

Preschool Curriculum Module



Curriculum is a written document that serves as a Road Map for implementing a quality child development and education program

Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center 2000



What makes curriculum a curriculum?

At its simplest, curriculum is defined as what to teach and how to teach it.

From *Preschool Curriculum Decision-Making: Dimensions to Consider*



Curriculum Topics

■ Why

■ Who



■ What

■ When

■ How





Why

- States are now required to develop standards for pre-K programs.
- These standards are increasingly being used to guide curriculum selection and planning
- Because high quality early learning experiences are so important, they cannot be left to chance.
- There is a growing consensus supported by many scholarly reports, that we must be more purposeful in our work with young children.





Why

- A curriculum helps to ensure that nothing related to children's development and learning is overlooked
- Curriculum plays a vital role in enhancing the social competence and school readiness of children
- The learning environment is arranged to accommodate a variety of children's strengths, and needs and to stimulate learning across all domains of development

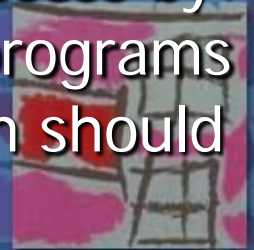


From Head Starts Education Association, Plan for Action



Why

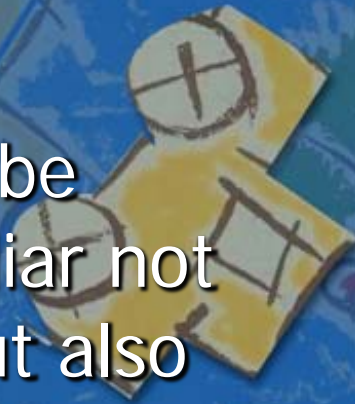
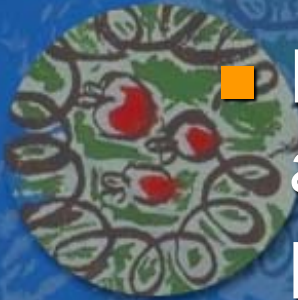
- Given the multitude of available curriculum models, the confusion regarding which ones are appropriate for young children overall is understandable
- The early childhood education field recommends programs that are known to be using Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- If the goal is to improve children's school success by enhancing their early skills and knowledge, programs need to examine the content of what children should learn as well as how they will learn best





Who

- No matter what a teacher's background, he or she cannot implement a curriculum well without initial training and ongoing professional development.
- To be effective, such training should be provided by individuals who are familiar not only with adult learning principles, but also with the realities of teachers' classrooms.
- Decision-makers will therefore want to look for a comprehensive professional development plan and examine the research on its effectiveness.





Who

The roles of the teacher and child in the learning process and areas of learning should be considered in making a decision on which curriculum to use

From *Preschool Curriculum Decision-Making: Dimensions to Consider*



What



- "Curriculum is more than a collection of enjoyable activities. Curriculum is a complex idea containing multiple components, such as goals, content, pedagogy, or instructional practices. Curriculum is influenced by many factors, including society's values, content standards, accountability systems, research findings, community expectations, culture and language, and individual children's characteristics."

From the advisement of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) 2003





What: Developmental Principles that guide the ways in which we work with children are universal

- Applying to all children regardless of gender, race, culture, or country of origin.
 1. Patterns of growth and development are orderly and sequential
 2. Human growth and development proceeds from simple to complex
 3. Learning is influenced by the child's social and cultural context
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From Head Start Education Association: Plan for Action

When

- Effective, developmentally appropriate curriculum is based on what is known about the interrelationships and sequences of ideas, so that children's later abilities and understandings can be built on those already acquired.
- At the same time, the rate and pattern of each child's learning is unique.
- All the domains of children's development and learning interrelate.
- Best Practice is based on knowledge-not assumptions.

How

Checklist for Preschool Curriculum Decision-Makers

1. How does the curriculum define the roles of teacher and the child in the learning process?
2. What domains of learning are addressed? Are they integrated or treated separately? Will the curriculum lead to achievement of state early learning standards?
3. Does the curriculum provide guidance for differentiating teaching for students with special behavior, linguistic or learning needs?
4. Do the curriculum's developers provide an assessment system that is consistent with the teaching philosophy and learning content
5. What research evidence exists to support the value or effectiveness of the curriculum?



Checklist Continued

6. Is the curriculum appropriate for all teachers, regardless of their qualifications? What kind of professional development is provided?
7. Are specific materials required to implement the curriculum?
8. Does the curriculum model provide guidance for such services as parent involvement and the transition to kindergarten?

From *Preschool Curriculum Decision-Making: Dimensions to Consider* Pg4

9. Are resources available to support staff in implementing the curriculum (e.g., trainer's guides, videos, parent resources)?

From *Childcare Information Exchange*

10. Is any information provided on the research obtained in the development of the curriculum itself?

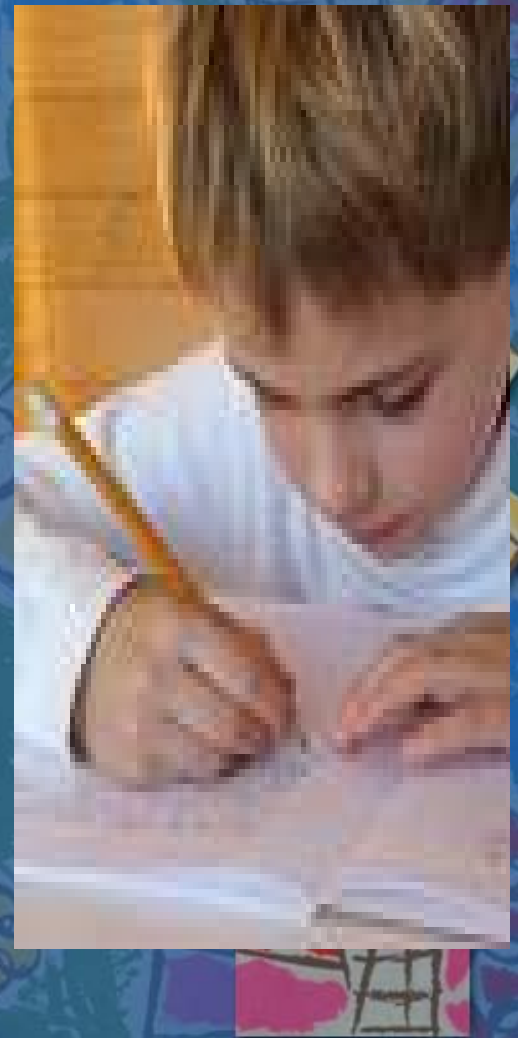
From *Review Rubric*



Assessment of Curriculum

- The information generated may not inform how well the curriculum is “working” for any particular child, or how a teacher’s practice might be modified as result. When making curriculum decisions, preschool program stakeholders also need to determine if their curriculum choice includes assessment systems that have been specifically designed both to measure whether learning objectives are being reached and to inform teaching.
- Assessments should document changes in individual children over time
- Teachers who use validated curriculum models benefit from the evidence of its effectiveness and the accumulated wisdom and experience of others

From *Preschool Curriculum Decision-Making: Dimensions to Consider*



How

- To implement a curriculum you need
 1. Have a working knowledge about child development principles
 2. Understand curriculum as defined by your Program Performance Standards
 3. The curriculum is taught in a beginning to end sequential manner

From Head Start Action Plan

4. Ability of the Decision-makers to do careful research of each curriculum and fit them into your goal areas

From *Preschool Curriculum Decision-Making: Dimensions to Consider*

Overall



"The term "Curriculum" might not come to mind when you hear children making joyful sounds or talking about the good food they shared with their friends, the bus ride, the variety of books, the water table, building with blocks, songs, or even hugs-but that's what is all about for the child."

References

