

Creative Curriculum Overview

Creative Curriculum is a research-based, age-appropriate approach to learning that is challenging, engaging, fun, culturally and linguistically responsive for all children.

The Creative Curriculum empowers teachers to understand not only the what and how to teach, but why particular practices are effective. Knowing the theory behind child development helps teachers adapt to each child's learning strengths.

One of the major influences guiding early childhood education with regards to The Creative Curriculum is the theory of developmentally appropriate practice. Developmentally appropriate practice means teaching in ways that match how children learn and develop best. It aims to promote optimal development and allows early childhood professionals to make sound decisions for children based on information about:

- Child development and how children learn
- The individual strengths, needs, interests, and social-emotional competencies of each child
- The culture of each child's family and community

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool builds upon the understanding that early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning. High quality care during the early years of life promotes profound and lasting development. Every interaction, every experience, and every activity has the potential to affect children's brain development. The trusting relationships that teachers build with each child are key to healthy development and learning in the classroom.

The Creative Curriculum has five fundamental principles that guide our preschool program.

1. Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
2. Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
3. Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
4. The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
5. Teacher/family partnerships promote development and learning.

The results from these fundamental principles provide us with a comprehensive curriculum that has a clear organizational structure and a particular focus on routines and learning experiences. Developmentally appropriate experiences foster joyful and purposeful learning while also addressing specific needs.

How Children Develop and Learn

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is based on the latest theory and research about how children develop and learn. When you know what to expect from children at each stage of development, you can create a responsive learning environment and plan developmentally appropriate experiences that recognize children as individual learners. Being responsive to children's strengths and needs and meeting them where they are is the best way to support their development and learning.

In addition to how children typically develop and learn, it is important to recognize that children develop at their own pace and in their own ways. Knowledge of typical child development is the starting point for offering a responsive and caring learning environment. Knowing the typical knowledge, skills, and abilities of preschool children enables teachers to respond in meaningful and appropriate ways.

The play and inquiry-based approach embraced by The Creative Curriculum for Preschool supports the development of the whole child by moving beyond traditional math and literacy foci to address all areas of development and learning. It is a powerful hands-on and minds-on approach to learning in which children actively construct meaning and develop understandings by engaging in a variety of dynamic learning experiences, both teacher-led and child-directed. The whole child approach is essential for teachers who want to recognize children as individual learners and encourage them to build on what they know, what they can do, how they learn best, and their individual interests and curiosities. The whole child approach lays the foundation for developing positive approaches to learning that will help children become lifelong learners and caring adults who are creative, resilient, curious, and empathetic.

The Daily Schedule

The daily schedule is an established sequence of routines and experiences. When the daily schedule suits the children's individual and group needs, the classroom life proceeds smoothly, is enjoyable for everyone, and children thrive. A good schedule for preschool children is balanced and it offers choices and a range of activities that are initiated by children and planned by teachers. A daily schedule establishes the consistency that helps young children predict the sequence of events and thus feel more secure and in control of events.

Sample Daily Schedule

Part of Day	What We Do
Arrival / Breakfast	Greet children, conduct meaningful conversations, encourage them to eat, discuss what they are eating, and allow children to talk to each other safely. Allow children to discuss how they are feeling and why and things that are important to them.
Morning Meeting	10-20m Welcome songs, sharing news, discussing the question of the day, shared writing, songs or fingerplays, discussions about the study and plans for the day.
Choice Time	60m Play-based center time for children to experience the centers in the classroom and extend their learning. Teachers encourage and scaffold learning during this time.
Small Group	20m Teachers introduce new concepts and reinforce skills with small groups of children. The activities are objective driven using the principles of active learning.
Outdoor Choice	45-60m Children develop their large-muscle by jumping, running, playing ball games, etc. Children will also explore nature while outside.
Read Aloud	15m Teachers will read stories that are related to the current unit of study.
Lunch	
Rest & Quiet Activities	60m Down time for children to rest. Some students will sleep while others will engage in quiet activities.
Read Aloud	15m Teachers and children will read, retell, and act out familiar stories.

Large Group and Closing	20m Music and movement activities, nursery rhymes, fingerplays, musical instruments, and a review of the day.
Limited Choice / Snack	30m Children engage in quieter interest areas. Teachers work with individual students as needed.
Dismissal	

Areas of Development

In The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, child development is considered within the context of four areas.

1. Social-emotional development where children are involved in socialization and learning how to interact with adults and children in ways that support all other areas of learning.
2. Physical development where children work on developing their large and small muscles. Large muscles enable children to sit, walk, run, jump, and throw & catch a ball. The small muscles enable children to hold, pinch, flex, point fingers, draw, write, and cut with scissors.
3. Language development where children practice their ability to listen, understand, and express their thoughts, needs, and ideas. Language learning involves structure and sequence of speech sounds, vocabulary, grammar, and the rules for engaging in appropriate and effective conversation.
4. Cognitive development involves the way children think, how they approach learning, their understanding about the world, and how they use what they learn to solve problems. A child's background knowledge, what she/he already knows, also affects the child's ability to make sense of new information and experiences.

Process Skills

Important to growth and development are process skills, which are skills that are the intrinsic aspect of all content learning. Process skills such as making predictions, asking questions, and testing hypotheses help children "learn to learn." They extend across all areas of development and learning and support children as they continually develop and expand their knowledge and understanding. Process skills enable children to find out what they already know and, using this knowledge, decide what they want to learn more about, furthering their understanding. Process skills include:

- Observing and exploring
- Connecting
- Problem-solving
- Organizing information
- Communicating and representing

Note: In The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, the four areas of child development (social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive) are not the same as content learning (literacy, mathematics, social studies, and the arts) but both can be found in the 38 Objectives for Development and Learning. Additionally, process skills are needed for content learning.

Objectives Statement

There are 38 objectives that represent the goals for children and are used everyday to assist the teacher in making decisions in the classroom to best support child development. The objectives for development and learning cover all of the following areas:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| ● Social-Emotional | ● Mathematics |
| ● Physical | ● Science and Technology |
| ● Language | ● Social Studies |
| ● Cognitive | ● The Arts |
| ● Literacy | ● English Language Acquisition |

The complete picture of the early childhood years that is outlined by these objectives for development and learning supports teachers to better understand what children know and can do. Teachers meet children where they are individually and assist with moving them along the developmental continuum while supporting their development and learning.

[Creative Curriculum Objectives and Dimensions](#)

Studies and Investigations

The units of study build children’s confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills through hands-on, project-based investigations. They promote discovery and inquiry with opportunities for children to think critically and develop process skills with rich, hands-on investigations of relevant and interesting topics in the classroom.

The first six weeks of school, children will focus on transitioning from home to preschool using the The First Six Weeks: Building Your Classroom Community study. After the initial six weeks, children will focus on a different unit of study every four weeks. Study examples include:

Wheels, Water, Balls, Buildings, Trees, Clothes, Exercise , and Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Engaging in the studies provide:

- Comprehensive, daily guidance and support for a full day of instruction and learning
- Exploration of relevant, interesting, and familiar topics
- Opportunities to promote children’s interest and build on their natural curiosity
- Encouragement for children to investigate and use critical thinking skills, and
- Hands-on learning through exploration and discovery

During a study, children spend four weeks asking questions and finding out answers to those questions through engaging, hands-on investigations and explorations. The [Web of Investigations](#) provides an overview of the investigation questions and opportunities to plan and personalize the study for our community and the children in our classrooms.

Studies last 4 weeks and are organized into three parts:

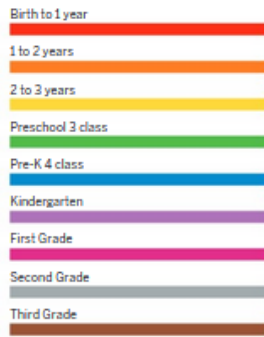
- Exploring the Topic: The start of the study provides an opportunity for teachers to activate children’s background knowledge; build excitement, and uncover what children want to investigate and learn.
- Investigating the Topic: The majority of the study is spent investigating the questions that children ask related to the topic.
- Celebrating Learning: At the end of each study, children spend time celebrating and sharing their hard work and reflecting on their learning.

Studies follow a scope and sequence of intentional teaching experiences tied to specific learning objectives. These objectives cover specific skills in a spiraling manner, which means children build up on each skill as the unit progresses. Our goal is to create meaningful learning experiences for all students by being Focused, Intentional, and Targeted in all we do.

Gold Assessment

Children will be assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD® which is an observational system used to determine where children are along a continuum of learning from birth to third grade. When observing children along a continuum, we see children developing at different levels and at different times for each objective. The Teaching Strategies Gold® uses color bands to indicate age or grade:

- Red, orange, and yellow represents 0-3 years
- Green, blue and purple represents Preschool - Kindergarten
- Pink, silver and brown represents First - Third Grade



Objective 1 Regulates own emotions and behaviors

a. Manages feelings

Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	<p>Uses adult support to calm self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Calm and relax •Calm and relax •Calm and relax •Calm and relax 	<p>Comforts self by seeking out special object or person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gets teddy bear •Gets teddy bear •Gets teddy bear •Gets teddy bear 	<p>Is able to look at a situation differently or enjoy participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •When the block area is full, looks to see what other areas are available •Looks and says, "I don't get to go to the park in the morning." Pauses and adds, "I have an idea. I can play after snack." 	<p>Communicates strong emotions in an appropriate manner most of the time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Says, "I'm mad" •Says, "I'm sad" •Says, "I'm angry" •Says, "I'm mad" •Says, "I'm sad" •Says, "I'm angry" 	<p>Manages strong emotions using known strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •When feeling overwhelmed, talks with teacher about a plan for completing an assignment •Finds a quiet place in the classroom to read after a disagreement with a friend •Takes a hand signal using recommended by the teacher 	<p>Demonstrates patience with personal transitions; continues playing based on how they will affect others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •When packing up, says, "I need to go home when I see the letter 'G' on my backpack" •Says and acts, "Thank you" for a gift, and then asks, "an adult," "I already read that book and I don't like it." 							

Family Engagement

Family Engagement is a key component of student success. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool embeds family engagement via the Family App. In this app, families may connect with their child(ren)'s teachers, receive monthly newsletters, home-learning experiences, and individualized support in English and Spanish. Teachers will share home activities that tie directly to the current study, that cover specific objectives, and that can be easily done with items found at home. Likewise, families may share their ideas, resources, and knowledge to enhance classroom learning. Additionally, families will have access to a digital library of books to read at home with their child(ren). The books are in English and Spanish. It is important for all families to connect to their classroom via the Family App and check it daily (keeping the notifications on would help you stay informed).

[Family App Flyer English](#)

[Family App Flyer Spanish](#)

[Video: Forming Relationships Between Teachers and Families: An Introduction to Teaching Strategies Family](#)

[Configurando Su Cuenta Para Teaching Strategies Family](#)

[Using the Teaching Strategies Family App](#)

[Uso de la Teaching Strategies Family App](#)

Focused, Intentional, and Targeted in providing meaningful learning experiences for all children.