

SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START

Section: Early Childhood Development
Subject: Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum
Revised: May, 2003

REGULATION REFERENCE:

45 CFR Part 1304 (Nov. 1996) Performance Standards 1304.21(a)(1)
NAEYC Guide to Accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs

POLICY:

A developmentally appropriate educational program for young children is composed of both **concrete** and **abstract** experiences that provide knowledge of themselves and the world around them. The Head Start program helps young children develop basic skills, concepts, knowledge, and attitudes in the important areas of intellectual development, social behavior, emotional balance, physical skills, aesthetics, moral/spiritual values, and cultural awareness. The curriculum is flexible and child-centered and is designed to be a part of the total educational continuum, not a separate program.

PROCEDURE:

The daily lesson plans for each class will include activities that foster development of the skills listed below.

1. **Intellectual development** includes cognitive, perceptual, and language skills.
 - a. Cognitive skills: This includes concept formation, problem-solving, classification, sorting, communication, observation, relationships, counting and number concepts.
 - b. Perceptual skills: This includes perception through the use of the senses: vision, hearing, taste, smell, and touch.
 - c. Language and Literacy skills: This includes use of increased vocabulary to communicate orally, use of appropriate patterns of English, use of age-appropriate language, verbalization of needs and feelings, use of literacy promotion activities to encourage the recognition and sounds of letters of the alphabet.
2. Appropriate **social behavior** is learned as a young child functions in and as part of a group, interacts properly with other children, takes directions from the teachers, respects the rights of others, takes turns, works cooperatively, and accepts responsibility.
3. **Emotional development** proceeds optimally as the young child gains positive attitudes toward self and others, accepts self as a person of adequacy and worth, acquires self-discipline, develops independence and initiative, grows in self-confidence and self-reliance, accepts and adjusts to success and failure, and expresses feelings in an acceptable manner.

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4. **Physical and motor skills** include both large and small muscle coordination. This contributes to a child's feeling of security and self-esteem as he begins to control himself and his environment.
 - a. Large muscle coordination is developed by climbing, pushing, pulling, lifting, skipping, hopping, throwing, running, jumping, dancing, and other creative movement activities.
 - b. Small muscle coordination is developed through manipulating pegs, toys, and beads, assembling puzzles, building with blocks, working with tools, and painting, drawing, pasting, etc.
5. **Esthetics, moral/spiritual values** are fostered through participation in art, music, and pretend activities; enjoying literature, stories, and poems; developing awareness of patriotism and love of country; and becoming aware of religious values.
6. **Cultural Awareness** is promoted by thorough planning as documented on the "Weekly Lesson Plan Form" (see page E-7-a). Classroom activities which foster cultural awareness include area field trips to various businesses and farms, songs, stories, and craft activities that would reflect our families and communities. Each Teacher will contact one parent each week to invite them into the classroom to share their culture (tell family stories, show pictures, tell about profession, demonstrate crafts and/or hobbies, share recipes and favorite foods, etc.). From time to time, the staff will take pictures of parents' projects to display and share. Also, Teaching staff will continue to review Weekly Lesson Plans with parents asking for suggestions concerning the topics and activities presented.