

# Adventures in Learning Curriculum Tips and Techniques

## Introduction

As **Adventures in Learning** was being developed, it was decided that a collection of tips and techniques would be beneficial to teachers and caregivers as they implement the curriculum. The suggested tips and techniques are divided into four major categories:

- Learning Environment
- Program of Activities
- Assessment
- Families

A list of resources available from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education is included.

You are invited to review the tips and techniques and the list of resources and select those that will be most helpful to you.

## Learning Environment

### Recyclable Materials and Found Objects

**Enhance your learning environment and curriculum by collecting and using safe recyclable materials and found objects.**

- Involve families in collecting items for the classroom.
- Send home a paper sack with a list of items you need attached to it. Ask families to return the items in the sack.
- Contact local businesses for materials.
- Collect only those items that you can store until you have a need for them.
- Check all items for safety and cleanliness.

#### **Suggested list of recyclable materials and found objects to collect:**

- sturdy clear plastic bottles and jars (Gatorade, whipping cream, single serve juice - water or soda/cold drink bottles are too flimsy), butter/margarine tubs, cool whip tubs, yogurt containers, plastic detergent scoops, milk jug caps
- cracker and cereal boxes, paper towel rolls, boxes of all sizes, artificial flowers, plastic vases, magazines, catalogs, recycled paper, cardboard, envelopes, junk mail, stickers, mock credit cards from junk mail, mailing tubes, menus, calendars, memo pads, address books, greeting cards, old blueprints, logos from local businesses
- telephones, briefcases
- items from nature: shells, rocks, feathers, pine cones, leaves, dried flowers, wood scraps, 6" tree cuttings

- yarn, ribbon, netting, lace, fabric and felt scraps, wallpaper samples, carpet squares, paint chip samples, PVC pipe & connections
- pictures from magazines and catalogs that reflect real people, not cartoon characters
- pictures that show people of different races, cultures, ages, abilities and gender in non-stereotyping roles
- dress-up clothes for males and females: shoes, purses, vests, ties, scarves, shirts, gloves, wallets, dance costumes, hair dryers (minus cords)

**Teacher Note:** *Children's size 10-12 clothing works well. If adult clothing is used, shorten length of item and of sleeves for safety and ease of use by children. Clothes that are easy for children to put on and take off work best.*

### Making Charts

**Create charts to promote language and literacy learning.**

- Charts can be made for Mother Goose rhymes, poems and recipes.
- Use both upper and lower case letters. Use upper case letters for the beginning of a sentence and proper names.
- Use extra spacing between words and between lines.
- Include some illustrations.



**Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star**

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,

How I wonder what you are!

Up above the world so high,

Like a diamond in the sky.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

How I wonder what you are!

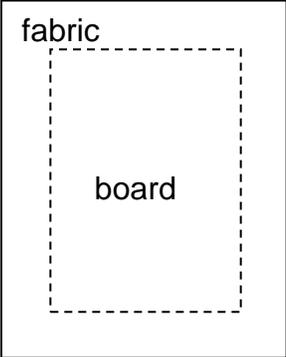
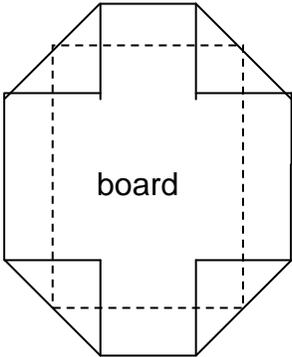
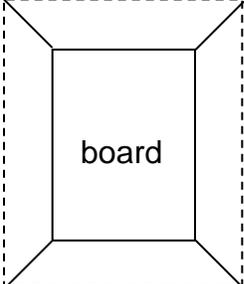
### Making Felt/Velcro Board Stories with Patterns

- Run copies on cardstock (index paper or tag board).
- Color pieces with markers or color pencils (may not be as bright).
- When putting two large pieces together, use a glue stick to prevent pieces from wrinkling when laminating.
- Laminate story objects. You may cut pieces before or after laminating.
- Attach Velcro dots or pieces to back of each object.

**Note:** *Characters for storytelling should be large and visible for all children listening to the story. Patterns may be enlarged if preferred.*

**Remember that patterns are not to be used for children's art projects!**

## Directions for Making a Story Board

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Choose a board (plywood, foam board, or 2-3 layers of corrugated cardboard).</p> <p>Size should be approximately 2' x 3'.</p> <p>Fabric can be either felt or Velcro.</p> <p>Make sure the board is 2-3 inches smaller than your fabric on all four sides. Lay your fabric face down and place the board in the center.</p> |    |
| <p>Fold the corners of the fabric in to the corners of the board. Fasten the corners with tape.</p>  |   |
| <p>Fold the top and bottom edges in and fasten them to the board with tape. Fold the sides in and fasten them to the board with tape also.</p> <p>Tape all fabric edges securely so there are no loose edges.</p> <p>Turn your story board over and tell a story!</p>  |  |

## Setting up the Classroom in Learning Centers

**Arrange your classroom in learning centers, each accommodating a small number of children.**

**Learning Centers:**

- Create small groups in which children can feel comfortable
- Allow children to explore, experiment, construct and create
- Encourage children to make choices
- Support children's independence
- Provide an environment in which children can concentrate on their work

Space, available materials, and number of children in the classroom will determine the number of learning centers you make available to the children. It is suggested that each classroom include at least five learning centers, with seven a preferred number.

**The first five centers listed below are absolutely essential to have available to children each day.**

**dramatic play/home living:**

- child-sized housekeeping furniture
- dolls, doll clothes and blankets
- dress-up clothes
- kitchen utensils
- telephones/cell phones
- theme boxes such as tea party, restaurant, farm, doctor's office, beauty shop

**block area:**

- wooden unit blocks (shapes such as rectangles, squares, triangles and cylinders), homemade blocks, cardboard blocks,
- small animals, vehicles, people and traffic signs

**art area:**

- drawing materials such as crayons, non-toxic markers, pencils
- paints: tempera paint, brushes, watercolor paints, finger paint
- collage materials: paper, scraps of ribbon, lace, paper scraps, paper shapes
- play dough (homemade is best), small rollers, cookie cutters, plastic knives
- essentials: variety of paper, blunt-tip scissors, school glue, easel

**manipulatives:**

- wooden puzzles
- stringing beads
- pegs and pegboards
- interlocking blocks and Lincoln logs

**library/book nook:**

- children's books stored so covers are visible
- some books that relate to the topic of study
- language materials such as discussion pictures and posters, felt or magnetic boards and storytelling figures

**sand tub and toys**

- plastic containers, measuring cups, funnels, shovels, molds, small vehicles, animals
- aquarium gravel or bird seed can sometimes be substituted for sand

**water tub and toys**

- plastic containers, funnels, sieves, plastic colanders, measuring cups
- plastic boats, vinyl animals

**discovery/science:**

- collections such as shells, rocks, pinecones, leaves, feathers
- living things such as plants and fish to care for
- magnifying glass, balance scale, rulers and cloth measuring tape

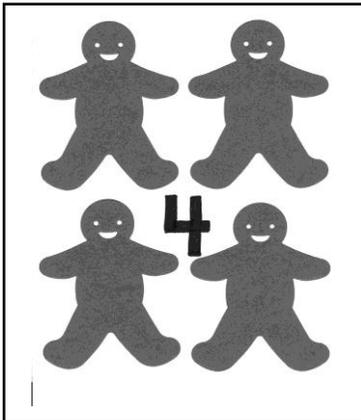
**Create portable learning centers if space does not allow more than the five essential centers to be permanently set up at one time.**

- Provide sand tubs which can be stored and brought out and placed on a low table during the time children are in learning centers.
- Provide water tubs which can be brought out and filled with water and placed on a low table. Empty, sanitize and wipe out the water tub each day.
- Add props to both sand and water tubs.
- Place a beach towel or a vinyl tablecloth on the table under the sand and water tubs to make cleaning up easier.
- Store materials for science/discovery in labeled boxes or tubs and bring out and place on a low table.
- Provide a whisk broom and a dust pan for sweeping up sand.

### **Setting up and Managing Learning Centers**

**Consider the following guidelines for setting up and managing learning centers:**

- Establish traffic patterns for entering and exiting the room, putting belongings in cubbies, using the bathroom, and moving from one center to another.
- Separate noisy areas from quiet ones. For example, home living/dramatic play and blocks are noisy area and library, games and art are quiet areas.
- Clearly define each area by using shelves, walls, furniture and rugs, for example.
- Eliminate spaces that invite running and rough play.
- Determine the number of children that can safely and cooperatively play in each center and post a population card in each center that indicates the number.
- Introduce the population cards to children and help them understand what the card means.



- Place centers near needed resources. For example, locate art and water play near a water source and the CD near electrical outlets.
- Arrange the space and furnishings so that teachers can see all areas of the room without obstruction
- Provide low, open shelves for storage of children's materials.
- Place picture and word labels on storage shelves so children can easily select and put away materials.
- Schedule large blocks of time (60 minutes each) for children to play in learning centers.
- Allow children to choose learning centers in which to play.
- Interact with children as they play. Avoid taking over or directing their play.

## Developing Prop Boxes for the Home Living/Dramatic Play Area

Enhance the learning environment by adding props boxes.

Prop boxes include a variety of materials relevant to a particular theme or topic of study. As children use the items in the prop boxes, they are recreating and exploring the topic-related and life experiences they have had and gaining a better understanding of the world around them.

### Tips for organizing and storing prop boxes:

- Store props for each theme or topic in a box or plastic tub with a lid.
- Label each container with the name of the theme or topic of study.
- Tape an inventory list to the inside cover of the container.
- Check prop boxes periodically and repair or replace items that are torn or broken.
- Invite families to provide items for the prop boxes.

### Here is a list of topics for prop boxes to get you started:

- **Supermarket:** empty food containers, cash registers, paper or plastic money, paper bags for groceries, plastic fruits and vegetables, coupons, supermarket ads, signs for different sections such as meat, dairy, fruit and vegetables, canned goods, and cereals
- **Office:** pads of paper, pencils, briefcases, telephones, stamp pads and stampers, envelopes, computer keyboard, adding machine or calculator, calendars, old planners, and business cards
- **Barbershop/hairdresser:** empty shampoo bottles with labels, wigs on stands, curlers and pins, hair dryer (minus electric cord), towels, basins, smocks, signs with services provided and prices, hair styling magazines, magazines for the waiting room
- **Camping:** pup tent, canteens, cooking utensils, empty food boxes, flashlight, small logs for campfire
- **Medical Office/Hospital:** stethoscope, blood pressure cuff, ace bandages, white "lab" jackets, scrubs, prescription pads and pencils, telephone, x rays, folders and clipboards for patients' charts, flashlight
- **Shoe Store:** chairs to sit in, variety of old shoes, shoe boxes (labeled and priced), cash register, play money, shoe horn, ruler to measure foot or a foot measurer from a shoe store, signs with name of store
- **Bakery:** baker's hat, apron, small plastic bowls, muffin tins, cake pans, spoons, spatulas, empty cake mix boxes, recipe cards
- **Gardening:** gardening gloves, small gardening tools, vegetable and flower seed packs

## **Program of Activities**

### **Planning for the Day**

#### **Establish a structure for the day.**

Each classroom should have an established structure for the day so that time is blocked out in an orderly and consistent fashion. This predictable use of time provides children with a sense of safety and security and assists teachers and caregivers in planning.

In developing a structure for the day, think of all of the different events that occur each day.

- arrival
- large-group time
- small-group time
- story time
- learning center/choice time
- transition times
- mealtimes and snacks
- rest time
- outdoor time
- departure time

While each classroom will have a different daily schedule, each should offer children a range of different types of activities.

- active and quiet times
- large-group activities, small-group activities, and time to play with others or to play alone
- indoor and outdoor play time
- time for child-selected activities and teacher-guided activities

Refer to *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Fourth Edition*, pages 82-101 for detailed information on establishing a structure for the day, including suggested daily schedules. This book also contains excellent information on how to set up and manage learning centers.

Refer to Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers for required times for specific activities in the daily schedule.

Refer to *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition*, for required times for specific activities in the daily schedule.

## Planning and Conducting Whole Group Time

### Plan for whole group time.

- Plan several brief group times each day rather than one long one. Begin with no more than ten minutes, especially for three year olds, and expand the time to no more than twenty minutes as children are ready to participate for longer periods. Remember that young children have short attention spans.
- Designate a space in your classroom for whole group time. The space should be large enough to accommodate all of the children and adults in the group. If your classroom is not large enough to have an area that is used solely for whole group activities, consider using the space in one of the large learning centers such as the block area.
- Provide comfortable seating on the floor. If the area doesn't have carpet or a rug, consider using carpet squares which are soft and also define each child's space.
- Allow space for charts and felt, magnetic and/or marker boards.
- Locate near an electrical outlet to play CDs for music and movement.
- Plan group time to include active involvement of the children: songs, finger plays, moving to music. Keep group time moving, vary activities, listen to the children, and limit the amount of talking you do.
- Introduce new songs, finger plays and group games to keep children interested.

## Reading Books with Children

### Read with your children several times each day. Read with children in both whole group and small groups and with individual children.

- Group children comfortably in front of you
- Hold book at child's eye level
- Make sure all children can see the pictures
- Be familiar with story.
- Use transition activity to prepare children for the story
- Introduce title, author and illustrator
- Ask children to predict what story is about
- Hold book in one hand, turn pages with other hand
- Show pictures to children as you read
- Vary voice to match characters, mood and action
- Encourage participation
- Pause at end of story to allow children to react and reflect on what they heard
- Invite discussion at end of story
- Place book in library area for independent reading



Each Topic of Study in Adventures in Learning is introduced with several familiar children's books. A list of additional books that relate to the topic is also included. Some of these books are available in big book format and some are available in Spanish and other languages.

## Telling Stories with Visuals

### Prepare for telling stories with visuals such as felt or magnetic storytelling figures or puppets.

- Choose a story
- Read the story several times, visualizing the setting and the characters
- Read the story aloud
- Outline the story on a cue card, noting characters and the sequence of events
- Memorize beginning and ending lines and special phrases
- Practice the story
  - The pauses, gestures and facial expressions
  - Before a mirror, your family, other teachers or staff members

### Keep these techniques and tips in mind during storytelling:

- Sit close to the children making sure all the children are comfortable before beginning.
- Tell the story in your own personal way.
- Look at the faces of the children to adjust or clarify the story as needed.
- Slow down. Speak at half of your normal conversation speed.
- Pace the storytelling by going faster during exciting or fast-action parts and slower in serious parts.
- Change the volume and tone of your voice to fit the story.
- Involve the children often, especially with repetitions, rhymes or actions, silly words, or appropriate questions, if the story lends itself to this.
- As you end the story, PAUSE, so children can reflect on what they heard.
- Show children the book that the story came from.

### Consider these tips and techniques when using a story board and visuals

- Place the characters on the board as they are introduced.
- Place the characters on the board in a left to right, top to bottom pattern to demonstrate the format for reading words on a page.
- Leave only the essential characters for telling the story on the board.

**Adventures in Learning** offers many opportunities for telling stories with visuals. Patterns for storytelling figures will be noted as attachments when stories are suggested for use in the topics of study.

**Teacher Note:** *Children should always have access to the book that is presented in storytelling, since one of the goals of using visuals is to heighten children's interest in looking at books.*

## Saying Mother Goose Rhymes, Finger Plays and Poems

**Include Mother Goose rhymes, finger plays and poems in your curriculum.**

### **Finger Plays**

Finger plays or action rhymes are child-oriented verses or rhymes with accompanying motions.

**These are some benefits of finger plays / action rhymes:**

- ✓ Finger plays / action rhymes promote language development by encouraging children to participate in a pleasurable repetition of words. The rhythm of finger plays helps to motivate verbal expression.
- ✓ Finger plays / action rhymes help establish more effective listening skills.
- ✓ Finger plays / action rhymes help develop small and large muscles as the actions are coordinated with language.
- ✓ Finger plays / action rhymes lay a foundation for understanding mathematical concepts because so many include numbers from one to ten. The concept of number rather than counting takes place when children “add” or “subtract”. Examples include “Along came another and then there were four” and “One ran away, and then there were three”.
- ✓ Finger plays / action rhymes help children discover concepts of position, time, size, and place using words such as tall, small, little, big, high, low, in, out, up, and down.
- ✓ Finger plays / action rhymes help children learn about people and things, such as animals, foods, flowers, and people in our community.
- ✓ Finger plays / action rhymes help children increase their attention span when teachers use them for movement during a group time.

**Use these techniques when teaching a rhyme, finger play or poem:**

- ✓ Seat the children where they can see you and your hand/body motions.
- ✓ Say the rhyme (and show the motions if a finger play).
- ✓ Repeat the rhyme and invite the children to repeat it with you.
- ✓ If the rhyme is long, or the children are having difficulty, repeat one line at a time and have the children repeat it after you.
- ✓ Say the rhyme again and invite the children to repeat it with you.

**Teacher Note:** *Patterns for storytelling figures for the Mother Goose Rhymes will be noted as attachments when suggested for use in the topics of study.*

## Graphing with Children

- Prepare a LARGE graph. (on a poster board or large chart paper)
- Attach real objects, photos or drawings to identify the choices.
- To indicate a choice, begin by using a name with photo label for each child. Then you can progress by using only the child's name. If the graph is large enough, some children later in the year may choose to write their name in the space indicating their choice.
- After all children have made choices on the graph, bring the whole group together to write a story or summary of the results of the graph. This should only be 2 or 3 sentences and written on a large chart sheet.
- When writing the graph story, allow 2 spaces between words and extra space between lines of the story.
- The graph story can be read as shared reading with the children.

### Our Favorite Color

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| 5 |   |  |  |
| 4 | Margaret  |  |  |
| 3 | Jill  | Gabriella  |  |
| 2 | Sarah   | Tommy  | Max  |
| 1 | Juan  | LaTonya  | Sergei   |
|   |  Red |  Yellow |  Blue |

(Place a red circle or a red object beside the word red, a yellow circle or yellow object beside the word yellow and a blue circle or blue object beside the word blue)

#### Summary Story:

Four children like red as their favorite color. Three children like yellow and two children like blue.

## Singing and Moving to Music with Children

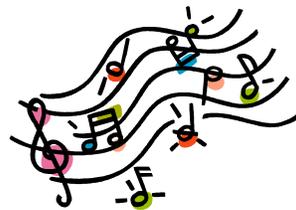
**Include singing and moving to music throughout each day.**

Children enjoy singing and moving to music together. Include music and movement when the whole group is gathered. Use music and movement as transition activities. Children enjoy music in small groups. They will sing as they play.

Children want to sing, so don't worry about the quality of your voice. For group singing, you may feel more confident if you use CDs. Whether you lead the singing, use CDs, or a combination of the two, include music and movement every day and throughout the day.

**Here is a list of traditional songs and action songs for preschool children:**

- “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”
- “Baa, Baa Black Sheep”
- “B-I-N-G-O”
- “The Wheels on the Bus”
- “The Eensy Weensy Spider”
- “If You're Happy and You Know It”
- “Ring around the Rosie”
- “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”
- “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”
- “She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain”
- “Pop Goes the Weasel”
- “Mary Had a Little Lamb”
- “Where Is Thumpkin? “
- “Hokey Pokey”
- “Farmer in the Dell”



### **Consider these strategies for introducing a new song**

- Select a song that is relatively short, has simple words, and a melody that is easy to remember.
- Practice the song and know it by heart.
- Tell the children a story about the song.
- Sing the song to the children. Be animated and sing with a smile!
- Use props, such as puppets, flannel board figures, song charts, or pictures, to help children remember the words of the song.
- Add motions to the song  
(Dodge, Colker, & Heroman, 2002)

Look for these names when purchasing CDs to use with children:

- Ella Jenkins
- Steve and Gregg
- Hap Palmer
- Raffi
- Kimbo
- Learning Station
- Dr. Jean

## **Using Transition Activities**

### **Use transition activities with your children.**

Transitions are the linking time between one activity and another. They cement the day together and prevent children from becoming bored, restless and out of control. Each **Adventures in Learning** Topic of Study includes transition activities.

### **Transitions**

- Keep children actively involved
- Can be songs, finger plays, counting games, name games, guessing games, signals, puppets, and surprise boxes
- Are excellent opportunities for learning
- Can be both planned and spontaneous
- Should be included on your written plan sheet
- Can be used during group time, to move children from group time to learning centers, to move children from one activity to another, and during waiting time

### **Develop a file of transition activities to include**

- songs
- finger plays
- signals
- guessing games
- puppets
- surprise boxes

## **Involving Children in Small Group Activities**

### **Include small group activities in your daily plans.**

Small group activities allow teachers to focus on specific skills and concepts, especially those in math and science that children may not grasp on their own. In small groups, children learn to work together and the teacher is able to focus on each child's strengths and interests.

### **Here are some tips for conducting successful small group activities:**

- Have a written plan
- Gather a small group of children (3 to 5)
- Have a plan for the other children. If two teachers are in the classroom, one teacher can conduct a small group activity while the second teacher supervises and interacts with the other children as they play in learning centers. Conduct group time with early risers from rest time, for example.
- Allow the children to explore the materials at the beginning of the group time
- Have enough materials for all the children in the group
- Make the experience "hands on." This is not a time to lecture.
- Keep the activity short. Consider no more than five to ten minutes.
- Allow the children to play independently with the materials after the planned small-group activity is over.
- Plan so that all children are included in small-group activities.
- Plan the activities so that each child can be successful.
- Place yourself so you can see all of the children in the room, especially if you are the only teacher present.

## Including Movement and Physical Education Activities

**Plan daily movement and physical education activities that will give children the skills and motivation to become physically active for life.**

The early years, from ages 3 through 5, are a critical time for children’s development of physical skills. Some children may develop these skills on their own, but many others need to be challenged with age-appropriate activities that can help them develop motor skills they will use throughout life. This means including movement activities in the daily curriculum for children from 3 through 5. Each Topic of Study in **Adventures in Learning** includes movement/physical education activities.

Skills for young children to develop are divided into three areas:

| <b>Locomotor</b> (developed first)   | <b>Stability and Balance</b> (developed next)  | <b>Gross Motor Manipulative</b> (developed later)  |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• crawling</li> <li>• walking</li> <li>• running</li> <li>• hopping</li> <li>• galloping</li> <li>• sliding</li> <li>• leaping</li> <li>• skipping</li> <li>• climbing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• turning</li> <li>• twisting</li> <li>• bending</li> <li>• stopping</li> <li>• rolling</li> <li>• balancing</li> <li>• transferring weight</li> <li>• jumping/landing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• throwing</li> <li>• catching/collecting</li> <li>• kicking</li> <li>• punting</li> <li>• dribbling</li> <li>• volleying</li> <li>• striking with racket</li> <li>• striking with long-handled instrument</li> </ul> |

Activities from *Books and Movement – A Magical Mix: B.A.M.M.M.!* will be noted as attachments to the topics of study where they are recommended.

Refer to **Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers**, Program Requirements for all ages, for information on required time each day for physical activity.

Three publications with excellent information about developmentally appropriate movement programs for young children are listed in the Resources section: *Designing Preschool Movement Programs*, *Active for Life*, and *Encouraging Physical Activity in Preschoolers*.

Each program will have to determine the space that is available for a movement program. Providing sufficient space for the children in the group to move safely is a key component of a successful movement education program.

## **Including Diversity in Materials and Activities**

### **Create a classroom environment that promotes acceptance of diversity.**

Diversity refers to people of different races, cultures, ages, abilities and gender. Include in your classroom environment and in your curriculum materials and activities that represent diversity.

- Collect and use pictures of real people and photos that represent diversity. Post the pictures at children's eye level. Use pictures as discussion starters.
- Include block play people that reflect a diversity of roles and that represent diverse family groups and people with differing abilities.
- Read with children books that depict diversity in a positive way.
- Provide children's books in their home language. Share the books with families.
- Include music CDs and songs from different cultures.
- Include dolls of different races, ethnic clothing, and cooking and eating utensils from various cultural groups.
- Add skin tone crayons and colored pencils to the art center.

## **Planning for Children Learning English as a Second Language**

### **Have a plan for children in your classroom who are learning English as a second language.**

More and more early care and education programs are enrolling children who are learning English as a second language. Consider these suggestions when working with these children and their families:

#### **Children Learning English as a Second Language**

1. Get to know the child's family. Learn the names of all family members.
2. Attempt to obtain information about home language development from parents and caregivers through a qualified interpreter.
3. Encourage families whose first language is not English to create language-rich environments at home (in child's home language).
4. Model language usage by using gestures with words and objects as much as possible.
5. Learn and use key words and phrases in the child's home language; words for greetings and good-byes, for food, toileting, clothing and family members, for example.
6. Integrate key words and phrases of the child's home language into daily and group-time routines such as greeting, singing, counting, story time and transitions.
7. Include songs from the child's home language.
8. Purchase children's books in both English and Spanish (if Spanish is the child's home language).
9. Provide language materials such as discussion pictures and puppets that reflect language and culture of the children.
10. Include dramatic-play props that represent diversity. For example, a selection of real cooking and eating utensils from children's homes and different cultures; empty food boxes from children's homes with print in their home language.
11. Encourage all children to play together in learning centers so that children who speak a language other than English play with English-speaking children. Non-English speaking children may be motivated to communicate without the help of a teacher. Both groups will learn language from each other.
12. Utilize teaching assistants, volunteers, or other members of the community who may speak the child's home language to read books, tell stories, record stories, and sing songs in the child's home language.
13. Seek training in the area of diversity, including language.

## Planning for Children with Disabilities

### Have a plan for inclusion of children with disabilities in your classroom.

Inclusion brings children with disabilities into many early care and education settings. Some children with disabilities can be easily absorbed into the existing environment with few modifications, while others will require some modification in the environment and classroom experiences to meet the developmental needs of each child.

The book, *The Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom*, is a resource manual on how to adapt regular classrooms and curriculum activities for children with disabilities. The book is arranged into the following chapters:

- circle time
- sand and water center
- block center
- dramatic play
- snack time
- transitions
- fine motor and gross motor centers

Two resources in Arkansas that provide information, guidance and support for programs that enroll children with disabilities are:

- The Education Service Cooperatives, Arkansas Department of Education
- Welcome the Children: Partners for Inclusive Communities in Arkansas - UA

**Teacher Note:** *Go the website of these two resources for contact information and an overview of the services offered by each.*

## Encouraging Independence In Health and Personal Care

### Provide daily opportunities for children to develop health and personal care skills.

When children are allowed to do things for themselves they are developing an “I can do it” attitude. They feel successful and proud of their accomplishments.

Consider these suggestions for helping children acquire and practice health and personal care skills:

- Develop a list of health and personal care skills for children in your group to acquire and practice.
- Include skills related to eating, getting dressed, washing hands, toileting and brushing teeth, for example.
- Develop strategies for helping children acquire and practice the skills. Here are some suggestions:
  - Dressing: Place dress-up clothes with buttons, snaps and zipper in the dramatic play/home living area.
  - Folding covers: In small groups, demonstrate to children the proper way to fold covers. Allow children to practice. Place doll blankets in the home living area.
  - Setting table: In dramatic play and/or at dining table, provide placemats with outlines showing where dishes and utensils are to be placed when setting the table. Allow children a turn setting the table at snack and lunch.
  - Toileting: Discuss with children the proper use of the toilet. Explain and remind children that they should flush each time.
  - Washing hands: Introduce washing hands to children on the first day they come into your classroom. Suggested times children should wash hands include:
    - Upon arrival in your classroom
    - Before snack and meals
    - After using the toilet
    - After blowing nose
    - Before and after water play
    - After messy activities such as finger painting, using glue or sand play
    - After outdoor play
  - Print the illustrated hand washing chart and laminate. **See Attachments: [Steps for Washing Hands](#)** for charts in black and white, and color. Model and describe the steps on the chart. Post the chart above the sink where children can see it.
  - Share with families the skills their children are acquiring.

## **Assessing Children’s Development**

### **Develop a plan for assessing children’s development**

Assessing children’s development is a key curriculum component. Through assessment you are able to do the following:

- Monitor children’s progress over time
- Plan activities that match what children can do and are not yet able to do
- Develop a plan to meet the needs of individual children, including those who have been identified as having a disability.
- Identify children who may benefit from referral to a specialist
- Share information with families about their child’s emerging skills and abilities

Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards (AR CDELS) includes a Developmental Rating Scale that is a tool for assessing children’s development over an extended period of time. The Developmental Rating Scale is based on the nine domains of development and learning identified in the Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months. For each domain, Learning Goals are identified.

**Adventures in Learning** curriculum clearly connects to the Learning Goals identified in the Standards and the Developmental Rating Scale. Throughout each Topic of Study, appropriate learning goals for activities are included. This enables you to know that you are addressing the learning goals in your curriculum. As children are involved in the activities, you have opportunities to observe them and identify where children are in achieving the learning goals.

## **Family Connection and Engagement**

### **Connect families to your program.**

When early care and education programs create a partnership with families, children stay connected to their classrooms and to their families. Everyone benefits.

**Adventures in Learning** includes a Family Connection and Engagement section that suggests ways families can be involved with their child in each Topic of Study.

Consider these things families can do:

- save recyclable materials
- contribute props for learning centers
- make materials for the classroom
- share a talent, hobby or job
- participate with their children in activities you send home
- order books from the book club flyers you send home

Be creative in thinking of additional ways to involve families in your program.

- See **Attachment B: Family Letter**, for a letter that can be sent to families about the **Adventures in Learning** curriculum. See **Attachment C: Adventures in Learning Family Activities** for a form that can be sent home prior to the beginning of each Topic of Study.

Check availability for additional curriculum and curriculum supplements on a Division website and on the U of A Early Care and Education Projects website.

- ✓ Books and Movement – A Magical Mix: B.A.M.M.M.
- ✓ Story a Month
- ✓ Creative Adventures in Literature (CAL)
- ✓ Connecting Literature and Math (CLAM)
- ✓ Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom

**Teacher Note:** *Some materials may be in development because all have to be revised to reflect new Learning Goals.*