



Professional Learning Module
Developing a Reflective Practice through Quality Teaching and Learning

Quality Learning Instruction in the Preschool Classroom

Quality learning happens when children are in a safe, well-organized and managed classroom with opportunities to explore and learn in a play-based setting. Children's learning is supported when concepts and skills are planned, introduced, practiced and reinforced throughout the day. The increased exposure to concepts and skills through multiple opportunities to practice and reinforce skills will lead to better outcomes for children. Quality instruction leads to quality learning. The key elements need for quality instruction are listed below.



Learning Environment

In a well-planned, integrated, learning environment, children can carry through with their natural desire to explore, discover, and act on the world around them. Play spaces are arranged and designed to engage children in critical and creative thinking. A variety of developmentally and culturally appropriate materials are available that support children's curiosity and range of abilities. Children's interests are considered when planning the environment.

Child-centered Classroom

A child-centered classroom supports children's interest and curiosity through play. Children gain knowledge through their play. When observing children's play, teachers can identify a child's strengths, interests and abilities in order to anticipate and scaffold their learning. Social emotional and language development are key elements of a child-centered classroom. When children are given daily experiences to interact with classmates, they begin to develop social skills in negotiating, turn-taking and cooperative play. Language develops as children interact and engage in conversations with their peers and teachers.

Active Learning Experiences

Children need opportunities to participate in active learning experiences that are child-initiated, as well as those planned and initiated by the teacher. During active learning you will hear more children's voices than adult voices as children interact with one another. Teachers are engaged and support active learning. Children participating in hands-on experiences throughout the day support their learning more than completing paper pencil activities, worksheets or coloring pages.

Balanced Schedule

A balanced daily schedule provides opportunities for children to participate in whole group, small group and learning centers both inside and outside throughout the day. Intentional planning for these learning experiences allow children to experience learning that is integrated throughout the day. It's important that the developmental levels and learning needs of children are met during whole-group instruction. When planning for small group learning, teachers can focus their instruction to more closely meet specific needs of each child. Learning centers provide the opportunity for children to explore, create and follow their interests.

One-on-one Interactions

It is important that teachers get to know and learn about a child's interests and specific learning needs through one-on-one interactions. Some children may require more time than others. It is important that every child have individual time with an adult every day.

Well-managed Classroom

In a well-managed classroom, daily routines and transitions established early in the program will support children when adjusting to the classroom setting. A classroom rules chart, for example, created together, fosters the idea of a learning community. Rules should be positive, stated simply and with pictures to support understanding. Management charts created with children and posted at their eye level will support children in organizing and managing their day.



Learning Areas

Creatively designed and arranged learning areas should include a variety of interesting and developmentally appropriate materials that are changed often. Teachers can facilitate language and reinforce literacy skills as they interact with children during learning centers.

Language Development

Language skills are developed through modeling as teachers engage in conversations with children during transitions, meal times, and independent learning times throughout the day. Daily conversations with each child will support their language development.

Early Literacy

Emergent reading and writing concepts and skills are planned and reinforced throughout the day during learning centers, transitions, meals, and outside play. For example, children learn to recognize and write their name when signing in as they arrive; the ABC center supports letter recognition; phonological awareness can be practiced during transitions or at meal times. Puppets and flannel board materials in the book corner can be used for retelling or making up stories.

Integrating Learning

Children will benefit when learning experiences are integrated across content areas in which skills and concepts are linked during formal and informal learning opportunities throughout the day. For example, after reading "The Three Little Pigs," the class explored math concepts (quantity of sets), built houses in the construction area and explored rocks, straw, wood and sticks in the science area.