspires all learners by providing tools and opportunities for growth, exploration and inquiry.

## VALUES STATEMENT

We **collaborate** with our community, leveraging support and access to quality resources, diverse skill sets, and a broadened knowledge base.

We honor **intentional** experiences and interactions that provide a solid foundation for high quality early childhood education.

We build positive, respectful, lasting **relationships** with our families, students and community partners.

We believe that learning should be **student-centered** and built upon the needs and interests of all learners.

We are an **inclusive** program where all students have the opportunity to be full and active participants

## WELCOME TO THE YOUNG CHILDREN'S PROGRAM!

The Young Children's Program is a preschool for three and four-year old children. Many of the children attend the YCP for two years, beginning at age three and leaving when ready to enter kindergarten.

The YCP is an environment specifically designed for young children. Opportunities for social interaction, independence and choice, physical activity, self-expression, language enrichment, and appropriate learning experiences are primary considerations as the teachers arrange the classroom and plan daily activities. The atmosphere is one of warmth and respect for all children.

As a student, you are a vital and dynamic contributor to the Young Children's Program. Your placement provides the setting needed for your course assignments, as well as the opportunity to learn as you work with the children and a master teacher. Because the current YCP facility includes the use of many classrooms, students have important responsibilities for supervision and appropriate interaction with the children. It is critical that you keep your dual role of observer/practicum student clearly in mind throughout the term and assume the professional obligations associated with these multiple responsibilities. It is expected that you will consistently demonstrate commitment to professional growth, as well as to the Young Children's Program, its children, and their families.

The opportunity to regularly observe children will help you relate developmental theory to classroom practice, understand the perspective of the young child, become familiar with methods and materials used in an early childhood learning environment, and sense the complexity and satisfaction of being a teacher of young children.

### WE WELCOME YOU!

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## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Young Children's Program is an early learning program operated by the James Madison University College of Education. Its curriculum, environment, and organization are based on professional standards and established knowledge of how young children learn and develop. Each class is led by master teachers. The morning session operates 8:30am-11:30am; the Full-Day sessions operate 8:00am-3:30pm with optional after-school care available 3:30-5:30pm.

The Young Children's Program recognizes that children's development is best facilitated through cooperative efforts of families and school. Family members are welcome contributors to the ongoing curriculum and are encouraged to be involved in ways that support their children's adjustment and growth. Avenues for communication are varied and personal in order to meet the needs of all families.

In addition to providing a quality educational experience for children and their families, the Young Children's Program serves as a laboratory site for JMU teacher education students. They provide assistance to the teachers and individual attention in ways that are positive and supportive to children. The YCP also serves as a setting for professional observation and research within the University community.

The YCP is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

**The Young Children's Program provides an environment designed to help each child:**

- Grow in independence and self-sufficiency
- Develop enthusiasm and skills for learning
- Grow in the ability to interact positively with others
- Increase personal awareness and self-discipline
- Grow in the ability to use language effectively
- Value individual creativity and self-expression
- Construct knowledge through experience and inquiry
- Develop and refine motor skills
- Make choices that support personal wellness

**The Young Children's Program provides an environment designed to help families:**

- Participate meaningfully in their children's educational experience
- Grow in their understanding of child development and appropriate early education
- Develop a support network with other families in the program
- Become more familiar with family support resources within the community

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the Young Children's Program is dynamic, evolving, and personal. It is grounded in our mission to support the growth of children in all areas of development -- physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic. Professional training, skillful observation, and personal, caring relationships with each child and family enable teachers to make curricular decisions that facilitate optimal growth and learning.

Program goals represent the areas of development and provide the framework of the curriculum. They are aligned with the *Milestones of Child Development* (VA Early Childhood Development Alignment Project, 2013) which define specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate for children ages 3 to 5 years of age in each developmental domain. All choices that relate to short-term and long-term planning reflect these goals, as well as the understanding that children construct knowledge through interaction with materials, people, and the environment. Therefore, play, investigation, communication, and reflection are daily experiences for children. The foundation of the curriculum is frequent, first-hand experiences within the classroom and the community. These experiences may take the form of special classroom activities or events, ongoing projects, field trips, walks to campus or community sites, or visitors to the school. Teachers then build on these concrete experiences by providing activities and materials which encourage growth and learning in the goal areas. These opportunities for creative expression, symbolic representation, individual research, social interaction, dramatic play, and the use of language and literature encourage meaningful learning because they are extensions of children's personal experiences and are presented in a manner that is sensitive to each child's level of understanding. Appropriate content knowledge identified in national and state standards in the areas of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies is integrated into extension experiences.

The physical environment of the Young Children's Program is a critical component of the curriculum. The classrooms and outdoor learning spaces are designed to include a rich variety of materials that encourage meaningful exploration and play and, therefore, support learning and development in all program goal areas. The learning environment is constantly evolving. Teachers introduce new materials, develop unique interest areas, and display equipment in different ways to challenge children's thought and motivate involvement. The organization and presentation of classroom materials contributes significantly to the overall curriculum; intentional decisions are made that support children's cognitive development, as well as conceptual knowledge in the content areas.

The daily schedule supports the program goals by providing routines that contribute to children's feelings of security and purpose. Flexibility within the schedule supports growth in all goal areas and enables teachers to respond to the needs and involvement of the children at any time during the day. The majority of each session is dedicated to exploration and purposeful play. During this active time, children choose where they want to play and when they are ready to move to a new activity. Teachers encourage involvement in chosen activities for an amount of time appropriate for each child's developmental level, but do not impose a scheduled rotation of activities. When possible, special activities or materials are available for consecutive days in order to encourage children's involvement and in-depth investigation. The role of the teacher and support staff during this period is also active, moving among individuals or groups of children to provide supervision, observe children's use of materials, or interact in ways that support the construction of knowledge, personal independence, and social growth. Classroom routines for opening and concluding the session, preparing and eating snack, and the rotation of classroom

responsibilities incorporate the use of written and oral language, numeracy, science, and social studies in concrete and meaningful ways.

The success of a dynamic, child-centered curriculum is dependent on the teachers' understanding of child development and their knowledge of individual children. YCP teachers know how young children learn and incorporate this understanding as they plan activities and provide materials that will be motivating and intellectually engaging. Every aspect of the curriculum, the classroom, and the daily routine reflects extensive knowledge of child development in all areas -- physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic. In addition to facilitating meaningful planning, this knowledge provides teachers with a basis for assessing the development of individual children. The assessment informs and enables the planning of experiences that will support optimal learning and growth of each child.

The final and most critical component of the Young Children's Program curriculum is the demonstration of sincere respect for every child. It is each teacher's responsibility to know the children personally -- their special interests, fears or needs for dependence, out-of-school routines and activities, and family dynamics. This is accomplished through consistent and meaningful interaction with each child, careful observation and assessment within the school environment, and the development of a cooperative and communicative relationship with all families.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment of children's growth and learning is an integral part of the curriculum. The information learned through purposeful assessment enables teachers to plan experiences for children that are personally meaningful, appropriately challenging, and consistent with their level of understanding. For this reason, the YCP assessment program is specifically designed to facilitate the collection of data on each child's growth in the developmental areas identified in the program goals. This is done through documentation of the observable knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified in the *Milestones of Child Development* (VA Early Childhood Development Alignment Project, 2013). Records are kept in individual assessment booklets and supported with samples of children's work. Involvement of family members is a critical component of the assessment program because of the knowledge they can contribute toward a complete understanding of each child's abilities, interests, and needs.

Early in the school year, parents are also encouraged to collaborate with the teacher in determining individual goals for their child. These goals are recorded in the child's assessment booklet. Progress toward the goals is documented in this booklet and discussed during formal and informal conferences throughout the year. Revision of goals and assessments are made when appropriate.

Communication with families about their child's development and progress toward program goals is scheduled a minimum of four times each year, at least twice in writing. This kind of sharing occurs in ways that are mutually agreeable and may take the form of formal or informal conferences, electronic contacts, phone calls, or personal conversations. Parents have the opportunity to review and contribute to the developmental information in the assessment booklet during formal conferences or on additional occasions as requested. Conferences or other formats for sharing information may be initiated by a teacher or family member at any time throughout the year.

Because the YCP program goals for each child represent assessment in all developmental domains, the data collection process constitutes an effective screening instrument. However, a separate developmental checklist is completed within each child's first three months of school attendance. If significant delays or areas of concern are recognized at this point or at any time during the child's enrollment, they are summarized and shared with the parents. Appropriate resource professionals are consulted if necessary and an intervention plan is developed in consultation with the family. If efforts to facilitate progress are unsuccessful, appropriate referrals may be made.

As much as possible, assessment of children in the YCP is conducted informally and as a part of their daily school activities. This is done through careful observation, collection of work samples, and the use of checklists and anecdotal notes. When assessment of specific, unobserved skills is necessary, it is conducted in an atmosphere that is supportive and enjoyable for the child.

All written information collected on individual children in the YCP is confidential and is kept in a secure location. Access is limited to the child's family, the teaching and administrative staff, and officials of regulatory agencies.

In addition to facilitating individual growth and learning, the information compiled through consistent observation within the classroom is used to make decisions that result in the improvement of overall curriculum, teaching strategies, and classroom environment.

### **Assessment of Program Effectiveness in Meeting Goals for Families**

- An annual survey is conducted in the spring. This survey includes objective statements for response, as well as the opportunity for written feedback.
- Twice during the year contact is made with families for the specific purpose of soliciting feedback and ideas for program improvement.
- Because there is a family representative from each class on the YCP Advisory Council, it is a forum for input and suggestions for program direction and improvement.

VA Early Childhood Development Alignment Project. (2013). *Milestones of Child Development*. Richmond, VA: VA Dept. of Social Services.

## EXPECTATIONS FOR ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

1. You are responsible for the information included in this handbook. Read it thoroughly before your first day of practicum and use it as a reference throughout the semester.
2. You are expected to attend every day you are scheduled to be at school, be punctual, and participate for the entire period.
3. **DRESS PROFESSIONALLY!** As a student in the YCP, you are expected to follow guidelines for appropriate dress. Failure to do so will result in a request for you to leave the classroom and will be considered an unexcused absence from practicum. Take cues from the teachers. Your dress does not have to be elaborate, but must be neat and professional. Aprons are available in the kitchen if you need to protect your clothing during messy activities. Be sure you are dressed to be actively involved with young learners and will be able to reach and bend without exposing undergarments, cleavage, or midriff.

The following guidelines must be followed:

- NO short skirts
- NO low necklines
- NO tight slacks
- NO spaghetti straps
- NO exposed midriffs
- NO tee shirts with logos
- NO sweatshirts
- NO short shorts



The classes go outside unless it is raining hard or extremely cold. Be sure you are dressed to be comfortable both indoors and outdoors.

4. Park in student lots only. The spaces immediately around Anthony Seeger are for faculty/staff and the YCP reserved spaces are for YCP parents only. If you park in either location, you **WILL** get a ticket.
5. Enter Anthony-Seeger Hall at the door nearest the playground (south side). Go to the student staff check-in area (the office/storage room) immediately. Sign the appropriate sheet, put on your name tag, and determine your area of responsibility for the day by selecting one of the clipboards in the clear file box. You are expected to be in the classroom and ready to participate at your assigned time. Failure to be punctual or stay for the full session will result in the drop of one letter off your final grade.
6. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer as soon as you enter the classroom each day.
7. Wear your name tag at all times while working at the YCP.
8. Use Ms., Mr., or Mrs. when you address adults in front of the children.

9. Respect the confidentiality of information regarding children and their families during this and subsequent semesters. **DO NOT** discuss children in front of classmates, family members, other adults, or anyone who is not professionally associated with the Young Children's Program. Conversations outside of school should be in professional settings only and **MUST** be private. If parents ask you for information about their child or another student, refer them to the teacher.
10. Children's real names should **NEVER** be recorded in your data collection. A child's name must be covered when scanning work samples (drawings, writing, etc.) to include in assignments.
11. Ask the teacher's permission before taking photographs or videotaping children.
12. Cell phones should not be used while you are working at the YCP. If you must take one into the building, be sure the ringer is turned off and kept with your personal belongings.
13. Do not eat or chew gum while working at the YCP. Water bottles and coffee cups should be left with your personal belongings in the office.
14. Occasionally it is necessary for students to drive personal vehicles on field trips. You will never be asked to transport children, only other students. It is required that all persons traveling with the group wear seat belts.
15. If you must be absent from the YCP due to personal illness or emergency, notify your YCP teacher **AND** Pat Kennedy before school begins. Call the YCP (568-6089) and leave a message on the answering machine if a teacher is not present. E-mail your teacher or Pat Kennedy. Failure to follow this procedure will result in the drop of one letter off your final grade.
16. On or before the day immediately following your absence, discuss a make-up time with your teacher. Notify your supervisor of this date via email. Your final grade will be dropped one letter for each unexcused absence or absence not made up.
17. In the event of hazardous weather, the YCP follows cancellation decisions made by JMU. Any closings or delays will be sent via Seesaw, email and posted on the WHSV-TV list of closings. If you **DO NOT** receive an email or Seesaw notification, or see it on WHSV-TV3's list of cancellation announcements, then the YCP is open and operating on time.

In the event of early closures or delays the following guidelines are followed:

- If JMU has a delayed opening, the YCP will also have a delayed opening. YCP opening time will be announced on Seesaw, the YCP Facebook page, TV, and via email. If the delayed opening is after 10:00am, the ½ day morning program will be cancelled.
  - If the YCP closes early due to inclement weather, an announcement will be made through Seesaw, the YCP Facebook page, WHSV-TV3, and via email.
18. You are not expected to attend school during official JMU closings.
  19. Ask for suggestions and feedback throughout the semester. View input from your teacher or supervisor as an opportunity to learn and grow as an early educator.

20. YCP parents are always eager to know of students who are interested in babysitting. A list will be compiled early in the semester and shared with YCP families only. This is unrelated to your course requirements and you are under no obligation to participate. If you choose to babysit for families of children in your practicum class, remember that you are a member of the YCP professional staff and, therefore, discussion of other children in the program is not appropriate.
21. Visitors to the YCP must contact a teacher or the Director in advance. Once you have completed your participation this semester, visits to the YCP must be prearranged.

## **GENERAL CLASSROOM GUIDELINES**

1. Children must always be within “sight and sound” of a supervising adult. You must constantly be aware of the location of children, including those who are moving from one room to another or seeking privacy, and move accordingly in order to maintain a safe and responsive learning environment.
2. One of the most reliable ways of controlling the spread of germs is proper and consistent hand washing. This is expected of the children and must be modeled by all adults working in the YCP classroom. Children and adults must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer at the following times:
  - Upon arrival at school
  - After using the toilet
  - After touching body fluids
  - Before AND after preparing, serving, or eating food
  - After playing in water shared by two or more people
  - After handling animals or materials that may be contaminated by animals
  - After playing outdoors

Proper hand washing includes using liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including the back of the hands, wrists, and between fingers.

Following hand washing, a paper towel should be used to avoid contact with the spigot when turning off the water. A bottle of hand sanitizer is available above the snack table. Children use this only with adult assistance. Children in the full day four-year old class are asked to bring a toothbrush to school so they can brush their teeth after lunch.

3. When speaking to individuals or a small group of children, position yourself on their eye level so that a loud voice is unnecessary and eye contact is natural. Even when speaking to the entire class, a soft voice is more effective. It is never appropriate for you to raise your voice to speak to children across the classroom; walk to them and kneel down to ensure eye contact before you begin talking.

4. Convey an attitude of warmth and acceptance. Children (AND adults) respond most favorably to someone they know cares for them. Smile a lot! Let everyone know you are happy to be at school and value them as individuals.
5. Be sensitive to cues from the children that your involvement is needed. Be responsive when they ask for assistance. However, your role is not to be their playmate or do things for children that they can do themselves. Talk with the teacher if you are uncertain about how much help to provide in specific situations.
6. Insist that rules are followed. Be firm and positive in your interactions. Do not end ANY directions with "OK?". Remember, you are a teacher, not a "buddy." Talk with the teacher about your role in situations of inappropriate behavior and keep the teacher informed of any problems you observe or help resolve. Never interfere with the teacher's directions to the group or a specific child.
7. Avoid saying "Good job!" as a habitual response to children. Personalize your response by commenting specifically on what a child is saying or doing ("You are using lots of blue in your picture." "You found your name on the snack list by yourself.")
8. Be alert to ways you can be helpful to the teacher. Convey your willingness to assist in any way.
9. Always use proper manuscript print when writing on materials that will be used or seen by the children. Refer to Appendix 3 of this handbook.
10. In most cases, the children are encouraged to put away materials as they finish using them. Usually a reminder or an offer of assistance is all that is necessary. Do not take over clean-up for children, but realize that often they do need help. Refer to classroom labels to be sure materials are returned to the proper location.
11. There are three major areas of responsibility for the classroom environment that are shared by practicum students--Art Area and Water Room, Health and Safety, and Snack and Kitchen. There are checklists for each area on clipboards at the student check-in area. You are responsible for completing ALL items on your daily checklist. Some jobs must be done before the children arrive and some after the session is over. Checklist obligations should never take you away from your primary responsibility to assist the teacher and children.
12. Refrain from chatting with other students or congregating in clusters of adults.
13. Avoid standing as much as possible. If you are working on a written assignment, sit on a low chair or on the floor at a place that does not disrupt normal traffic flow or interfere with the children's activities. **DO NOT** sit on tables, the large blocks, the slide, or other indoor or outdoor equipment.
14. When you are involved in a written assignment and prefer to not be disturbed, cover your name card with a red ribbon. These are kept on the bulletin board at the student check-in area. Before you begin, note how many students are already writing. It is important for there to always be at least one student per classroom who is free to assist the teacher. Generally, it is advisable to begin your writing assignments as early in the session as possible.



15. If you want to discuss your observations or ask questions of the teacher, do so after the children leave. This will ensure appropriate privacy and allow the teacher time to give you a thoughtful response. Email communication is also welcome.
16. If you observe an incident in which a child is hurt or hurts others (verbally or physically) or you overhear a child share information that makes you uncomfortable, inform the teacher as soon as possible. If you cannot talk with the teacher before leaving, write a note and leave it in a private location for her.
17. If the telephone rings, answer, “*Young Children’s Program...May I help you?*” Unless it is an emergency, take a message for the teacher and tell the caller she will respond at the end of the session.
18. Visitors who enter the facility should be referred to the teacher immediately.
19. If a child is hurt seriously and emergency contacts cannot be reached, the teacher is required to accompany the child to the emergency room. If this happens, the remaining staff should notify the Early Childhood Education Office (568-6292 or 568-6255) and assume responsibility for the other children until an authorized adult arrives (refer to *Appendix 1: Emergency Procedures* in this handbook).
20. The YCP teachers expect that you will have questions and are strongly committed to supporting your growth as an early educator. Feel free to share openly with them and ask about situations you do not understand. If you have concerns, your initial step as a professional should be to discuss them with your teacher.



## WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?

### Specific Expectations for Involvement in Classroom Activities

#### ART ACTIVITIES

In all types of creative activities for young children, the process, not the product, is of primary importance. For this reason, we insist that you **NEVER** make models for the children to copy or draw pictures for them. When squeezing play dough, when sitting near a child using markers, or when observing children gluing collage materials, you may be tempted to show a child how to make the materials “look like something.” Children have the right to use the materials in their own way and will make that representational discovery in their own time.



1. When an activity is potentially messy, encourage the children to wear aprons. If a child resists, don’t insist. **IF CHILDREN ARE WEARING LONG-SLEEVED SHIRTS, ROLL THEM UP TO THE ELBOWS.** The children should return the aprons to the hooks when finished. (Adult-size aprons are available in the kitchen for your use.)
2. Children should always be seated when using scissors. Scissors should not be carried away from the art area.

3. A child using large amounts of glue may be reminded calmly, "*It only takes a little bit to make it hold.*" This is an understanding that comes with experience, so be patient and don't be overly concerned about waste.
4. Do not draw for children! If a child asks you to draw something, say, "If I draw the picture, it will be mine. I'd love to see what you can draw" or "Drawings don't always have to look like something. I'd like to watch what you choose to do with the markers."
5. When children are painting at the easel, they are encouraged to work with only one color of paint at a time. When finished, that cup should be returned to the tray and another color chosen if desired. This allows the children a wider selection of colors and eliminates the problem of brush handles interfering as children paint.
6. As a child finishes painting, be sure his or her name is visible on the paper, then remove the painting from the easel (this should always be done by an adult). It may be necessary to remind the children to clean the area they were using "so it is ready for someone else to paint." Wet cloths for this purpose are on the side of each easel. When the area is clean and dry, hang a new piece of paper on the easel. Extra paper is located in the lower drawers of the storage unit in the hallway.
7. Use the clothesline in front of the windows for hanging **ONLY** wet artwork that is not drippy. Art that is likely to drip should be placed on the cabinet in the water room or in the hallway beyond the glass partition (prop the door open so you are not locked out). Dry artwork can be put into cubbies, unless otherwise directed by the teacher. **BE SURE THE CHILD'S NAME AND THE DATE ARE PRINTED NEATLY ON ALL ARTWORK.**
8. Many children, particularly the older ones, will write their own names on their art. If you write for a child, do it only after the child's work is completed. Added respect is communicated if you ask, "Where would you like me to write your name?" Please ask if you are in doubt about the spelling of a child's name. Print appropriately (first letter capitalized, all others lower case) and neatly, using the manuscript alphabet page in this handbook as your guide for correct letter formation. The children's names are posted throughout the classroom.
9. Children are free to select the play dough and toys they want from the art shelves. They may need to be reminded to put these materials away and return the dough to its airtight container when they are finished.
10. Different colors of play dough should not be mixed together unless otherwise directed by the teacher.



### DRAMATIC PLAY

Be involved in a child's play if he or she seems to really need or want you, but never lose sight of your supervisory role. Be sensitive to the child's cues and allow him or her to direct the play. Do your best to draw another child into the play and minimize (or eliminate) your role.



1. Children may need assistance with dress-up clothes. The clothes should be returned to the designated hooks as the children finish with them. Most of the clothes have loops sewn in the neckline so children can do this easily.
2. Note the storage labels on baskets and trays, as well as inside the wooden cabinets so you can help children locate what they need and return it to the proper place. Dishes and food containers should not be thrown randomly into the cabinets during clean-up.
3. Gun and weapon play is strongly discouraged. If you feel uncomfortable intervening in this kind of situation, or, if the children are unresponsive to your suggestions, let the teacher know immediately what is happening.
4. Avoid becoming involved in a captive role that allows children to take advantage of you (i.e., putting you in prison, tying your hands together, covering your eyes in any way). The focus of children's play in a school setting should not be on domination of adults.

### **BLOCKS (Unit and Large Hollow)**

The presence of an adult in or near the block area can encourage children to build. If you are with children who are building, be an interested listener and ask questions if it seems appropriate, but do not attempt to direct the play. Suggestions should be open-ended and respectful of the child as decision-maker. For example, you might say, "Will there be a place for the cows to sleep in your barn?" instead of, "Why don't you build a stall for the cows to sleep in?"

1. Blocks should never be thrown, intentionally dropped, or pushed over.
2. Children should not walk on the unit blocks when wearing dress-up shoes.
3. As children begin to build, suggest that they work at least 18-24" away from the shelves (leave a "walking space"). Explain that if they are too close, someone may accidentally bump their building while getting blocks.
4. Encourage the children to take from the shelves the blocks they need "for right now," rather than dumping large piles into the area.
5. If a block structure becomes the child's height, an adult should stay in close proximity. Watch closely for structural flaws that could cause the blocks to fall unexpectedly. Buildings should be no higher than the child's head.
6. When taking down buildings, blocks should be removed one at a time. Buildings should never be pushed over. If you anticipate this is about to happen, remind the children of the way it should be done and explain that crashing buildings is not safe because it can cause people to get hurt and it can damage the blocks.
7. If necessary, assist children in returning the blocks to their proper place. You may need to help the younger children or new builders to attend to the shape outlines on the cabinets or the floor. Make a game of "figuring out where they go" and working together, perhaps forming

a “production line” with a group of children. Try handing blocks to a reluctant child to put on the shelf, working with one shape at a time.

## WOODWORKING

1. Check with the teacher about the number of children who can work in the area safely. Help children space themselves so they are a safe distance apart.
2. When the workbenches are in use, an adult should **ALWAYS** be nearby and supervising the children’s work carefully.
3. Tools and goggles are not to be used as play props or taken to other areas of the classroom without the approval of the teacher.
4. Tools must be used properly and only for their intended purpose.
  - Before using any of the tools in this area, help the child put on and adjust the safety goggles. Wearing goggles is strongly encouraged.
  - Before using a saw, wood must be secured with a C-clamp or vise. For younger children, wood should be clamped before nailing. Most will need assistance with this.
  - When sawing, children should pull the saw back toward the body two or three times to make a groove in the wood. The blade should be at a right angle to the wood. If the saw blade bends or squeaks, it is being held improperly. Help children to reposition themselves and/or the saw if this happens. You may need to saw with them until they begin to feel the rhythm of sawing.
  - When using a hammer, children should hold the nail and tap gently until it is set firmly. **DO NOT** hold a nail for a child. If you must, have the child place his or her fingers around yours (or you’ll be sorry...).
  - To remove a nail, children should place the claw of the hammer (the back of the head) around the nail and **PUSH** the handle away from their bodies.
  - Shorter children may need to stand on a large block when sawing or hammering.
5. If you give help with sawing or hammering, leave a short length for the children to finish so they will have a feeling of accomplishment with the activity.
6. Be sensitive to children’s feelings about what they are doing. If the children are becoming frustrated, a helpful question or suggestion may save the experience for them. Often children’s ideas about what they want to build are beyond their skill level. They may need help in rethinking what they want to do and feeling acceptance for the modification.



(Some portions of this section are adapted from “Woodworking for Young Children,” a document written by Mrs. Mildred Dickerson.)

## SENSORY PLAY

1. If water or other wet material is in the table, be sure the children's sleeves are rolled or pushed up as far as possible and remind them to wear a plastic apron. If a child resists, let the teacher know.
2. Materials (water, sand, grain, etc.) are to be used so they stay inside the tub. Assist children in cleaning up spills quickly using towels, a mop, or broom and dust pan.
3. Do not allow children to throw sand, water, or other materials from the table. If a reminder or request is not heeded, notify the teacher.
4. The children should wash their hands after playing in water.
5. The children should not add extra water, soap, or materials or toys from other areas without permission. When in doubt, stop the children and check with the teacher.



## LOFT ROOM

Often students are needed to supervise children playing in the loft room while the teacher is in the main classroom. When you are asked to do this, remember that you are responsible for ALL the children playing there. Position yourself so you can maintain sight and sound supervision at all times and take initiative to ensure that play remains purposeful and safe.

1. The children must walk in the loft room.
2. Remind the children to put toys and materials away **as they finish using them** and check the floor for items that have been dropped. Assist them as needed in reading the storage labels and figuring out where things belong. It is **NEVER** appropriate for children to throw things onto a shelf randomly or walk away without cleaning up. **Before leaving the room, you should check all areas -- including the upper level of the loft -- to be sure materials are put away properly.**

### Loft

- Only one child should be on the loft stairs at a time.
- Children should not climb or stand on any furniture in the loft.
- When standing in the loft, both feet should always be flat on the floor.
- Nothing should be thrown or dropped intentionally from the loft.
- Four children are allowed in the loft if playing alone. More are permitted only if an adult is with them.

## Slide

- Experimentation is permitted with the slide. However, careful supervision is required to ensure safety.
- Shoes must be worn on the slide.
- When taking large vehicles down the slide, the child must hold onto the vehicle and slide down with it.



## SNACK

*If you are responsible for snack, ask the teacher at the beginning of class for specific instructions for the day. Be sure to complete ALL steps on the checklist -- including washing dishes and putting away those from the previous class.*



1. ADULTS AND CHILDREN MUST ALWAYS WASH THEIR HANDS OR USE HAND SANITIZER BEFORE AND AFTER PREPARING FOOD AND/OR EATING. CHILDREN IN THE FULL DAY 4-YEAR OLD PROGRAM SHOULD BRING A TOOTHBRUSH TO SCHOOL IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO BRUSH THEIR TEETH AFTER LUNCH.
2. Involve as many children as possible. Ask for volunteers to prepare the snack and give opportunities to take part in stirring, measuring, mixing, pouring, counting, etc. Four children can sit at the table comfortably.
3. Cups tip over easily; this is a common occurrence. Assist the child as needed and comment, "Oh, accidents happen." Encourage children to pour only half a cup of juice and keep the cup toward the center of the table.
4. Children are to help themselves to snack, but discourage a child from taking more than the stated amount unless permission has been given by the teacher. If children want more than one cup of juice, they may get water from the dispenser on the low cabinet beside the door.
5. Snacks are for the children. Adults may eat special snacks, but only if the teacher invites them to participate.
6. When children finish eating, they are to throw away any trash, wipe their places at the table, and wash their dishes in the kitchen sink. An adult must always be with a child when washing dishes.
7. Children with allergies or other dietary restrictions may sometimes require modified snacks. Specific instructions for these children are posted in the kitchen and must be strictly followed.

8. The snack area should be swept and the tables cleared and thoroughly cleaned after all children have eaten. All dishes should be washed and rinsed in bleach solution and placed in the rack to air dry.

### LUNCH

Children in the full day programs eat lunch together in their classroom. We recommend an insulated lunch box and ice pack to keep food fresh. We are unable to refrigerate or microwave children's lunches.



The preschool lunch is a good place to start developing good nutrition habits in children. Therefore, we encourage parents to pack protein foods, fruits, and vegetables, and to strictly minimize chips, cookies, fruit snacks and sweets. Please do not send candy, soda, or glass containers to school. We do not place restrictions on the order on which your child eats the foods placed in his/her lunch box.

Because of individual dietary restrictions, children are not permitted to share food from their lunches.

### ALLERGIES

We discourage children from sharing food because of allergies. If your child has an allergy, it is essential to include that information on your child's health form. Because we have children with life threatening peanut and tree nut allergies enrolled in the preschool, we require that you refrain from sending peanuts, tree nuts, peanut/nut butter or products made with peanuts or tree nuts in your child's lunch or for treats to share with the class. Foods other than peanuts and tree nuts may be restricted in your class. **If a child in your child's class has a life threatening allergy to another food, you will be informed.**

### GROUP TIME / WHOLE GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. At least one adult should be in the group meeting area as children begin to transition there. Practice transition activities and/or read books to the children until the teacher assumes responsibility.
2. Sit directly behind the children and encourage them to listen and participate by modeling attentive behavior and participating in songs and finger plays.
3. Help to prevent problems by sitting with children who need support in this setting.
4. When children are distracted or disruptive:

- Stay next to them or offer your lap to sit in, even if you have to move away from one child to supervise others.
- Position yourself between children who are socializing and separate them if necessary.
- Help children participate in songs or finger plays, positioning their fingers, hands, etc. to accompany the group.

## COURTYARD AND PLAYGROUND

1. Adults should not congregate while outdoors. Your role is to ensure the safety of the children as they are involved in active play, so student staff should be stationed throughout the playground and/or courtyard area in order to supervise appropriately.
2. Having an adult within sight and sound of every child is as critical outdoors as it is indoors. If a child leaves the area you are supervising, be sure to communicate with the person who should take over supervision responsibilities. If both the courtyard and playground are being used for outdoor play, report the number of children in your area to the teacher frequently.
3. Don't yell across the play area. Walk to a child and get his or her attention before giving directions.
4. Tricycles are used in the courtyard only and should never be ridden into equipment, walls, or each other.
5. Sand, gravel, and mulch should never be thrown and must be kept in the designated areas.
6. Children should not play in the storage shed.
7. Adults should sit on the porch swing only if children invite them and are **NEVER** to swing on the small swings, use the slide, ride the tricycles, or climb on equipment.
8. The swing area must be supervised closely. Redirect children who are running close to the path of others who are swinging.
9. Children should always be seated when using the swings. When pushing inexperienced children on a swing, be cautious and insist they hold the chains with both hands at all times. It may help to say to the child, "Tell me when you are ready for a push."
10. Digging must be done in the designated areas only.
11. DIGGING TOOLS SHOULD NOT BE RAISED HIGHER THAN THE CHILD'S WAIST.
12. Assist children in putting equipment in the storage shed at the end of the period.
13. Adults should never swing children around in a circle by hanging onto their hands.



14. Each day a staff member is assigned to rake the playground gravel to assure it is the required depth (12" in lower area around slide, 6" in upper area). Pay particular attention to high traffic locations such as the bottom of the slide and under swings, metal climber, and fire pole
15. While supervising children, both in the YCP and outside the YCP (playground, field trips, walks), staff will actively supervise children at all times. This includes positioning themselves in strategic locations to monitor all children, regularly scanning play activities, and circulating among and interacting with children.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

*The teachers make every effort to schedule field trips and special visitors on different days of the week. This enables as many students as possible to be involved without infringing on the time needed for specific assignments. We will notify you of these events as far in advance as possible, but sometimes plans must be flexible.*

*A field trip is a time when you should be particularly helpful to your teacher. She may give you a specific responsibility for the entire session and it may be necessary for you to be present longer than your assigned time if your schedule allows. Writing during a field trip is difficult. If you need additional observation time, arrange this with your teacher.*

1. Field trips are considered an extension of the YCP classroom with specific learning objectives and expectations for appropriate behavior. The teacher will communicate guidelines for individual trips.
2. BE ON TIME! Be sure you understand where you are to meet the class and if a particular type of dress is necessary.
3. The YCP relies on public transportation for all non-walking trips.
4. As children arrive at the trip site, assist the teacher as needed. This may involve supervising a small group of children as they wait for others to arrive. This is a good time to use songs and transitions you've learned in class, play simple guessing games, or initiate personal conversations.
5. If you assist with unloading children from a vehicle, position yourself so you can prevent accidental running into the parking lot or traffic area. Children must always be near an adult.
6. You will be assigned to assist a parent volunteer with a small group of children. The two of you should assume responsibility for the safety and behavior of your group. Keep the children together at all times.
7. The teacher will have specific objectives for the trip and will share ways you can support the learning opportunities it offers. Talk with your group about what you are experiencing, ask questions to extend the children's thinking, and help to position children in ways that enable everyone to be involved as meaningfully as possible.
8. If snack is served on a field trip, assist the teacher with distribution and clean up.

9. You may take pictures as long as it does not interfere with your ability to supervise and support your group of children.
10. Avoid carrying children unless it is absolutely necessary.
11. Follow the teacher's lead at all times. The teaching staff is ultimately responsible for the safety and behavior of all children participating in the trip. You must assume this responsibility -- even if it means directing a child whose parent is present.
12. On walking trips the teacher will assign several children to you. You are to stay near these children at all times. You must hold their hands when crossing streets. Position yourself so you are on the side next to the street when walking on the sidewalk. **DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO RUN AHEAD OF YOU.**



## TEACHING TO ENHANCE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

From Section 2, *Guidelines for Decisions About Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997)

Adults are responsible for ensuring children's healthy development and learning. From birth, relationships with adults are critical determinants of children's healthy social and emotional development and serve as well as mediators of language and intellectual development. At the same time, children are active constructors of their own understanding, who benefit from initiating and regulating their own learning activities and interacting with peers. Therefore, early childhood teachers strive to achieve an optimal balance between children's self-initiated learning and adult guidance or support.

Teachers accept responsibility for actively supporting children's development and provide occasions for children to acquire important knowledge and skills. Teachers use their knowledge of child development and learning to identify the range of activities, materials, and learning experiences that are appropriate for a group or individual child. This knowledge is used in conjunction with knowledge of the context and understanding about individual children's growth patterns, strengths, needs, interests, and experiences to design the curriculum and learning environment and guide teachers' interactions with children. The following guidelines describe aspects of the teachers' role in making decisions about practice:

- A. Teachers respect, value, and accept children and treat them with dignity at all times.
- B. Teachers make it a priority to know each child well.
  1. Teachers establish positive, personal relationships with children to foster the child's development and keep informed about the child's needs and potentials. Teachers listen to children and adapt their responses to children's differing needs, interests, styles, and abilities.

2. Teachers continually observe children's spontaneous play and interaction with the physical environment and with other children to learn about their interests, abilities, and developmental progress. On the basis of this information, teachers plan experiences that enhance children's learning and development.
  3. Understanding that children develop and learn in the context of their families and communities, teachers establish relationships with families that increase their knowledge of children's lives outside the classroom and their awareness of the perspectives and priorities of those individuals most significant in the child's life.
  4. Teachers are alert to signs of undue stress and traumatic events in children's lives and aware of effective strategies to reduce stress and support the development of resilience.
  5. Teachers are responsible at all times for all children under their supervision and plan for children's increasing development of self-regulation abilities.
- C. Teachers create an intellectually engaging, responsive environment to promote each child's learning and development.
1. Teachers use their knowledge about children in general and the particular children in the group as well as their familiarity with what children need to learn and develop in each curriculum area to organize the environment and plan curriculum and teaching strategies.
  2. Teachers provide children with a rich variety of experiences, projects, materials, problems, and ideas to explore and investigate, ensuring that these are worthy of children's attention.
  3. Teachers provide children with opportunities to make meaningful choices and time to explore through active involvement. Teachers offer children the choice to participate in a small-group or a solitary activity, assist and guide children who are not yet able to use and enjoy child-choice activity periods, and provide opportunities for practice of skills as a self-chosen activity.
  4. Teachers organize the daily and weekly schedule and allocate time so as to provide children with extended blocks of time in which to engage in play, projects, and/or study in integrated curriculum.
- D. Teachers make plans to enable children to attain key curriculum goals across various disciplines, such as language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and health.
1. Teachers incorporate a wide variety of experiences, materials and equipment, and teaching strategies in constructing curriculum to accommodate a broad range of children's individual differences in prior experiences, maturation rates, styles of learning, needs, and interests.

2. Teachers bring each child's home culture and language into the shared culture of the school so that the unique contributions of each group are recognized and valued by others.
  3. Teachers are prepared to meet identified special needs of individual children, including children with disabilities and those who exhibit unusual interests and skills. Teachers use all the strategies identified here, consult with appropriate specialists, and see that the child gets the specialized services he or she requires.
- E. Teachers foster children's collaboration with peers on interesting, important enterprises.
1. Teachers promote children's productive collaboration without taking over to the extent that children lose interest.
  2. Teachers use a variety of ways of flexibly grouping children for the purposes of instruction, supporting collaboration among children, and building a sense of community. At various times, children have opportunities to work individually, in small groups, and with the whole group.
- F. Teachers develop, refine, and use a wide repertoire of teaching strategies to enhance children's learning and development.
1. To help children develop their initiative, teachers encourage them to choose and plan their own learning activities.
  2. Teachers pose problems, ask questions, and make comments and suggestions that stimulate children's thinking and extend their learning.
  3. Teachers extend the range of children's interests and the scope of their thought through presenting novel experiences and introducing stimulating ideas, problems, experiences, or hypotheses.
  4. To sustain an individual child's effort or engagement in purposeful activities, teachers select from a range of strategies, including but not limited to modeling, demonstrating specific skills, and providing information, focused attention, physical proximity, verbal encouragement, reinforcement and other behavioral procedures, as well as additional structure and modification of equipment or schedules as needed.
  5. Teachers coach and/or directly guide children in the acquisition of specific skills as needed.
  6. Teachers calibrate the complexity and challenge of activities to suit children's level of skill and knowledge, increasing the challenge as children gain competence and understanding.
  7. Teachers provide cues and other forms of "scaffolding" that enable the child to succeed in a task that is just beyond his or her ability to complete alone.

8. To strengthen children's sense of competence and confidence as learners, motivation to persist, and willingness to take risks, teachers provide experiences for children to be genuinely successful and to be challenged.
  9. To enhance children's conceptual understanding, teachers use various strategies that encourage children to reflect on and "revisit" their learning experiences.
- G. Teachers facilitate the development of responsibility and self-regulation in children.
1. Teachers set clear, consistent, and fair limits for children's behavior and hold children accountable to standards of acceptable behavior. To the extent that children are able, teachers engage them in developing rules and procedures for behavior of class members.
  2. Teachers redirect children to more acceptable behavior or activity or use children's mistakes as learning opportunities, patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed.
  3. Teachers listen and acknowledge children's feelings and frustrations, respond with respect, guide children to resolve conflicts, and model skills that help children to solve their own problems.

NAEYC. (1997) *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8*. Retrieved August 11, 2007 from <http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/dap4.asp>.

## **BASIC GUIDELINES FOR TALKING WITH CHILDREN**

(Mooney, 2005, pp. 18-20)

- **Make sure you have the child's attention before you begin to speak.**  
This is easier if you are close to the child and down on her level. A gentle hand on her arm might help, too, depending on the child and the situation.
- **Always get down to a child's level when talking to her.**  
If sitting on the floor or squatting is uncomfortable for you, try keeping a chair handy.
- **Remember that body language, tone of voice, and facial expression affect the message you deliver.**  
The same phrase can be reassuring or threatening depending on how you say it. Words matter. Your expression and tone of voice matter just as much, and sometimes more.
- **Use simple words and short sentences.**  
Avoid idioms and shortcuts. Try to say exactly what you mean as clearly as possible. If you do use idioms, watch for signs of confusion, and be prepared to explain them.
- **Don't be wishy-washy.**

If you mean no, say it. If you say no, mean it!

- **Don't ask a question or offer a choice when there isn't one.**  
Let children know clearly what you need from them. In particular, avoid using "okay?" at the end of directives, as in "It's clean-up time, okay?"
- **Don't ask questions to which you already know the answer.**  
This applies to managing behavior as well as concept development. Don't ask a child, "Is that the way we treat our friends?" You already know that pushing another child is not a good way to treat him, but a young child doesn't yet. Likewise, there are better ways to develop children's thinking skills than to ask them questions about numbers and colors and letters to which you already know the answer.
- **If you must interrupt children, remember they deserve the same courtesy adults expect.**  
Say something like, "Excuse me, I need you in the book corner now, please." Teach *please, thank you, I'm sorry, you're welcome*, and other niceties by your own modeling rather than prodding with that old "What do you say?"
- **Use praise in moderation and only when it is sincere and truly called for.**  
When you are praising a child, be specific—for example, instead of just saying, "Good job!" follow it with the appreciated behavior: "Good job picking up the blocks." Better yet, avoid praise altogether, and comment on or thank the child for the work she did. For example, "You did a lot of work picking up those blocks," or "Thank you for picking up so many blocks. Look how much space there is now!"

Mooney, C. (2005). *Use your words*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.