



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ **Individualize care and learning activities**
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

Individualize Care and Learning Activities

Intentional Planning

If you've ever planned a party or event, then you know that there's a fair amount of work that goes into planning...but the pay off is great! Good planning leads to a great party! In the same way, when you plan your day with young children, it will go a lot smoother, and will lead to many positive outcomes such as:

- **School success.** Brain research tells us that planning rich experiences and activities for children during the early years (birth-5), helps children enter school ready to learn and succeed!
- **Individualized learning.** Intentional planning means planning with a goal in mind. It means thinking about where each child is developmentally and planning activities that will best meet his developmental needs and better support his learning. When we plan this way, there are many positive short and long-term impacts.
- **Increased quality.** Intentional planning increases the quality of the care provided to children. It leads to richly planned activities, helps us to stay on track, limits distractions, and increases our interactions with children.

The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) emphasizes the importance of intentional planning. Quality Standard 3.6 for achieving NAFCC accreditation states, *"The provider plans learning experiences that build on the needs and interests of the children, being flexible in adapting the plans."*

A good question to ask yourself when planning activities for the children in your family child care program is: *"What do I know about each child's current skill level and how can I move him to the next level?"* This is intentional planning!

This newsletter will outline the steps for intentionally planning learning activities to engage young children, and will highlight the importance of setting goals for each child, the benefits of using a lesson plan, and key ideas to keep in mind when planning.



Steps for Intentionally Planning Activities to Engage Young Children

Step 1: Know your children

As an FCC provider, you observe and interact with the children in your care daily; you are aware of their likes and dislikes and have a good idea of where they are developmentally. It is important to have a system in place to document information about children's interests, behavior, development and learning progress. A simple composition notebook is a good place to jot down your observations.

Step 2: Identify children's next level

Using a resource that shows children's developmental milestones, you can identify where each child is in their development, and determine their next step.

For example, Hawai'i has developed the *Hawai'i Early Learning and Development Standards (HELDS)*, which outlines the expectations of knowledge and behavior at each age level (birth through kindergarten entry) in five domains: Physical Well Being, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Cognition and General Knowledge, and English Language Arts and Literacy. To access HELDS visit <http://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/HELDS-continuum-2014.04.01.pdf>.



Step 3: Set goals for each child

"A high-quality provider has individualized goals for each child as well as goals for the group as a whole." (NAFCC, 2017)

The goals that you set for each child should be based on all areas of his development. For example, the *HELDS* tells us that a 12–24 month old will typically be able to grasp objects and pick up objects with his thumb and forefingers; and the next milestone is that a 24–36 month old will typically twist his wrist to accomplish a task. Therefore, one goal might be for a 24-month old child (who has been observed using his thumb and forefingers confidently to grasp objects) to begin to twist his wrists to accomplish a task.

Step 4: Plan the activities

In order to meet the goals set for each child, you can plan activities to help children reach these goals. For example, in the case of the aforementioned 24-month old (Makana), in order to meet the goal for him to twist his wrists — plan activities that will necessitate the movement of wrists, such as painting a fence with a bucket of water and a paint brush, stirring pancake batter when cooking, or using a large bubble wand when playing bubbles.

With more than one child in your family child care (most likely of different ages and in different stages of development), it is probable that you will have different goals set for each child, and different planned activities to meet these goals. In order to cut down on the number of activities planned, try the following strategy:

- **Plan activities that can meet several goals.** For example, a bucket of large beads and lace can promote picking up (grasping thumb and forefinger), lacing (twisting wrist), sorting (by color or shape), counting, patterning, etc. This one activity will help meet the goal set for Makana to strengthen and twist his wrists, as well as Kaila's goal to sort, pattern, or count.
- **Individualize the things you say/do with each child while engaged in the activity.** Using the example above, you can show Makana how to string the beads and encourage him to do it on his own; for Kaila, you might say, "Can you find all the beads that are the same color and put them together?"



Step 5: Write it down: The Lesson Plan

By writing things down, it allows you time to review and compile the activities planned. A lesson plan template is a good place to document the activities, and a good way to stay on track. A lesson plan is like a roadmap to help us reach the goals we have set for each child.

Keep in mind:

- Select activities that are developmentally appropriate and based on best practices in child development.
- Whenever you can, select activities that are based on the culture of the children in your family child care.
- Instead of planning completely new activities every week, extend the learning of selected activities by adding something new to the existing activity each week (for as long as the children are interested). For example, in the case of the bucket of beads and laces, try adding different colored pipe cleaners the next time and see how children use the materials.
- While engaged in the activity, keep in mind the purpose/goal of the planned activities.



Citations:

National Association for Family Child Care, Quality Standards for NAFCC Accreditation, Fifth Edition (2017). <https://www.nafcc.org/file/bfae1239-d67e-41d9-820d-96c059842fac>

Center on the Developing Child. *Experiences Builds Brain Architecture*. Harvard University. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNNsN9IJkws>

Reflection Sheet, Award Book, and Training Certificates

- Providers who fill out the caregiver's reflection sheet and return it by the posted deadline to the Learning to Grow Program are *guaranteed* a children's book in return. A postage-paid envelop is provided.
- Providers who thoughtfully complete the reflection sheet **question #5** can be awarded a certificate indicating one hour of training completed. Training hours will align with the topic areas required to meet DHS requirements.
- Reflection sheets do not need to be returned by the due date in order to earn the certificate. However, the supply of award books is limited and after the due date, award books will be sent only as available.
- Indicate on Question #8 if you would like to receive free technical assistance or support related to a child care issue.



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