Orange Township Public Schools

Preschool Teacher Handbook

Office of Early Childhood Education
Jacquelyn Blanton
Supervisor

Orange Board of Education
451 Lincoln Avenue
Orange, NJ 07050

Ronald Lee
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Paula Howard
Deputy Superintendent of Schools

Belinda Scott Smiley
Administrative Assistant for Operations/HR

Adekunle James
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Dr. Terri Russo
Dir. of Curriculum, Instruction, Professional Development & Data Assessment

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Famous Quotes

"*A child's brain is a fire to be ignited, not a pot to be filled*" John Locke

"*A teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops.*" Henry B. Adams

"*I am in the world to change the world*" Muriel Rukeyser

"*The essence of teaching is to make learning contagious, to have one idea spark another.*" Marva Collins

"*If you don't make mistakes, you're not working on hard enough problems, and that's a big mistake*" F. Wilezek

"*The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.*" William Arthur Ward

"*The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence*" Denise Waitley

"*The first task of a teacher is to keep hope alive*" Joe Batten

"*Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do*" Johann von Goethe

"*Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort; intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives*" Willa A. Foster

"*Children are like cement – whatever falls on them makes an impression*" Dr. Haim Ginott

Old Chinese saying …….."*Your fortune at 80 was decided when you were 3!!!!!!*"

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Learn to play. Play to learn.

Welcome to the Orange Township Public School District where "Keeping Children First" and a commitment to excellence in Preschool education are our priorities.

This handbook, intended to be user friendly, serves as a ready reference to assist in planning and implementing a high quality preschool classroom program. You will find topics of general interest specific to the Orange School District, as well as, valuable information regarding the High/Scope curriculum and New Jersey State Guidelines to Early Childhood Education. It is designed to provide guidance throughout the year, and will be update with additional information or changes as needed and provided by the Office of the Early Childhood Education in Orange or the New Jersey Department of Education.

Learn to play. Play to learn.

Preface

Education is not preparation for life: education is life itself.
John Dewey

The Orange Board of Education has provided Early Childhood Education for the children of Orange since 1998. It first collaborated with the Montclair Child Development Center/Head Start Program to provide inclusion support for children with special needs within the regular education classroom. Now, as mandated by the State of New Jersey, Orange provides full day preschool education for all three and four year old children.

Our district now has 58 preschool classrooms (23 district classrooms, 16 Head Start classrooms and 19 classrooms in local private provider preschool settings). A complete list of the Orange Providers can be obtained from the Orange Early Childhood Center at 397 Park Avenue, Orange, New Jersey 07050.

The Orange School Administration and the Board of Education recognize the importance of incorporating developmentally appropriate practices within its preschool program; therefore, have selected High/Scope as its comprehensive curriculum model. The model promotes a recognized high quality preschool education program and is in alignment with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards. It is a curriculum model designed to assist children in developing necessary skills to be successful life-long learners.

Learn to play. Play to learn.

Acknowledgements

This Handbook was revised August, 2014; however, it was created through the hard work of many people. A special thank you to all who have helped in the creation of this hand book:

Kathleen D. Priestley, Former Supervisor of Early Childhood Education
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Gloria Avila, Secretary to the EC Supervisor
Vivian Piaz – Administrative Assistant to the EC Department

It was their hope and now our hope that this handbook will afford teachers a quick and basic foundation of knowledge and facts they need to provide age appropriate activities to the children and families.

Orange Early Childhood Program

Mission

It is the intent of the Early Childhood Department to provide a quality educational opportunity for all children ages three and four living in the City of Orange Township. Our goal is to maximize their individual cognitive, physical, and social/emotional potential by utilizing a developmentally appropriate approach to learning that is supported by a comprehensive research-based curriculum and the NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards.

Shared Beliefs

- All children will have an equal opportunity to develop personally (i.e. culturally and linguistically) through a quality preschool educational experience

- All children will be provided with a quality educational environment that promotes his/her cognitive, social, and emotional growth

- All children come to school with a special gift and something to offer; it is the responsibility of caring adults to accept, acknowledge and support them while nurturing their gifts in a warm and respectful quality learning environment

- A developmental approach to preschool education supported by a comprehensive research-based curriculum provides educational opportunities that allow for success in life

- Effective preschool programs have an effect not only on the preschooler but on the community as well. It has the potential to positively alter the lives of families and the community at large

The High/Scope Approach to Learning

The Orange Public School Administration and the Board of Education selected High/Scope as the comprehensive curriculum model for all district and community preschool classrooms. This research-based model promotes a high-quality preschool educational program and is aligned with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards.

The High/Scope curriculum gives the teaching team a systematic method for planning, organizing, and carrying out their preschool responsibilities. For the children, the curriculum provides a consistent and secure daily experience that promises interesting things to do, attention by the teachers to their interests and needs, and a sense of control over themselves and their environment. The experiences that teachers plan foster independent thinking, initiative, and creativity. Young children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical capacities develop quickly when they use materials and their imaginations freely in an environment that promotes investigation, decision-making, cooperation, persistence, and problem solving. The High Scope approach incorporates five essential elements: active participation, adult-child interaction, daily routine, key developmental indicators and the learning environment.

Active Learning/Participation – This means that children are involved in direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, ideas, and events. Teachers plan specific activities and experiences for the children to strengthen their emerging intellectual, physical, social, and emotional abilities. Active learning takes place when young children are able to construct knowledge that will help them make sense of their world.

- Active participants become engaged in play and problem solving because they themselves choose to do so. According to High/Scope, motivation theorists suggest that children choose to become engaged in activities and interactions that are *enjoyable*, *related to their current interests* and that *allow them to experience feelings of control, success, and competence*. Our teachers understand the power of intrinsic motivation (the desire to acquire knowledge because one is genuinely interested in it or to pursue a goal that comes from within). Therefore, they provide many opportunities for children to make choices, take initiative, and lead activities.

Adult-Child Interaction – interaction refers to the verbal and nonverbal dialogue that is created when adults play and communicate with children. In the High/Scope approach, both children and adults contribute to this dialogue, and there is a balance between adult and child contributions. The High/Scope Curriculum allows adults to observe and interact with children at their level to discover how they think and reason. Adults interact with children to support their initiatives,

interests, and developing abilities. By balancing child and adult initiated activities, teachers and children share control of the learning experience.

Support comes from an understanding of:
- How preschoolers think and reason
- Sharing control
- Forming genuine relationships
- Supporting children's play
- Adopting a problem solving approach to social conflict

- Problem Solving Approach to Conflict – Adults working with young children see conflicts throughout a typical day. These incidents often create feelings of frustration and failure. Many times it isn't clear what happened, who is responsible, or how the problem can be resolved. The emotions and reactions that manifest from conflict are very important occasions for learning. Teachers using the High/Scope approach can turn disputes and conflicts into positive experiences by understanding the developmental needs of young children, using problem prevention strategies and engaging the child in a conflict resolution process. By settling disputes with their classmates, children gain an understanding of how to respect the needs of others while meeting their own needs.

Daily Routine – Each classroom has a daily schedule that must be posted for adults. Just the same, a daily routine chart that uses simple words and pictures for the different parts of the day in sequence must be posted for the children to review and follow every day to provide consistency and security for the children. The daily routine chart can be created from left to right or from top to bottom. When particular segments of the day are depicted as being longer or shorter, it helps children begin to realize that some parts of the routine take more time than others do. For example, the square representing Work Time should be wider or longer than the square depicting Planning Time. The routine enables young children to anticipate what happens next and gives them a great deal of control over what they do during each part of their day. The following excerpt is taken from the book entitled *Educating Young Children (Second Edition), Mary Hohmann and David P. Weikart (2002). High/Scope Press: Ypsilanti, MI., 164.*

The daily routine supports child initiative
- It provides time for children to express and follow through on their goals and intentions
- It enables adults to become fully engaged in supporting and encouraging children to do and say things for themselves

The daily routine provides a social framework.

- It provides children with a psychologically safe and purposeful environment.
- It eases children's transition from home to the early childhood setting by building a sense of community

The daily routine provides a flexible structure.

- It provides an alternative to rigid structure and randomness
- It has the potential for teaching adults something new about each child every day

The daily routine supports curriculum values.

- It enables children to construct knowledge
- It includes the ingredients of active learning in each segment

The Basic Parts of the Daily Routine (Taken from the High/Scope Daily Routine Participants Guide pp. 12-16):

- **Greeting Time/Morning Message** – Teachers greet children and review a morning message that has been written on the board with words and pictures

- **Large Group Time** – This segment of the routine helps to build community in the classroom, and it gives the children the opportunity to share ideas and learn from the ideas of others.

- **Small Group Time** – Each adult guides a small group of children (7 or 8) as they focus on the NJ State Standards and the High/Scope Key Developmental Indicators. The activity is planned and introduced by the teachers but the children are free to use the materials in unique ways

- **Outside Time** – Children go outside every day for 45 minutes to exercise those large muscles

- **Meal Time** – Children eat family style, and begin by setting the table, serving themselves, cleaning up after themselves and exchanging pleasant/positive conversation with each other

- **Story Time** – We have large group and small group story time each day (we read individually to children as well)

- **Rest Time** – Each day the children must rest – they do not have to go to sleep

- **Plan-Do-Review** – This is the heart of the daily routine where the children pursue their own interests as they make plans (planning part), follow through on them (the do part), and reflect on their experiences (review) with their classmates and with the adults in the classroom:
  - Planning Time – Children express what they want to do during work time. It takes place in two consistent groups of children with one adult per group. This part of the day must take place directly prior to work time. As soon as a child makes a plan, he/she is free to go and implement the plan
  - Work Time – During this time the children are free to select and manipulate any of the materials available in the interest areas. It is common for children to change their plans during work time. It is the role of the adults to observe children and play, work and converse with them on their own physical level. This is the longest period of the daily routine.
  - Recall Time – This is the last segment in the Plan-Do-Review part of the daily routine and it comes after the children clean up. It takes place in two consistent groups of children with one adult per group. Children are encouraged to share about something they did or who they interacted with during work time. Every child does not need to review verbally every day during this segment of the daily routine. Some children can review individually with a teacher during work time or clean up time.

- **Clean Up Time** – During this segment of the day, the children return materials and equipment to their storage spaces. Clearly and appropriately labeled shelves and containers and a well organized classroom helps children learn where items belong and why certain items are stored together. Clean up time follows work time

Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs) – In the High/Scope Curriculum, the content of the children's learning is organized into eight major divisions that are easily aligned and consistent with the NJ Preschool Standards and Common Core Standards. Key Developmental Indicators describe what young children do, how they perceive their world, and the kinds of experiences that are important for their development. As children play, (i.e. fitting things together, taking them apart, making things and pretending) they construct knowledge and gain a sense of competence. The KDIs are organized into the following categories:
  - Approaches to Learning
  - Social and Emotional Development
  - Physical Development and Health
  - Language, Literacy, and Communication
  - Mathematics
  - Creative Arts
  - Science and Technology
  - Social Studies

Further according to High/Scope the Key Developmental Indicators encapsulate the High/Scope's approach to early education. High/Scope says that the word *key* refers to the fact that these re meaningful ideas children should learn and experience. In addition, the second part of the term, *developmental*, conveys the idea that learning is gradual and cumulative. Learning follows a sequence, generally moving from simple to more complex knowledge and skills according to High/Scope.

Learning Environment – The classroom furniture and equipment are arranged in several clearly defined interest areas that enable children to find, use, and return the materials they need in order to explore, invent, and learn about their world. The areas are clearly separated from each other with separate rules. Preschool children flourish in a well-organized, clearly defined environment that is arranged to promote independence, foster decision-making and encourage initiative and involvement. The classroom environment should convey the following:
- This is a good place to be
- You belong here
- This is a place where you belong
- You can make choice and do things on your own
- This is a place to explore and try out your ideas

The children choose their own area to "work in" as well as the materials they want to "play with". While children are playing in these areas, they are learning about the world around them. The materials in the areas are changed frequently, reflect the children's interests and culture are age appropriate, and can be used in many ways. The materials are stored in a consistent location where the children can reach them, use them and return them. The learning environment is very important because of the impact it has on learning and the behaviors of children. The learning environment provides many   opportunities each day for children to engage in the Key Developmental Indicators in creative and purposeful ways.

Play space should include the following interest areas:
- House
- Sand/Water
- Blocks
- Art (drawing and painting)
- Reading and Writing
- Small Toys
- Computer

Some classrooms have the science and math areas separately. It is not always necessary to do so. Math and science materials should be integrated in all areas of the play space and science and math learning should be going on in the classrooms everyday and all through the daily routine.

The Growing Readers Early Literacy Curriculum

The Early Childhood Program uses the High/Scope *Growing Readers Early Literacy Curriculum* for its focused approach to literacy instruction. This curriculum has four key principles for early literacy instruction:

- Comprehension
- Phonological Awareness
- Alphabetic Principle
- Concepts about Print

This focused approach to literacy development in young children focuses on these four aspects of early literacy because of the strong evidence that young children's knowledge of these concepts is a solid predictor of their reading achievement in later years.

The Four Areas of Concentration

Comprehension – the process of understanding what is being learned by linking it to what is already known. Growing Readers promotes comprehension by enhancing oral language and vocabulary development as an outgrowth of social interaction and children's active engagement with the environment.

Phonological Awareness – this is the ability to attend to the sounds of language as distinct from meaning. This includes initial awareness of speech sounds and rhythms, rhyme awareness, recognition of sound similarities, and phonemic awareness.

Alphabetic Principle – is the understanding of a systematic relationship between letters and sounds known as 'Alphabet Knowledge'. With Growing Readers, preschoolers learn about letters and words by seeing adults write and by examining print in books and on environmental print. Children have ongoing access to the alphabet as they use books, magazines, catalogs, mail, games, and menus as well as alphabet books, alphabet puzzles, three dimensional letters, letter stamps and ink pads, letter blocks, tiles, etc.

Concepts about Print – refer to how print is organized and used in reading and writing tasks. Print awareness begins with oral language development; children learn that language carries messages, and words can represent ideas. As teachers read aloud, children learn about various types of text and their uses. Teachers systematically point to printed words and talk about what they are doing as they read. The use shared writing, in which children dictate short messages and observe as their teachers write them. During shared writing, children have numerous opportunities to learn directionality concepts and to understand the function of letters and words.

Growing Readers is designed to be used in early childhood programs and it is structured around three basic elements:

1. Small group literacy activities at 3 developmental levels
2. New and classic children's books
3. Common classroom materials

Together, these three components provide the tools for systematically and specifically supporting the growth of language and literacy in preschool and kindergarten classrooms.

Examples of Open-Ended Questions

The role of the teacher is to plan activities, carefully observe children, and provide appropriate support and guidance. Teachers extend children's learning by listening, asking open-ended questions, and engaging in meaningful conversations with children.

Sample Open-ended questions:
- What will you do at work time today?
- What materials did you use today?
- What will you do if….?
- How could you use this?
- What did you use first?
- Tell me how to make one?
- What did you do next?
- How did it work?
- How did you know that?
- Do you remember doing anything like that before?
- How do you feel when……?
- What did you say when……?
- How will this go together?

High/Scope Numbers Plus – Preschool Mathematics Curriculum

The Numbers Plus Preschool Mathematics Curriculum is a comprehensive set of detailed plans for small and large group activities, with ideas for extending mathematics learning throughout the program day.

By actively engaging young children with materials and ideas, Number Plus builds on the latest knowledge from research and practice about early mathematics learning and how adults support it.

Numbers plus is sequenced with activities that have a built in progression so children of different developmental and ability levels can participate together and have a positive and meaningful learning experience.

Numbers Plus has five areas of concentration:

1. Numbers and Operations – understanding whole numbers, number words and symbols, counting, comparing, ordering, etc.

2. Geometry – identifying shapes and describing spatial awareness

3. Measurement – measuring objects and using measurements to compare objects

4. Algebra – identifying patterns and relationships

5. Data Analysis – formulating answers by collecting, organizing and analyzing data

Authentic Assessment of Young Children
(Taken from Teachers' Manual for the NJ Early Learning Assessment System)

What is Assessment?
Young children's developmental growth and learning is rapid, variable, and influenced by numerous factors. For these reasons, effective assessment of young children must be ongoing; relying on different types of information from multiple sources.

Performance based assessment is the ongoing process of gathering evidence that documents what children know and understand in order to make informed instructional decisions. Performance based assessment is made up of two processes: documentation and evaluation.

Documentation focuses on identifying, collecting, and describing evidence of children's learning in an objective, nonjudgmental manner. Teachers use documentation to respond to children and to plan for materials, interactions and activities. Teachers document evidence of children's learning in individual, small and large group situations. Evidence may include:

- Anecdotal records of children's conversations and behavior during play, routines and activities
- Annotated samples of artwork, drawing and writing
- Photographs, recording or other annotated records of children engaged in activities

Evaluation is the process of comparing documentation to a standard in order to make a decision or a judgment about the child's skills and how to support them.

What is Performance Based Assessment?
Performance based assessment means that children are assessed in "real life" situations, using typical classroom activities. Documentation for performance based assessment is collected as children play and work in their natural classroom environment. Teachers observe and document what children know and can do by watching them, talking with them, and studying the work they create. Performance based assessment is an effective way to assess young children because it occurs in a familiar setting, with familiar activities, along side of other children, and familiar adults.

There are two types of performance based assessment: on-demand and curriculum-embedded.

On-Demand assessments give children one chance to show what they know. This type of assessment yields potentially misleading results.

Curriculum-embedded assessment or observational assessment occurs in the midst of everyday classroom activities. Children's daily actions and responses are the basis of the assessment. These results are likely to be more accurate and representative of children's achievement.

Child Observation Record

The Orange Public School Administration and the Board of Education selected the High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR) as the performance-based assessment model for all district and community preschool classrooms. This research- based model promotes a high-quality preschool educational program and it is approved by the state of New Jersey Department of Education – Division of Early Childhood Education.

The COR – According to High/Scope, educators of young children must be able to monitor progress in a developmentally appropriate way. Effective assessment helps teachers monitor children's progress. It also assists teachers with developing appropriate activities/lessons for them. Teachers will analyze the assessment data and based on that information, they will develop/create activities/lessons for the children (individual children, small groups of children or a large group of children).

The Preschool COR assessment is based on six child development categories that represent broad domains of child development:

I. Initiative
II. Social Relations
III. Creative Representation
IV. Movement and Music
V. Language and Literacy
VI. Mathematics and Science

How does the COR work?
The teaching staff spend a few minutes each day writing brief notes that describe what children say & do and how they behave in various situations. The COR is completed in the course of everyday activities, and is a true reflection on what the children can do. Therefore, the assessment is seamlessly integrated with teaching and planning. Teachers compile and analyze the notes to provide a comprehensive portrait of each child's developmental gains as well as the progress of the group as a whole. The information gained will assist teachers with planning appropriate activities/lessons for the children.

Highlights of the COR
- Requires no change in the children's daily routine
- Focuses on what children can do, not on what they cannot do
- Is effective in multicultural and multilingual centers
- Is effective in assessing children with special needs
- Provides a framework for communicating with parents

Portfolio Contents for Preschool

Each child's portfolio must contain:

- Three *literacy prompts* (Nov. Jan. May) Prompts must include the date, book title, author and a description of the activity-this could be done on a Post-It or an index card attached to the child's work.
- Three *samples of children writing* (Nov. Jan. May)
- Three sets of *cutting samples...each set contains cutting on a curved and straight line* (Nov. Jan. May)
- Two *self portraits* (Nov. and May)
- Student Profile (final form at the end of the school year STUDENTS GOING TO K ONLY)
- Copy of the Home Language Survey
- Students should select two *items they want* to include in their portfolio (Jan. and May)

When you are doing a literacy prompt with a child, you must record what question or prompt you provided, the setting or situation, the name of the book and author. Of course, you also include the child's verbal response. You should not always ask "What was your favorite part of the book?" There are other strategies that are far more meaningful.

DATE every piece of documentation you put in the portfolio or folder. Without dates, it is impossible to see progress. I know we all think we will remember when a child did something or said something....but we simply have too much on our minds to remember accurately.

Praise vs. Encouragement

(Taken from "Adult Child Interaction Participant Guide" page 36)

The High/Scope Curriculum model developers ask early childhood professionals to look at how and why we interact with children differently than we may have done in the past. Research has shown that praising makes children dependent on adults. It can negatively impact children's self-esteem. It can discourage risk taking because children know that they can't be "good" or "smart" or "nice" all the time and they may become fearful of disappointing the adults in charge. Praise can reduce self motivation and take away a child's power to evaluate his or her own work. It can actually discourage problem solving.

So, what do we do? When we praise children we say things like "Good Job!" "Your dress is so pretty!" "You are so smart!" When we encourage children, we follow the following guidelines:

- Participate in children's play

- Encourage children to describe their efforts, ideas and products. Our goal is to have the children, not adults, evaluate children's work. We want children to develop self-esteem; to feel good about their work and ideas. Ask questions like: "What can you tell me about your picture?" (rather than "Your picture is wonderful") "How did you build this hospital" (rather than "You are a great builder")

- Acknowledge children's work and ideas by making specific comments. You can encourage children to classify and describe their work and ideas by making specific, objective comments about children's work as you talk with them. For example, "I see that you have painted a picture that has a lot of blue paint on the bottom and red paint along the side." (Rather than, "Wow! You are such an artist!")

The Importance of Play

Children are playful by nature. It is the most important process of learning to adapt to the world. Play is a pleasurable, spontaneous and creative into which children put all their energies. There is no distinction between play, learning and work. Children are curious; therefore they find play to be very pleasurable sometimes challenging by always rewarding. Play is a way of controlling the environment; it can be noisy, quiet, messy, organized, silly, natural and exhausting. Through these activities they are learning that they cause things to happen or change (cause and effect).

Play:
- Is enjoyable
- Is intrinsically motivated
- Is free of externally imposed rules
- Is carried out as if the activity is real
- Focuses on the process rather than the product
- Is dominated by the players
- Requires active involvement of the player

Children who are in supportive play environments have the opportunities to be aware of others, watch and imitate what others do. Focus on things that interest them and converse about what they are doing or feeling.

Types of play that children engage in:
- Exploratory Play – simple actions, manipulating materials trying out new actions and repeating pouring sand from one container to another
- Constructive Play – children create things such as build towers, roads cakes out of clay they become creators
- Pretend Play – acting out "what if" situations
- Games – children are beginning to invent their own simple cooperative games

Reference:
Rogers, Cosby S. & Sawyers, Janet K. (1988) Play in the Lives of Children

Rest Time

The daily routine used in our preschool programs allows for one hour of rest time per day. Preschoolers have unique sleeping needs. Many of the children in our classes may no longer require a nap as the year progresses. Children must never be forced to sleep and may engage in quiet activities during rest time.

The rest schedule should meet the needs of most children in the group. It should be neither too early nor too late in the day. The time frame scheduled for rest should be predictable. The atmosphere in the classroom should be conducive for resting. The lights should be dimmed and soft music can be played in the background. Teachers can help children relax by helping them to get settled and rubbing their backs. Children must be carefully supervised during rest time.

Sanitary conditions must be maintained. Mats or cots should be placed at least 18 inches apart from one another. Thirty six inches is optimal. Children should be positioned head to toe and they must have assigned cots or mats and use only their own bedding.

If a child is particularly tired for some reason, he/she should be permitted to take a rest earlier in the day or for a longer period.

Tooth Brushing

In an effort to model and teach good dental hygiene practices, each classroom will implement daily tooth brushing for all students. In order to prevent cross-contamination between students, tooth brushes and tooth paste, this activity must be closely monitored by staff and proper procedures must be followed. The following procedures are summarized from the Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Section 1304.22 and the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised Health Practices 7.2.

Sanitation and Storage
- Each student must have his or her own tooth brush. Each tooth brush must be labeled with the child's name. Tooth brushes must be stored individually and kept out of reach of the children when not in use.
- Each classroom will be provided with tooth brushes and a storage system.

- Teachers must sanitize each tooth brush holder two times each month. It should be washed with soap and warm water. If the holder becomes visibly dirty between scheduled sanitation, it must be sanitized.
- The sink used for tooth brushing must be sanitized prior to and after each group of children use it to brush their teeth. The classroom bleach and water solution should be used.

Tooth Brushing Procedures
- Each child should brush his or her teeth one time per school day.
- Children should brush their teeth in small groups.
- Adults must carefully supervise the activity to be certain that each child only uses his or her tooth brush. Children must be prevented from spitting on or near one another's tooth brush.
- Adults must place a pea-sized amount of tooth paste on a surface other than the child's tooth brush. The side of a disposable cup or paper towel can be used. The child will transfer the toothpaste on to his or her own tooth brush.

It is the responsibility of the classroom staff members to teach and model proper tooth brushing techniques in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Tooth brushing song (sample – tune of Here we Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush):

<u>Brush your Teeth</u>
This is the way we brush our teeth,
Brush our teeth, Brush our teeth.
This is the way we brush our teeth
So early in the morning (or afternoon).

Health and Safety Highlights

The health and safety of the children in our classrooms is of the utmost importance. A good early childhood educator must be certain that health and safety procedures are consistently followed. The following list of health and safety tips is not exhaustive, but is a good start. It is recommended that you look carefully through the health and safety sections of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R).

- ✓ Are all the outlets covered (unless they are the newer self closing safety type)?
- ✓ Do you have broken toys or equipment that might cause injury…..indoors and outdoors?
- ✓ Are there any tripping hazards in your room or on your playground?
- ✓ Do you have any unsteady furniture?
- ✓ Are all dangerous or potentially poisonous materials (cleaning products, air fresheners, medicines, etc.) stored under lock and key? Keeping them up high and out of the reach of children is not enough.
- ✓ Is your bleach and water solution stored out of the reach of children? This is the only cleaning supply that does not have to be under lock and key.
- ✓ Do you have a well stocked first aid kit that is easily accessible in your room?
- ✓ Are emergency procedures clearly posted?
- ✓ Is your fire evacuation plan clearly posted?
- ✓ Are children's allergies clearly posted? Remember, have the list in an envelop or file so that we can maintain confidentiality.
- ✓ Do the children and adults consistently wash their hands upon arrival in class or re-entry from outdoors, after sand or messy play, before and after water play, after dealing with bodily fluids or skin contact, after touching pets or contaminated objects, before eating, after toileting, after wiping their noses, and whenever they are soiled?
- ✓ Are you sanitizing tables consistently and correctly? Remember to follow the two step process. Tables should be washed with soap and water and then sanitized with a bleach and water solution. Tables should be dried with paper towels not rags or sponges. Children should not use the bleach and water solution and it should not be sprayed near people or food.
- ✓ Is your room simply clean? While no one expects you to be constantly picking up, please make sure that your floors are free of crumbs and spills. Garbage cans should be covered and not over-flow. Tables should not be dirty and must be

cleaned before and after eating and after messy activities using the proper procedures (soapy water to wash; then sanitize with bleach and water solution.*
- ✓ At nap time, cots should be at least 18 inches apart. Thirty six inches is optimal and place the children head to toe.

*Proper Bleach and Water Solution is 10 parts water to one part bleach. The solution must be mixed fresh each day

See All About ECERS-R pp 92-143

Personal Hygiene Practices

Hand washing is the first line of defense against infectious diseases. As part of this line of defense, teachers and children should wash their hands immediately upon arrival in the classroom and throughout the day.

All teachers and children are required to wash both hands with liquid soap and rinsed thoroughly under warm running water. Hands should be dried with individual paper towels or air dried with a blower. Using gloves, wipes, or antiseptic waterless washes does not count as substitutes for hand washing. An exception is that if hand washing is required on the playground (after a child wipes his nose for example) use of a wipe is acceptable.

All children and staff must wash hands if engaged in the following activities.
- Upon arrival into the classroom
- Before and after eating, handling food, and cooking activities
- Before giving medication (before and after dealing with cuts, scrapes and other health needs)
- Before and after playing in water that is used by more than one child
- Before and after applying sunscreen to a child

After
- Coming in contact with bodily fluid (blood, fecal matter, urine, vomit, mucus or other secretions).
- The handling of pets and other animals
- Playing in the sand box (indoors and outdoors)
- Messy activities; gardening
- Coming in from the playground
- Cleaning or handling the garbage; touching trash cans or lids
- Cleaning up spills
- Sneezing or coughing when hands are contaminated
- Wiping noses

Hand washing Procedure
- Moisten hands with warm water and use liquid soap
- Rub hands together vigorously for at least 10 seconds (sing one verse of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

- Wash back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under nails
- Rinse hands free of soap under running water
- Dry hands with a clean disposable individual paper towel or air dry with a blower
- Turn off water using the paper towel, not your clean hands
- Throw the used paper towel into the hands-free trash container

Meal Times

Meal time is an important part of a preschooler's routine. Most children in our program eat breakfast, lunch and a snack with their classmates and teachers. Meals should be of high nutritional quality and follow USDA serving guidelines. The meal schedule should be appropriate for the children in the group.

Close attention should be made to health and safety issues. Teachers and children must wash hands before handling food. Watch for recontamination of hands. Tables must be properly sanitized with a two step process of soap and water and a bleach and water solution.

All meals should be served "family style". This gives the children the opportunity to serve themselves and interact socially with classmates and teachers. Meals are a wonderful time for promoting language development. Teachers should sit with the children whenever possible. Child sized serving containers and utensils should be used.

Food should never be withheld as a punishment or used as a reward. Teachers must be cognizant of food allergies or dietary restrictions that are prevalent in the classroom. Allergies and restrictions must be posted in a covered file or folder where staff can access the information as needed.

Transitions

Transitions occupy from 20% to 35% of activity time in nursery school…….This surprising statistic certainly emphasizes that transitions are worth thinking about and managing well so that children can move as smoothly as possible from one activity to the next - Joanne Hendrick, *The Whole Child: Developmental Education for the Early Years* (4th ed.), Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Co., 1988, p. 52.

Although we think of a high quality preschool program as much more than the traditional "nursery schools" of the past, the fact remains that transitions are a regular, and often challenging, part of an early childhood routine. The High/Scope Daily Routine Participant Guide offers eight keys to successful transitions on page 26 of that manual.

Keys to Successful Transitions

1. Reduce the number of transitions until there are as few as possible
2. Decrease the waiting time by having one activity start as soon as another finishes or by having the end of one activity overlap with the beginning of another
3. Use brief music and movement activities to capture children's attention during the transition
4. When needed, offer children choices during a transition: "You can stay at the table with us as we finish small group time or you can go to the circle and look at some books"
5. Balance your daily routine so that times of high activity alternate with quieter times
6. Familiarity with the routine helps children make transitions independently – therefore, help children become accustomed to the routine by following it consistently, using the names of the segment of the routine in conversations with children, and reviewing the routine each morning with children using a daily routine chart
7. Give children warning just prior to a transition in the routine
8. Predict for children what is coming next

NJDOE Preschool Guidance

Preschool Celebrations

There should be times for celebrating and for bringing closure to the children's time together. These large group times should be active, designed around children's interests, and take place for a length of time that is appropriate for the children. Graduation ceremonies that require a lot of time for practice and memorization, or that focus on adult-centered activities, are not appropriate for preschool. The practice sessions may create a high level of stress for both children and teachers.

An appropriate end of the year celebration should be participatory and meaningful for all the children. Familiar music and movement activities, reciting poems and finger plays, or acting out a familiar story are all appropriate choices to incorporate into the designated day. The celebration will be most comfortable for the children if it takes place in a familiar location such as the classroom or familiar outside area.

Planning Field Trips for Preschoolers

Preschool programs can be enriched through the inclusion of carefully planned field trips. Firsthand experience can provide children with information and a level of understanding that adds elements to their play, enriches vocabulary and enhances their overall learning.

The age and developmental level of preschool children must always be taken into consideration. Many trips that would be educational for older children are simply too overwhelming for younger children (i.e. trips that require long bus rides of over forty minutes or require children to be out of the center for the entire day) or that may not be safe for younger children (i.e. trips where careful supervision is difficult). Particular needs of children in the group must also be considered when choosing and planning a trip. The trip should be appropriate for all children in the class and be accessible for children with special needs. Special arrangements that can be made to ensure that all children are included should be researched and planned ahead of time.

For children to gain the greatest benefit, field trips should not only be thoughtfully chosen, but should also relate to the *New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards*, the district's DOE approved comprehensive curriculum and the children's interests. Meaningful field trips are integrated with a current study, theme or classroom project. If children are interested in farm animals, a trip to a real farm could greatly enhance children's understanding. If children have not had any exposure to farm animals, the trip would provide concrete experiences that the teacher will be able to build upon.

First field trips should be to places that are familiar in some way to young children. Many of the best trips build on children's interests and the curriculum by revolving around the immediate, familiar community. Trips to local grocery stores, libraries, flower shops etc. can enhance relationships

between family members, the school and the community and can often be planned at little or no cost. Field experiences can also take place in-class or in-school by inviting guests and setting up an area of the room with books, props and materials relevant to the content.

Effective teachers will use recommended best practices by introducing a field trip in advance and providing opportunities for the children to apply new concepts and information in the days after the trip. The teacher may use a storybook and props to set the stage for the trip. She/he will discuss the trip with the children and chart their predictions of what they might see and/or questions they might ask.
On the day of the trip, the adults will actively engage the children by discussing the sights, people etc. (context) and by encouraging the children to explore, question and think about their experience (content). Adults may take photographs to record the day and to create a book with the children. The teacher may return to the class chart the day of or the day following the trip so that children can compare their predictions and questions with their actual findings. Small group and center activities can be planned to extend children's learning. Props or materials can be added to dramatic play that will deepen children's understandings. The opportunity for developing new vocabulary will be stronger as children add more roles to their play.

Field Trip Approval:

Districts have an obligation to ensure that all field trips are safe, age appropriate and planned to enhance the curriculum:

- Districts must have a clear policy in place to ensure that all field trips, whether planned by a private provider or an in-district school, go through a central district and budgetary approval process.
- This policy should also include the stipulation that parent chaperones are not to be charged for field trips.
- Policies regarding procedures should be the same for both in-district classes and private providers.
- District administrators and community provider directors should require teachers to fill out a field trip form that designates the purpose of the field trip and its relationship to the *New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards*.
- Policies and forms for securing transportation should be followed. Children should never be transported in cars owned by private individuals.

Field Trip Preparations:

In addition to preparing for the learning experience, the teacher should prepare the children for each trip:

- All sites for field trips should be visited by a staff member prior to scheduling the trip for children.

- Safety precautions, the buddy system, positive behavioral expectations and emergency procedures with children and adults should be reviewed and rehearsed as necessary.
- The teacher should assess and determine if children and other adults are adequately prepared to take field trips. Readiness on the part of all responsible adults is critical to the safety of the children.
- The staff should prepare identification tags for all children that include the name of the school/center and phone number. Caution should be used in placing children's names on tags as this may result in alerting strangers to the individual child's name. If necessary, name tags might be worn inside shirts or tops. Some schools/centers have shirts printed with their logo, name and address so that children and staff will easily be identified.
- The teacher should explain the planned field trip to parents and receive permission slips for each child for each trip.
- The teacher must have children and parents' names, telephone numbers and school/emergency telephone numbers with them at all times. An accurate list of children in attendance on the day of the trip must be supplied. A copy should be also left at the school/center.
- The teacher should decide how children will be grouped with adults. The adult chaperones must have lists of the children in their care with the telephone number of the school/center.
- A place for regrouping and checkpoints should be identified at each trip site.
- Adult supervision of all children at all times is essential. Children must never be left alone or sent ahead of the group for any reason. The adult/child ratios recommended for trips are 1:3 for three year olds and 1:4 for four year olds.
- A designated staff person for each group should have the responsibility of carrying a first aid kit, money and needed supplies. Required medications, allergy concerns and nutritional needs must be considered.
- Safe and healthy foods should be provided that follow the food service guidelines. Staff should be aware of any steps necessary for safe handling of food. Whenever possible, adults who are responsible for carrying items should not be directly responsible for a group of children.

Recommended Field Trips:

Many districts have developed lists of recommended field trips. Attached to this memo you will find some examples of common field trips. Please note that this list encompasses trips that are *generally* considered appropriate for preschool children. For example, not every farm or theatre production will be an ideal site for a class trip. Discretion and common sense must always be used when determining if a field trip is safe and has educational value. A follow-up evaluation of the value of the trip and any pertinent highlights or significant features should be noted for future reference.

Field Trip Examples

Appropriate

Small Local Airport/ Train Station
Animal Shelter/Pet Shop
Bagel Shop/Bakery
Children's theatre production
Children's museum
Doctor's/Veterinarian's Office
Farm
Florist/Garden Shop
Fruit/Vegetable Store/Grocery Store
Hospital
Library
Local Restaurant/Pizzeria/Cafeteria
Nature walks – along the beach, in nearby parks or gardens
Post Office
School
Zoo

Inappropriate

Carnival
Circus
Movie theatre
Shopping malls
Theme park
Water Park

Planning for Holiday Activities and Celebrations

Educators often have questions and concerns about how to address holiday activities and celebrations in a way that is developmentally appropriate for preschoolers. It is important to take into account the many different perspectives on holidays and what they mean to the communities, families and children that we serve in our schools. These special occasions can have religious, cultural and historical significance, as well as personal meaning. It's also important to consider the perspective that some families in our communities may not celebrate any holidays during the year.

It can easily become common practice to automatically celebrate holidays in our classrooms throughout the year without giving careful thought as to what is best practice for the students.

There are some guiding questions that schools and teachers can use when considering the whole notion of how to approach holidays:

- Does our practice make sense when thinking about the developmentally appropriate teaching practices that are aligned with our curriculum?
- Are our practices age-appropriate?
- Is what we do relevant to the individual children who are currently in our classrooms?
- Are we inadvertently relying on store-bought activity books with content that focuses on holidays throughout the year?
- In trying to be multicultural in our approach, are we mistakenly using holidays as the main or only way of teaching about cultural diversity?

Some alternatives for approaching holiday activities and celebrations are:

- Observe only holidays relevant to the cultures in the community with activities that accurately reflect what is celebrated at home and how it is celebrated at home. At the same time, check to find out if, within your adopted curriculum, teachers are stressing children's learning about the usual happenings and everyday routines of families based on the cultures represented in the local community. By valuing the cultural lives of children, teachers send a strong message to each child about his/her personal value as a member of the classroom group while simultaneously providing lessons about valuing cultural similarities and differences in the community.
- Celebrate holidays with circle-time discussions, storybook reading and simple, traditional snacks relevant to the children in the class.
- Omit all or part of holiday activities and celebrations from the curriculum. This can make sense if many families in a program are opposed to celebrations and/or activities for religious reasons. This type of policy can also make sense when used to eliminate activities and celebrations designed for older audiences that preschoolers cannot understand.

The policy that you adopt should be guided by the goals of your adopted curriculum and the *New Jersey Teaching and Learning Standards*. The policy should reflect the diversity present in your community and be inclusive of all families served by your preschool program through thoughtful, developmentally appropriate activities and celebrations that reflect overall classroom goals.

Further Reading:

Bisson, Julie. 1997. *Celebrate: An Anti-Bias Guide to Enjoying Holidays in Early Childhood Programs.* St. Paul MN. Redleaf Press.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). 2009. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice, 3d Edition.* Washington, D.C. NAEYC.

Derman-Sparks, Louise and the A.B.C Task Force.1989. *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children.* Washington, D.C. NAEYC.

Bridges

Goal of Bridges – the goal is to provide opportunities for parents to be meaningfully involved in their child's educational experience. Bridges is strictly about parent involvement and education so that parents will begin to understand how children learn at this age and what they can do to maximize their growth and development.

Bridges is designed to give parents activities that they could do at home with their children. The activities are designed so that parents do not have to purchase anything; rather they are designed for parents to spend quality time with their children. Teachers will send activities home regularly and consistently following strict guidelines.

Facts about Bridges

- Bridges assignments are expected to be returned – in as much as possible.

- The teacher should not acknowledge receipt of the assignment with some type of reward (happy face, check mark, sticker, etc.). Rather the teachers must apply the same rules as with other work that the children create and want to display. A separate bulletin board for Bridges is not permitted. Children should choose whether or not to display their work in the classroom. If work is displayed, the child who created it decides where to place it.

- Bridges is not designed to be punitive rather it is an avenue for teachers to help parents become meaningfully involved in their children's development. Bridges is not designed to place parents or children in awkward positions, make them feel bad, add stress to their lives or make them feel obligated in any kind of way. Additionally, and equally important, Bridges is for teachers to form a relationship with their parents.

- Bridges activities may be sent home 3-4 times per week; the emphasis is not on the quantity, but quality.

- Activities could be sent home on a certain day each week or via the monthly newsletter or any other way that is convenient for parents. It is highly recommended that teachers talk with parents/guardians regarding the best way to send the activities home. The point here is to be consistent in what every method is chosen.

- Many of the Bridges activities do not require the parent or child to bring something back to the school. However, we do need and value the opinions of the parents/guardians regarding these activities. Therefore, it is recommended that if the activity is something that must be returned to school, the teachers must ask the child if he/she would like to display the activity in the classroom (it should be up to the child as to where the activity will be displayed). Teachers must also refrain from the "show n tell" model when children return their activities. Teachers must find a way for parents to feel good about attempting/completing the Bridges activities. We want parents to feel good about themselves and we want teachers to continue building a good relationship with the parents. One recommendation is to have an end of the year celebration for parents to show them your appreciation for them participating in Bridges (this should be open to all parents not just the parents who participated – we don't want parents to feel bad if they did not participate). Also it is very important for teachers to get to know their parents and the skills that they have and tailor the Bridges activities accordingly.

- Teachers must also take note of their body language and other non-verbal language when talking with parents about the Bridges activities, particularly if the parents/guardians are not able to complete the activities. Reminder, nothing associated with Bridges should be punitive; this should not be something that is forced upon anyone. No attitudes, No pressure, No stress!

- Only activities from Bridges are approved to go home; all other activities must be approved by the director **and** master teacher before they are sent home. However, since Bridges is a work in progress, we welcome the opportunity to have new activities added. To add a new activity the teacher must complete the activity template and submit it to a Bridges committee member. The activity will be reviewed and if it is appropriate, it will be added to the other approved Bridges activities. If the activities require modifications, someone from the committee will discuss the modifications with you and the activity will be reviewed again. This is extremely important because we do not want inappropriate activities going home; we want to be consistent in our message and philosophy to families.

Lesson Plans

Benefits of lesson planning for Teachers:
– Knowing what to expect reduces stress
– Allows you to prepare the required materials
– Following the day in an organized manner is easier and fun
– Conveys professionalism to parents
– Allows you to track and monitor children's learning

Benefits of lesson planning for Children:
– Children know what to expect
– Reduces tension thus reducing misbehavior
– Sense of time and sequence is developed
– Children learn the skill of predicting, which helps with problem solving

Benefits of lesson planning for Parents:
– Parents feel more secure when they know something about daily plans
– Encourages them to discuss with their child what is going on at school
– Helps educate parents on appropriate growth and development activities for their child

Planning the Lesson – after gathering information about the children (i.e. interests, developmental stages, family background, etc.), teachers must use the High/Scope KDIs, the COR and the NJ DOE Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards to develop a plan for individual, small/large groups of children. The plans must have appropriate objectives and fun and interesting activities that children would enjoy.   Plans are submitted once per week for review for the following week. They should be emailed to the principal, supervisor, master teacher, inclusion teacher and prep time teacher.

Components of the lesson plans (see appendix for the lesson plan template):

Unit of Study: Studies are one of the most effective ways for children to learn content material while developing skills in literacy, math, the arts and technology. They support children's wonderful ability to become totally engaged in topics and activities that interest them, and they challenge children to extend their thinking to even higher levels. Studies are meaningful to children because they provide opportunities to gain information through direct observation and experimentation and then link new ideas to what children already know.

Recommended Steps in Planning a Study

Step 1- Select an appropriate topic (based on what you think will hold the children's interest and one that has meaningful content worth knowing).

Step 2- Create a web of important ideas. Use the web to anticipate the concepts that maybe learned. Begin to write down words and statements and then put them into groups. For example: a study about insects. The important ideas may be how insects move, what insects eat, where insects live and how insects help us.

Step 3- Determine how content knowledge and process skills can be learned through the study: language/literacy, science, math, the arts, technology and social studies.

Step 4- Discuss the topic with the children and find out what understanding they already have of the topic. Encourage the children to put thoughts into words and pictures. Ask them what they want to know about the topic and make a list of their questions.

Step 5- Family Involvement: Inform families of the proposed study topic. Encourage parents to discuss the topic at home with their children and share any expertise with the class. Involve families as active participants.

Step 6- Planning your lessons for the study- Think about how the children might investigate this topic in interest areas, daily routine and group time activities. For example a study about cars: get more out of building a dash board or steering wheel out of recyclable materials than by sponge painting car shapes onto a piece of paper.

Step 7- Assemble relevant materials and resources. Think about what children are going to need to make investigations: books, materials, technology, and field trips to support children's learning.

Step 8 – Facilitate investigations. While children are in small groups, investigate research questions.   Plan for differentiated activities based on the student's level of development.

Step 9- Document findings. Children document what they learn through representations (drawings, writings, diagrams, maps, graphs, collections, constructions, etc.)

Step 10- Before the children lose interest, think about how you want to end the study on a high note.

Essential Questions: What is it that you are trying to answer and/or learn about this week based on your unit of study and your activities? This may be one question or multiple questions; however, the activities in the lesson plan must be designed to answer the essential questions.

New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards and the High/Scope Key Developmental Indicators: This section is important in that it ensures that the teachers are creating lesson plans that are based on the state approved standards and the curriculum content. Plans are also based on the child assessment data (COR). Teachers will use the data that is available to them and will place an asterisk next to the activities that are driven by assessment data. Teachers must list all of the relevant standards and KDIs for the lesson plans that they create each week. Standards must be prioritized to ensure that children are ready for the next level of their educational experience but they must also touch all the standards in a given year. Regularly reviewing the standards/KDIs that have been used in planning the lessons will help teachers monitor those

that the children have been exposed to and those that need more exposure (see appendix for the link to the NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, and the KDIs hand-out).

Instructional Objective: This is a mini goal that the teacher hopes the children will gain after experiencing the activities associated with the goal.

Materials: Teachers must list all of the materials that are needed for small/large activities, work time, story time, outside time, etc. Materials must be prepared in advance and each child must have his/her own set of materials for small group time and large group time in as much as possible.

Activity: The teacher will describe the activity that she will engage the children in. The activity must be age and ability appropriate but challenging. This is the section where differentiation of instruction must be evident. Teachers must identity how she will differentiate the activity for all learners (typically by placing a B for beginning learners and L for later learners). Also instruction must be differentiated for English Language Learners and Inclusion Students. There must be a beginning or introduction to the activity (teachers often state what the children will do, why it is important and the materials that will be used). This is followed by the middle part of the activity, which is what the children and teachers will actually do or experience. The last part of the written activity is the closure. Teachers must bring the activity to a close by reviewing all that occurred during the activity.

Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist Team (PIRS)

When a child in the classroom is demonstrating learning or behavioral difficulties, it is up to the classroom teacher to closely observe and document the child's behavior. In order to support the child who is having difficulties, the teacher attempt to adapt the activities and the environment to meet the child's distinct learning or behavioral needs. The teacher will also enlist the help of the child's parents as the primary source of information concerning the child. Another resource is the master teacher. The master teacher works in conjunction with the classroom teacher to provide additional strategies to meet the child's needs and to facilitate full participation in the preschool classroom. Licensed social workers and family workers can help with additional family and community outreach to support the child's needs.

The primary role of PIRS is to work with school district administrators, center directors, master teachers, preschool classroom staff and the school district child study team members to increase inclusion of children in general preschool classrooms and to decrease referrals for special education while meeting the overall objective of seamless preschool programming. PIRS members consult with classroom teachers to provide support for children who, either through the screening process or through the observation of the classroom teacher and master teacher is exhibiting difficulty in the classroom.

The PIRS Team should:
- Consult with and support master teachers and preschool classroom staff in planning strategies, adapting teaching practices, involving and educating families and making modifications to help preschool children meet the *NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards*;
- Conduct regular visits to classrooms to observe, model, provide feedback and make recommendations about appropriate strategies, classroom modifications and the selection of adaptive materials;
- Plan and implement behavior support plans in cases where children's behavior blocks successful participation in the preschool classroom;
- Plan and implement professional development in coordination with the inclusion master teacher for instructional staff and administrators to facilitate preschool inclusion;
- Coordinate meetings for professionals across disciplines and with families, as appropriate with the goal of consulting, collaborating and planning as a team;

- Coordinate with school district special services departments and child study team members, when beneficial, to ensure seamless preschool programming; and
- Facilitate, when appropriate, a written referral to the school district child study team as set forth in the *New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:13.*

Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is an approach for changing a child's behavior that is based on humanistic values and research. It offers an approach for developing an understanding of why the child had problem behavior and teaching the child new skills to replace problem behavior. PBS offers a holistic approach that considers all of the factors that impact on a child and the child's behavior. It can be used to address problem behaviors that may range from aggression, tantrums, and property destruction, to withdrawing or repetitive behaviors.

PBS provides a process for identifying the problem behaviors of the child, developing and understanding of their purpose or function, and developing a behavior support plan that will result in reducing problems and developing new skills. In the classrooms and the program, the behavior support plan is implemented by all caregivers, and is encouraged to be implemented by the family in the home and community. The use of the support plan ensures that the child's behavior will change quickly and the child's caregivers will be better able to teach and interact with the child.

PBS is different from traditional behavior modification in three ways:
1. It is focused on the use of positive intervention strategies that are respectful of the child
2. The intervention that are developed are individualized and are based on an understanding of the child, the child's communication abilities, and the unique situations of the child
3. The intervention strategies that are developed are focused on helping the child gain access to new environments, have positive social interactions, develop friendships, and learn new communication skills

Tucker Turtle – PBS Mascot

Inclusion of Students with Special Needs

It has been a district policy to offer to all children a place in their community where their educational needs and care can be met. Focus is on individualizing instruction to meet the goals of each child's IEP by choosing an appropriate instructional environment and format. Recognizing a child's learning style, special needs, and strengths, assists in the development of a program that will build on the strengths while the child learns new skills.

The High/Scope curriculum supports an active learning environment. Within an active learning environment, all children are assisted in generalizing the skills they have learned, outside the instructional setting. The children are involved in functional tasks that will help to teach specific skills.

Generalizing the skills, or being able to use skills across environments, materials, and trainers, is an essential aspect of an active learning educational environment. This is essential in providing learning activities and skill development for children with special needs, as well. Motivation is key to reinforcing skills which are then maintained because they are being used naturally.

Once the child starts in the preschool program, the preschool inclusion teacher (special educator) will meet with the classroom teacher to review the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). To more specifically define the goals and objectives of the IEP, the classroom teacher will define the difficulties that prevent the child from engaging in the everyday activities with the class. Together the special educator and the classroom teacher complete a grid called, "Goals at a Glance." This grid lists the typical activities of the day (e.g., arrival, work time, meal time). The needs are listed in each area where it may apply and then together the teachers determine some strategies to modify, accommodate or remediate the area(s) of need. The purpose of this form is to facilitate embedded teaching strategies. The form is to be used by all instructional staff members so as to know when and where support can be provided for the child with special needs.

Integrated instruction is provided by the special education inclusion teachers. The inclusion teachers work in the classrooms with the students, working within the activities that may be occurring within the regular routine of the classroom, or sometimes bringing in an activity. These activities are not for the children with special needs only, rather other children may join in as well. The special educators try to stagger their scheduled visits to the classrooms

so as to be present for different times of the day in which the student's needs may be addressed. Conferring with the teachers often happens in quick "debriefing" sessions, but also occurs in preplanned meetings with the teachers.

Other therapies, such as Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy, may be provided in class or in a pull-aside or pull-out model. It is the aim of the preschool program to have these therapies provided within the classroom environment as much as possible. In this way, the classroom teachers and assistants will become knowledgeable with the techniques and strategies implemented by the therapists that will help in facilitating the child's skill development.

Progress is monitored by the inclusion teacher and therapists in conjunction with the classroom teacher. All of the above will result in a program in which:
- Children with and without disabilities will fully participate
- Children with disabilities will receive the support and related services needed to achieve valuable learning
- Children will form and maintain productive social relationships with other children
- Children will learn to accept others who may be different
- Children will be more accepting of their own limitations

Parent Involvement

Parents are the child's first teacher; therefore, they should be continually involved in the ongoing process of educating their children. Good communication is crucial for building partnerships. It is the responsibility of the teacher to understand and respect each child's family. In creating a supportive classroom climate, parents and teachers can share control. When children see that there is respect and real communication between their family and teacher they feel content at home and at school.

The impact of a family life affects every aspect of the child's life. The High/Scope approach recognizes the important role family plays in young children's lives.

We help children and their families by:
- Focusing on the strength of the family
- Understanding the child's home culture
- Having open relationships amongst adults and children
- Empowering children to act confidently and respect for other
- Expect excellence from all children

Parent conferences are held twice a year the purpose is to share information and the child's progress. There should be a discussion of the child's development, objectives and strategies you are working on with the student. Parents should be included on sharing their own observations and objectives that are important to them.

Sample conference questions to ask parents:
- What does your child like or dislike about coming to school?
- What changes have you seen?
- What would you like your child to experience at school this year?

Community and Parent Involvement Specialist
Classroom teachers are central to the way in which parents and other family members are included in the program. The community and parent involvement specialist works with the supports classroom teachers. The specialist facilitates the community needs assessment, staffs the Early Childhood Advisory Council, organizes and oversees systematic family involvement plans and activities and coordinates work with other agencies.

Social Worker (MSW)

The social worker should collaborate with the classroom teachers, master teachers and other school district professionals to support the families. In conjunction with the community and parent involvement specialist, the social worker should reach out to families, determine individual needs, provide advocacy services and help obtain available community services. Responsibilities also include assisting parents in learning about child development, nutrition, providing a safe environment and supporting the curriculum chosen by the school district. The social worker should accomplish this by designing and providing family workshops based on identified needs and topics revealed on parent surveys. Families of children with Individualized Education Plans should be included in all workshops.

Family Worker

Family workers should have experience working with families, knowledge of available social service agencies and community resources and experience working in the local community. Family workers collaborate and communicate regularly with the community and parent involvement specialist, in-district social workers, master teachers, teachers, center directors and other district professionals, as needed, in areas of parent needs, parent involvement and recruitment and outreach. The family worker should provide ongoing communication with the family members to ensure that their specific needs are being met, including determining the social and health services needs of families, enhancing the relationship between teachers and families, assisting with transition and making at least three family visits per school year. The family worker must work as a team member with classroom staff, the master teacher and other professionals to support the child and family.

Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language

Bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) are services provided to children who speak a language other than English at home. An English Language Learner (ELL) is a student for whom English is not his native or first language. An ELL is only one term to describe this type of student. You may hear them referred to as ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages); LCD (Linguistically and Culturally Diverse); SLL (Second Language Learner); LEP (Limited English Proficient); LES (Limited English Speaker); and FES (Fluent English Speaker). These will include children born outside of the United States and have just immigrated with their parents and/or U.S. born children from one of many cultural backgrounds where English is not spoken at home.

Our preschool students enter school with a variety of different ability levels in oral language: never been exposed to English, but has strong first language skills; never been exposed to English and has weak first language skills; or some command of social/oral English language. Children are always allowed to interact in their home language in the classroom. Research has shown that development of language and literacy in the home or first language facilitates development of language and literacy in the second language. Development of the first language also stimulates cognitive development. English Language Learners go through several stages in the acquisition of English and there are characteristics of these stages that teachers need to know. There will be workshops and trainings for teachers and assistant teachers to help them understand theories of second language acquisition; stages of adaptation for English Language Learners; strategies to use in the classroom for effective teaching in relation to each stage of language acquisition; cultural diversity issues; some specific terms for understanding second language acquisition; working with parents to reinforce what the children are learning in the classroom while maintaining the home language; and the principles for teaching English Language Learners.

As children are registered, the parents are asked to fill out a Home Language Survey form. This form is a pre-screening device to see whether students need to take tests for entry into ESL. Each teacher is also asked to complete a Classroom Language Survey form. This is another tool to help decide whether a student needs to be tested. On this form, the teacher rates the children's English Language proficiency. Another State of New Jersey form that the teacher is required to complete is the Bilingual/ESL Immigrant Student Count.

This is crucial to funding in the district. The teacher can send additional forms home to gather information about each student's cultural background so as to be able to integrate the information into the classroom environment.

Based on the information from the above forms, the children may be identified as second language learners. At the preschool level, ESL services are inclusive (push-in) as opposed to a pull-out program. Implementing and integrating effective teaching strategies are necessary to facilitate language development of English Language Learners in classrooms. Language interactions are embedded in the daily activities and happen at regular and predictable ways. Some of the many different methods for helping children understand and learn English are:
- Combining gestures with talk
- Using simple language and emphasizing important words
- Pointing to pictures/illustrations
- Repeating key words and phrases
- Talking about the "here and now"
- Translating news from the first language in to English

Diversity is considered in choosing materials used by the children – pictures and photos displayed books, puzzles, games, dolls, and play people in the block area, puppets, music tapes, videos, and computer software. So, choose for example:
- Dress up clothing that represents different countries and customs such as hats, shoes, pants, shirts, and dresses
- Puppets representing people of different cultures
- Small toy people representing various ethnic groups
- Real equipment used by people with disabilities
- Play money from different countries

Diversity is included as part of daily routines and play:
- Ethnic foods are served often as meals or snacks
- Music from various cultures is used at naptime
- Say hello or goodbye in different languages
- Family traditions and utensils are provided at meals and snacks if desired
- Bingo is played in different languages
- Musical instruments representing varied cultures are accessible; children regularly dance to music from various cultures

Activities that promote understanding and acceptance of diversity are included daily in the classroom. This is an opportunity to include parents and caregivers in the life of the classroom. Teachers and adults take these opportunities to talk about the characteristics of countries, cultures and differences therein. Examples can include:

- For a cooking activity, children prepare and eat a food representative of a certain culture
- People come in to teach children folk songs of different countries
- Children learn dances from different countries
- Children watch videos of games played in other countries

Measures of Classroom Quality

Several instruments are used to measure the quality of the Orange Public School District's preschool program. Please become familiar with each tool. Copies will be provided to you.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)

Overall classroom quality is measured using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised. The ECERS-R rates classroom quality on a 7 point scale, indicating a range of quality from inadequate (1) to excellent (7). The seven ECERS-R subscales are as follows:
- Space and Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Language-Reasoning
- Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure
- Parents and Staff

Evidence of high quality in the classroom includes:

Space and Furnishings
- ✓ Ample room in the learning environment
- ✓ Natural lighting and good ventilation
- ✓ Child-sized furniture that is in good repair
- ✓ An easel, work bench or a sand/water table in use
- ✓ A cozy area which is not used for active physical play
- ✓ At least five well equipped, easily accessed interest centers that children can use by themselves
- ✓ Current children's individual work displayed at their eye level
- ✓ Safe and ample outdoor space
- ✓ Indoor gross motor space for inclement weather

Personal Care
- ✓ Individualized warm greetings for parents and children
- ✓ Nutritious meals and snacks that are scheduled appropriately for young children
- ✓ Pleasant meal times where there are many opportunities for conversation

- ✓ Opportunities for children to serve themselves and eat independently
- ✓ Rest times that are scheduled appropriately for the children in the group

Language and Reasoning

- ✓ A wide selection includes many different types of books including picture books, rhyming books, number books, poetry, fictional stories, books about animals, weather, holidays, books in other languages and celebrate diversity in cultures, abilities and ages that are regularly rotated
- ✓ Other language materials such as a felt board, recorded stories games with words and pictures, puppets, and small figures
- ✓ Adults who read to children daily formally and informally and in small groups and individually
- ✓ Conversations that encourage complex sentence structure and new vocabulary

The Activities Subscale

- ✓ Materials that are accessible to children for a substantial portion of the day (substantial portion is defined as at least one-third of the day, which is two hours for our six hour program)
- ✓ A wide variety of materials on well-organized low shelves
- ✓ Plenty of fine motor items such as small buildings toys, puzzles, beads for stringing and small figures
- ✓ Art supplies allow for much individual expression, and include the typical crayons, markers, paints and brushes of different sizes and colors, but also clay, play-doh, felt, wood, glue, safe scissors, interesting collage materials like feathers and, pom-poms, and other fun materials that can inspire creativity and assist fine motor development
- ✓ Many musical instruments and recordings are available along with dancing props - some recordings should be in the languages of the children
- ✓ Several different kinds of building blocks in a activity center big enough to allow three children to build something together, along with accessories such as small vehicles, people, animals and road signs
- ✓ Sand and water play

- ✓ Dramatic play materials including collections of natural objects, living things, games and materials
- ✓ Math materials to count, measure and weigh along with tape measures, balance scales and rules; geometric shapes in different sizes and colors to sort or to create patterns; number games and other materials to play with written numbers

Interactions

- ✓ Teachers who create a positive environment and use positive conflict resolution techniques

Program Structure

- ✓ A balanced, flexible schedule that has both child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities
- ✓ Free play for a substantial portion of the day
- ✓ Transitions that are smooth
- ✓ Limited whole group gatherings
- ✓ Many opportunities for children to select a group to be with during the day
- ✓ Children with disabilities in the classroom included in the group

Parents and Staff

- ✓ Convenient and secure storage space for the personal belongings of the staff
- ✓ A separate lounge area for the staff with comfortable furniture
- ✓ Ample space for classroom supplies and files, separate and well-equipped office administration space
- ✓ Enough space for individual or group conferences that can be held separately from the children's activities
- ✓ Planning time for staff working together
- ✓ Training opportunities for staff
- ✓ Opportunities for parents to participate in the program
- ✓ Administrative and procedural information given to parents at time of enrollment
- ✓ Opportunities for parents to be part of the decision making process in the program

Authors:
Thelma Harris, Director, Curriculum Development
Richard M. Clifford, Senior Investigator
Debby Cryer, Director Child Care Program
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of N. Carolina

Preschool Classrooms Mathematics Inventory
(PCMI)

The PCMI focuses on the materials and methods used in preschool classrooms to support and enhance children's math skills. The instrument is comprised of 11 items. Each item is rated on a 5 point scale. A score of 5 indicates strong evidence of a developmentally appropriate math learning experience in the classroom and 1 indicates the absence of high quality, appropriate math instruction and activities. The areas addressed by the PCMI are the strategies and materials that support development of the following concepts:

- Counting
- Comparing
- Estimating
- Recognizing number symbols
- Classifying
- Seriating
- Geometric shapes
- Spatial relations

A learning environment that supports math learning has:

- ✓ Diverse items for children to count
- ✓ Examples of numerals posted for a purpose around the room, on posters, and on cash registers, number puzzles, and games, and in books
- ✓ Materials that encourage the understanding of one-to-one correspondence, such as pegs and pegboards, jars and lids, puzzles
- ✓ Materials to encourage measuring such as tape measures, scales, and measuring cups
- ✓ Items to measure located near to the measuring instruments
- ✓ Items to sort in the classroom such as collections of shells, beads, dishes that allow the children to sort by function, texture, color, shape, and size
- ✓ Materials that can be put in order from smallest to largest
- ✓ Many geometric shapes such as geo-boards, parquetry blocks, stencils
- ✓ Materials with which the children can create shapes of their own

Teachers support children's early mathematical skills by:

- ✓ Incorporating mathematical concepts throughout the day, in routines, in small groups and with individual children

✓ Modeling mathematical terminology
✓ Encouraging children to compare, measure, classify and seriate
✓ Calling attention to shapes, spatial relationships, and patterns

Authors:

Ellen Frede, Ph.D., New Jersey Department of Education, and The College of New Jersey
Marcia Dessewffy, Keansburg Public Schools
Amy Hornbeck, National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)
Amanda Worth, Elizabeth Public Schools

Support for Early Literacy Assessment
(SELA)

The SELA provides specific information on classroom practices that support children's early language and literacy skills. The instrument is comprised of 16 rating scales and several teacher interview questions. Each of the items in the SELA is rated on a five point scale. A rating of 5 indicates best practice and a score of 1 represents little or no evidence if literacy support in the classroom. The items addressed in the SELA are as follows:

- Literate Environment
- Language Development
- Knowledge of Print/Book Concepts
- Phonological Awareness
- Letters and Words
- Parent Involvement
- Native Language

Indicators that a classroom that supports literacy development include:

Literate Environment

- ✓ Strong evidence of print for a purpose in the learning environment
- ✓ Labels, name boards and signs are used for a purpose in many places
- ✓ Print is used so that it will capture the attention of the children. It is clearly written, large and eye-catching
- ✓ At least one copy, comfortable area where children can sit and look at books
- ✓ At least 25 selections of high quality children's books that are in good condition in the main reading area. New books are introduced at least every two weeks
- ✓ Books are found throughout the classroom in addition to the main reading area
- ✓ The books are of many types including big books, class books, non-fiction books on a variety of topics, story books, alphabet books, number books, science books, folktales, fantasy, books that illustrate diversity in abilities, gender and age and books that reflect diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds including those of the children in the class and are in good condition
- ✓ Many written materials accessible, to the children, throughout the room

✓ A variety of literacy props are used in the house area and rotated at least monthly

Language Development
✓ Teachers encourage children to use and extend oral language
✓ Staff members take time to talk to individual children
✓ Teachers use open- ended statements and leave space for children to respond
✓ Teachers add new words to, and elaborate on, what children say
✓ Staff members use language that introduces new concepts and linguistic structures
✓ Teaches intentionally organize and facilitate activities that promote language development
✓ Children are read to on a daily basis
✓ Children are encouraged and invited to take part in active, engaging story telling experience
✓ Teachers read to the children in small group, and individually

Knowledge of Print/Book Concepts
✓ Teaches call attention to the function and features of print throughout the day in ways that are enjoyable, interesting and appropriate for young children
✓ Staff members use a variety of engaging methods to call children's attention to the sounds they hear in words
✓ Teachers use a variety of methods to help children recognize letters
✓ Teachers do **not** rely on rote memorization or drill to introduce and reinforce letter sounds
✓ Children's interest in writing is encouraged and responded to positively by the adults in the room
✓ Children's writing is on display throughout the room on children's eye-level

Parent Involvement
✓ Staff members regularly suggest literacy activities that can be done in the home and share specific information about a child's interests and literacy skills with parents
✓ There is a lending library in the classroom
✓ Parents are welcome to participate in literacy activities in the classroom

- ✓ There are a variety of activities to provide parents with information on literacy topics and services

Native Language
- ✓ Classroom and parent involvement activities help maintain and further the development of a children's native language

Developers of the Instrument:
Sheila Smith, Ph.D., New York University, School of Education
Sherry Davidson, Ph.D.
Georgeanne Weisenfeld, Ph.D.

Preschool Program Quality Assessment
(PQA)

The Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA) is a rating instrument created to evaluate the quality of preschool programs and determine training needs. The PQA was created by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. There are two forms of the PQA. Teachers will be most familiar with Form A - Classroom Items.

Form A - Classroom Items:

  I. **Learning Environment**
 II. **Daily Routine**
III. **Adult Child Interaction**
 IV. **Curriculum Planning and Assessment**

Form B - Agency Items:

  V. **Parent Involvement and Family Services**
 VI. **Staff Qualifications and Staff Development**
VII. **Program Management**

The PQA rates each item on a five point scale. Level one signifies a lack of quality and level five indicates a high quality program.

Classroom teachers and center directors will most often utilize the PQA for the following purposes:

Self Assessment
  • Helping classroom staff identify strengths and modifiable issues

Supervision and Observation/Feedback
  • Providing an opportunity for staff members and supervisors to evaluate the program, affirm areas of strength and create action plans for improvement
  • Identify areas for training
  • Setting overall programmatic goals

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, Ypsilanti, Michigan

SELLCA

SELLCA stands for Support for English Language Learners Classroom Assessment. This instrument is an observation tool for describing the extent to which classrooms provide "optimal support for the language and literacy development" of children who speak a language other than English at home, and/or are in the process of acquiring English as a second language.

Like the ECERS and SELA, the result is to be used for mentoring, supervision, and program improvement planning, SELLCA will provide a method of analyzing classroom practices and promoting discussions among master teachers, teachers, paraprofessionals, and directors, about dimensions of effective practice for bilingual children. It will provide a context professional development to present further information, and encourage reflection about current research, theory, and practice relevant to English Language Learners

There are eight items on the SELLCA arranged in 4 areas:
1. Developmentally appropriate practices by the teachers and program
    - Incorporating the cultural backgrounds and life experiences of the children
    - Speaking and using the native language of the majority of the children
    - Encouraging children to use and extend their native language abilities
    - Organizing activities to promote the native language of the children
    - Actively encouraging children's literacy development in their home language

2. Developmentally appropriate materials
    - Providing books, print and literacy props are available in the native language of the children

3. Developmentally appropriate strategies
    - Using effective strategies and techniques to help children understand and acquire English

4. Developmentally appropriate child assessment tool
   - Using appropriate assessment practices to identify children's language strengths and needs in their home language and in English

Teachers may need to show evidence of appropriate practices for second language learners in an interview that will follow the observation. Therefore they should keep accurate documentation in areas like classroom or site newsletters, language surveys, letters/notes home to parents, parent questionnaires, and community/parent involvement sign-in sheets. In other words, evidence to support what the teacher or center claims is happening. The observation will last from two to three hours including the interview with the teacher. Each item is rated on a five point scale with five being the best practice and one showing the absence or very low quality.

SELLCA falls right in with the other instruments already being used in the district like ELAS and High/Scope. It just demands that more of certain materials, practices, and techniques be available to second language learners. For example, it requires formal and informal readings to the children <u>but the teacher must make a conscious and observable effort to include ELL children.</u> This could be by using words in the languages of the ELL children, using props, acting the story out, reading it in the target language, and/or a parent to read or record it in the home languages.

TPOT

The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) for Preschool Classrooms is an instrument designed to measure practitioners' implementation of teaching and behavior support practices associated with the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and young children. The Pyramid Model is a multi-tiered framework that organizes empirically supported teaching practices for promoting social-emotional competence and addressing challenging behavior of preschool children.

Key Practices

There are 14 Key Practice Items. Each item includes a set of practice indicators that are scored based on observation, interview, or both.

1. Schedules, Routines, and Activities
2. Transitions Between Activities are Appropriate
3. Teachers Engage in Supportive Conversations with Children
4. Promoting Children's Engagement
5. Providing Directions
6. Collaborative Teaming
7. Teaching Behavior Expectations
8. Teaching Social Skills and Emotional Competences
9. Teaching Friendship Skills
10. Teaching Children to Express emotions
11. Teaching Problem Solving
12. Interventions for Children with Persistent Challenging Behavior
13. Connecting with Families
14. Supporting Family Use of Pyramid Model Practices

Red Flags

Using Effective Strategies to Respond to Challenging Behavior

Potential Uses for the TPOT

1. The TPOT can be used in research to characterize descriptively the fidelity of implementation of Pyramid Model practices in a classroom, a group of classrooms in a program, or a group of programs in an organization, region, or state. It can be used to address research questions focused on evaluating the extent to which

the fidelity of practice implementation changes after an intervention or the extent to which the fidelity of practice implementation is associated with teacher or child variables of interest, such as a teacher's self-efficacy or a child's social, emotional, behavior, or pre-academic skills.

2. The TPOT can be used in professional development or technical assistance activities to provide information about which practices are or are not being implemented in a classroom, a group of classrooms in a program, or a group of programs in an organization, region, or state. The need for training, coaching, or other implementation supports can be identified based on information obtained from the TPOT.

3. The TPOT can be used in program improvement or quality rating initiatives as a measure of classroom or classroom or program quality related to the Pyramid Model practices.

Developers of the Instrument

Mary Louise Hemmeter, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Florida

Lisa Fox, Ph.D., University of Florida, Gainesville

Patricia Snyder, Ph.D., University of Florida, Gainesville

*See Appendix for Positive Behavior Support

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes electronic communications and the use of social media outlets create new options for extending and enhancing the educational program of the school district. Electronic communications and the use of social media can help students and teaching staff members communicate regarding: questions during non-school hours regarding homework or other assignments; scheduling issues for school-related co-curricular and interscholastic athletic activities; school work to be completed during a student's extended absence; distance learning opportunities; and other professional communications that can enhance teaching and learning opportunities between teaching staff members and students. **However,** the Board of Education recognizes teaching staff members can be vulnerable in electronic communications with students.

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:36-40, the Board of Education adopts this Policy to provide guidance and direction to teaching staff members to prevent improper electronic communications between teaching staff members and students.

The Commissioner of Education and arbitrators, appointed by the Commissioner, have determined inappropriate conduct may determine a teaching staff member unfit to discharge the duties and functions of their position. Improper electronic communications by teaching staff members may be determined to be inappropriate conduct.

For the purposes of this Policy, "electronic communication" means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. "Electronic communications" include, but are not limited to, e-mails, text messages, instant messages, and communications made by means of an Internet website, including social media and social networking websites.

For the purposes of this Policy, "professional responsibility" means a teaching staff member's responsibilities regarding co-curricular, athletic coaching, and any other instructional or non-instructional responsibilities assigned to the teaching staff member by the administration or Board of Education.

For the purposes of this Policy, "improper electronic communications" means an electronic communication between a teaching staff member and any student of the school district when:

1. The content of the communication is inappropriate as defined in this Policy; and/or

2. The manner in which the electronic communication is made is not in accordance with acceptable protocols for electronic communications between a teaching staff member and a student as defined in this Policy.

Inappropriate content of an electronic communication between a teaching staff member and a student includes, but is not limited to:

1. Communications of a sexual nature, sexually oriented humor or language, sexual advances, or content with a sexual overtone;

2. Communications involving the use, encouraging the use, or promoting or advocating the use of alcohol or tobacco, the illegal use of prescription drugs or controlled dangerous substances, illegal gambling, or other illegal activities;

3. Communications regarding the teaching staff member's or student's past or current romantic relationships;

4. Communications which include the use of profanities, obscene language, lewd comments, or pornography;

5. Communications that are harassing, intimidating, or bullying;

6. Communications requesting or trying to establish a personal relationship with a student beyond the teaching staff member's professional responsibilities;

7. Communications related to personal or confidential information regarding another school staff member or student; and

8. Communications between the teaching staff member and a student that the Commissioner of Education or an arbitrator would determine to be inappropriate in determining the teaching staff member is unfit to discharge the duties and functions of their position.

The following acceptable protocols for all electronic communications between a teaching staff member and a student shall be followed:

1. E-Mail Electronic Communications between a Teaching Staff Member and a

Student

a.   All e-mails between a teaching staff member and a student must be sent or received through the school district's e-mail system. The content of all e-mails between a teaching staff member and a student shall be limited to the staff member's professional responsibilities regarding the student.

b.   A teaching staff member shall not provide their personal e-mail address to any student. If a student sends an e-mail to a teaching staff member's personal e-mail address, the staff member shall respond to the e-mail through the school district e-mail system and inform the student his/her personal e-mail address shall not be used for any electronic communication between the teaching staff member and the student.

c   A teaching staff member's school district e-mail account is subject to

review by authorized school district officials. Therefore, a teaching staff member shall have no expectation of privacy on the school district's email system.

2   Cellular Telephone Electronic Communications between a Teaching Staff

Member and a Student

a   Communications between a teaching staff member and a student via a

personal cellular telephone shall be prohibited.

(1)   However, a teaching staff member may, with prior approval of the

Principal or designee, communicate with a student using their personal cellular telephone if the need to communicate is directly related to the teaching staff member's professional responsibilities for a specific purpose such as a field trip, athletic event, co-curricular activity, etc. Any such approval for cellular telephone communications shall not extend beyond the specific field trip, athletic event, co-curricular activity, etc. approved by the Principal or designee.

3. Text Messaging Electronic Communications Between Teaching Staff Members and Students

    a   Text messaging communications between a teaching staff member and an individual student are prohibited.

        (1)   However, a teaching staff member may, with prior approval of the Principal or designee, text message students provided the need to text message is directly related to the teaching staff member's professional responsibilities with a class or co-curricular activity. Any such text message must be sent to every student in the class or every member of the co-curricular activity. Any such approval for text messaging shall not extend beyond the class or activity approved by the Principal or designee.

4. Social Networking Websites and other Internet-Based Social Media Electronic Communications Between Teaching Staff Members and a Student

    a   A teaching staff member is prohibited from communicating with any student through the teaching staff member's personal social networking website or other Internet-based website. Communications on personal websites are not acceptable between a teaching staff member and a student.

        b.   A teaching staff member shall not accept "friend" requests from any student on their personal social networking website or other Internet-based social media website. Any communication sent by a student to a teaching staff member's personal social networking website or other Internet-based social media website shall not be responded to by the teaching staff member and shall be reported to the Principal or designee by the teaching staff member.

        c.   If a teaching staff member has a student(s) as a "friend" on their personal social networking website or other Internet-based social media website they must permanently remove them from their list of contacts upon Board adoption of this Policy.

        d.   Communication between a teaching staff member and a student through social networking websites or other Internet-based social

media websites is only permitted provided the website has been approved by the Principal or designee and all communications or publications using such websites are available to: every student in the class; every member of the co-curricular activity and their parents; and the Principal or designee.

Reporting Responsibilities

In the event a student sends an improper electronic communication, as defined in this Policy, to a teaching staff member, the teaching staff member shall report the improper communication to the Principal or designee by the next school day. The Principal or designee will take appropriate action to have the student discontinue such improper electronic communications. Improper electronic communications by a teaching staff member or a student may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

[Optional: District may select one of the following exemption options

_____   A teaching staff member and student may be exempt from the provisions outlined in this Policy if a teaching staff member and student are relatives. The parent of a student and the teaching staff member requesting an exemption from the provisions of this Policy must submit a written request to the Principal of the student's school indicating the family relationship between the student and the teaching staff member. The Principal will provide written approval of the request to the teaching staff member and the student. If the Principal does not approve the request, the teaching staff member and the student must comply with all provisions of this Policy. The Principal's approval of a request for this exemption shall only be for the individual teaching staff member and student included in the request and for the school year in which the request is submitted.

✓ A teaching staff member and student may be exempt from the provisions outlined in this Policy if a teaching staff member and student are relatives. The teaching staff member and the student's parent shall submit notification to the Principal of the student's school of their family relationship and their exemption from the provisions outlined in this Policy.

The provisions of this Policy shall be applicable at all times while the teaching staff member is employed in the school district and at all times the student is enrolled in the school district, including holiday and summer breaks.

A copy of this Policy will be made available on an annual basis, to all parents, students and school employees either electronically or in school handbooks.

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-40

Adopted