



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE Vol. VIII, No. 1

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 Hallmark of Quality Child Care

Foster Curiosity and Development through Play

Planning Activities with the 4 E's

Over fifty years of research has confirmed that a child's **interest** is *the most powerful ingredient for learning*. When a child is interested in something she is:

- engaged and pays attention to it,
- less distracted and able to focus, and
- highly motivated to explore it and learn more about it.

Studies have shown that the more motivated a young child is to learn, the more likely she will be successful later.

The 4 E's are four simple steps to help you discover each child's interests, and spark their desire to learn.

- **Excite:** What *excites the children*? Observe carefully what each child looks at, plays with, talks and laughs about, and what questions are asked. Write them down.
- **Explore:** Give the children *opportunities to explore* their interests. For example, if the children like cars, then take them out to safely look at your car. Point out the parts of your car.
- **Extend:** *Extend the children's learning and pique their curiosity*. For example, after they explore your car – have them work together to make a pretend car using a large cardboard box, and make the parts of the car (wheels, steering wheel, etc.)
- **Evaluate:** *Evaluate the learning that took place*. What do the children now know about cars that they didn't know before? What questions do they still have? Their questions will provide opportunities for further explorations and learning.

By using the 4 E's, children will not only learn more about the subject of their interest, but they will also discover that learning is fun! In this newsletter, we will discuss steps for lesson planning while keeping the 4 E's in mind with each age level – infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



Born Curious

Dr. Susan Engel explains that babies are born with a “natural and active interest in knowing more about the world around them.” However, this natural curiosity becomes fragile over time and can weaken for children who are not given opportunities to explore their curiosities. *You play a key role in giving young children opportunities that spark their desire to learn.*

Steps for Lesson Planning

Step 1: Observe what *excites* each child.

Infants will:

- listen to, look at, move their arms or legs, smile, laugh, or coo at someone they are interested in;
- look at/track, reach for, touch, grasp, listen to, and mouth objects they like.

Toddlers will:

- want to get a closer look, and touch and explore things they are interested in;
- *begin to ask questions* about what they see, hear, and experience, such as “what that?” or “why?”

Preschoolers will:

- select activities, explore objects, and demonstrate patience, problem-solving, or creativity when engaged in the activities that they are most interested in;
- frequently talk about or ask questions about things they are interested in.



Step 2: Plan activities for children to *explore* – based on their interests.

Infants

- Sing, read and play games (such as peek-a-boo) with her.
- *Talk about* the things she is looking at or reaching for, mouthing, etc.

Toddlers/Preschoolers

- Give children plenty of *time* to explore the object, person, or place that sparks their interest.
- Provide *tools and resources* to aid in their exploration, such as a magnifying glass, tape measure, binoculars, tongs, books, etc.

Step 3: *Extend* their learning.

Infants

- Give infants opportunities to further *explore objects through their senses* (look at, listen, touch, smell and taste).

Toddlers/Preschoolers

- Show them how to use materials *in new ways*. For example, show the child how to build a ramp with the blocks to roll cars down/up.
- Plan an outing/field trip to a place that may provide answers to their questions.
- Help them *recall and re-create* their experiences and explorations through drawings, or by role playing.
- Encourage children to *record their findings* in a journal, chart or calendar.

Step 4: Look for cues and *evaluate* each child's learning.

Infants

Discovering a newborn's likes and dislikes is all about trial and error. Here are some things to try:

- Ask her parents what she likes (how she likes to be held, what she likes to look at, etc.).
- Be aware of signs that she is not interested – such as turning her head away, closing her eyes and falling asleep, crying, making “fussy” sounds, or hiccupping. When you see these kinds of signals, give baby a rest. Put aside her toys and rock and sing quietly to her, or just hold her.

Toddlers/Preschoolers

- *Listen* to their questions to evaluate their learning.
 - When they ask “why?” ask the question back to them. Say, “What do you think?” or “You tell me why.”
- Help preschoolers reflect on their experiences and what they learned. Are there *questions they still have* about the topic?
- Allow their *investigations to continue* for days, even weeks – for as long as they are interested.



Tips:

- Keep in mind that the human brain learns through repetition. When children ask for the same book to be read, or ask to do activities again, this helps the connections in their brain get stronger.
- Although children demonstrate specific “personal” interests, you can also spark their interests in other things by creating what is called “situational” interests. Here are examples you can try:
 - Point out things such as a bug you happen to see outside your door, or a weed growing in the grass in your outdoor play area.
 - Introduce a new item, such as a restaurant menu in your dramatic play area, or plastic cups and wet sand in your sensory table.
 - Take the children on outings, such as a walk, and observe their reaction.

Training Opportunity

Wonder of Wonders! Harnessing the Wonder of Play through Provocations,
by Sally Haughey

This is a free online recorded Early Childhood Investigations webinar. The training offers a free certificate for 1.5 training hours. Stay until the end to find out how to access your certificate.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7656378166255469579>

Featured Activity

Investigating the Garbage Truck with the 4 E's



What You Need:

- Books about: the garbage truck, and/or the landfill/transfer station
- A blank monthly calendar and markers or crayons

What to do:

1. Join the children in watching the garbage truck collect your trash for several days while commenting on your observations.
2. Listen to the questions the children ask. Read books to them about the garbage truck.
3. Help the children keep a monthly calendar to tally: the days the garbage truck collected the trash, what they did, and the time the trash was collected. At the end of the month, talk about their findings.
4. Take a trip or show a children's video of the community dump or transfer station so they can see where the trash goes and what the workers do with it. Ask them to talk about what they observe.
5. Give the *children* opportunities to recall what they learned by drawing pictures or by acting it out with toy vehicles, roads, and recyclables to represent trash.
6. Talk about things they learned and listen for questions they may still have. For example, if they are curious about recycling, give them hands-on opportunities to explore this topic.

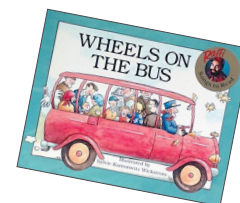
Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the Hawai'i State Public Library www.librarieshawaii.org

Wheels on the Bus

by Raffi

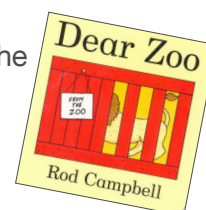
Even the youngest child will enjoy this classic book and sing-aloud about the bus that goes "all around the town!"



Dear Zoo

by Rod Campbell

Young readers will love lifting the flaps to discover the animals the zoo has sent as potential pets—a monkey, a lion, and even an elephant!



Where Does the Garbage Go?

by Paul Showers (A Let's Read and Find Out Book)

This picture book is filled with diagrams that follow a garbage truck to the landfill, the incinerator and the recycling center.



Citations

Engel, Susan (2015). *The Hungry Mind*. President and Fellows of Harvard College: United States of America.

Hand, Jamie. (2021). *How Tweaking Your Curriculum Can Help Behavior: A Focus on STEAM with Jamie Hand*: Transforming Challenging Behavior Online Conference 2021.



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