

St Anne's Nursery School

Policy on Teaching
and Learning

POLICY ON PLAY

Play is the medium through which all learning occurs in the pre-school context.

In St. Anne's Nursery the approach to play is underpinned by the N. I. Nursery Education Guidelines. Recent restructuring of this school's curriculum has been guided by the 'Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education' CCEA 1987 and we aim through the provision of progressive free choice, activities and experiences to both enrich and extend the knowledge, skills and attitudes of children.

Staff, through careful intervention in play and focusing on thematic objectives, will engage in conversation with both groups and individuals to ensure that each child has a sound grasp of the language, skills and concepts relevant to his developmental stage.

Observation and evaluation of various play aspects will assist staff in assessing the effectiveness of provision and amendments will be made accordingly.

All play occurs within a settled and secure environment where the child is encouraged to respect the produce of his own and others efforts through praise from adults and parents.

Parents are informed, through monthly newsletters, of the current focus of play and invited, where appropriate, to contribute or to consolidate some play experiences at home.

Staff, conscious of the need to provide indoor and outdoor play facilities and to affect a balance between supervision and involvement in the latter will strive towards this end through careful classroom auxiliary help at outdoor playtime.

Staff have noted, with particular interest, the success of informal parent / teacher exchanges in the matter of reporting achievement / concern and this has been developed recently to take the form of a termly timetabled meeting based on staff collation of record card information and findings following from individual tracking observations which staff have been carrying out.

It is considered essential that from the outset of a child's experience at St. Anne's Nursery any concern social or educational, emerging from his classroom profile be monitored, recorded, discussed with parent / guardian and relevant professional expertise sought out.

In conclusion, the approach to play in the schools curricular structure aims to be sufficiently flexible as to enable the needs of each individual to be met and to ensure each pupil has access to a wide range of activities promoting development in the following developmental areas: -

- Language and intellectual
- Mathematical

- Scientific
- Physical
- Creative and aesthetic
- Environmental
- Social and personal

St.Anne's Nursery Unit

Learning: Aims and Objectives

1. Mission Statement:

During the child's journey in St.Anne's Nursery Unit he/she will be exposed to experiences and quality of interpersonal relations that will promote his social and educational development to the full and foster in him/her positive attitudes to later life and learning.

2. General Aim:

To that end we seek to match opportunities offered to the unique needs and interests of each pupil in the following way:

<p><u>Aims</u> To provide structured activities/tasks distributed over 3 terms of academic year which ensure a host of learning opportunities spanning the range of pupil ability at any given stage in their nursery school experience.</p> <p><u>Social and Emotional</u> To stimulate curiosity and encourage independence and foster good relationships</p> <p><u>Physical Development</u> To offer in both outdoor and indoor experiences equal opportunities for all pupils to develop confidence and embrace the challenges which foster gross and fine motor skills.</p> <p><u>Creative and Aesthetic</u> To make constantly available a diverse and exciting range of materials for pupils' spontaneous engagement.</p>	<p><u>Objectives</u> <u>By the end of their nursery school experience children will...</u> ...have explored a range of experiences which enable them to develop in social, emotional, physical, intellectual, language and creative aspects and to reach the specific goals below at their own pace.</p> <p><u>Social and Emotional</u> ... Have had the opportunity to work constructively both alone and as part of a group and demonstrate consideration and respect.</p> <p><u>Physical Development</u> Have access to suitable and safe open and more concentrated spaces where such skills as running, hopping, balancing, throwing, catching and manual dexterity will have been stretched.</p> <p><u>Creative and Aesthetic</u> ...have experienced the reward of achievement and more significantly the therapeutic value resultant from painting / collage / role play /model and music making / appreciation of their peer's efforts.</p>
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Language Development

To provide opportunities which promote vocabulary, comprehension, speaking and listening skills.

Early Mathematical Experiences

To stimulate mathematical language uses in the course of everyday classroom experience which will lead to understanding of basic mathematical concepts.

The World Around Us

To schedule more intricate and thought provoking investigative situations.

To incorporate in each monthly theme opportunities to develop awareness of
-personal identity
-safety
-daily routines
-extended family
-nature
-role of various persons in immediate community.

Aims

Adult planning and presentation of daily activities will seek to offer open access to the full curricular range.
To intervene in order to balance opportunities for both stimulation and monitoring of pupil learning.

Adult Role

Language Development

...have acquired, via conversation with peers and adults / access to books, rhymes, songs, relevant language-based ICT, the essential language components to enable them to express their understanding of their environment and their opinions and feelings thereof.

Early Mathematical Experiences

..Have explored and discussed materials and activities conducive to a grasp of early numbers, order, time, space, sequence, volume, capacity and measurement.

The World Around Us

...become sufficiently confident and able to bring existing knowledge to bear on new learning situations, thus observing, reasoning, predicting, manipulating, constructing, handling a variety of data and problem solving.

...show interest in caring for themselves and other creatures.

...have a firm grasp of their own and others role in community.

...contribute to shared discussions and activities involving local environmental issues (e.g. litter project) and community members.

Objectives

...have participated with pupils in a progressive, challenging range of activities related to the learning outcomes above.
...have acquired detailed information of for individual pupil progress and impression of the effectiveness of experience offered which will inform future planning.

Teaching and Learning

This teaching and learning policy of St Anne's Nursery Unit was written by the staff team after careful consideration had been given to recent research upon the subject e.g. H. Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory. It aims to ensure that the children at our school are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement.

Children learn through their total experience. This policy guides what children do, what staff do, how time is managed, the organisation of the classroom and what the school as an organisation does to create an effective and well-managed learning environment in which the individual needs of each child can be met.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

We believe that children learn best when they:

- are happy
- are interested and motivated
- achieve success and gain approval
- are given tasks which match their ability
- clearly understand the task
- are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries
- are challenged and stimulated.

The Learning Environment

This is organised to ensure that children have the opportunity to:

- work individually, in groups and as a class
- make decisions
- work co-operatively
- solve problems
- be creative
- discuss their ideas
- develop social skills
- develop independence
- use initiative
- receive support
- achieve academically

Learning takes place in an environment which:

- is challenging and stimulating
- is peaceful and calm
- is happy and caring
- is organised
- is well resourced
- makes learning accessible

- is encouraging and appreciative
- is welcoming;
- provides equal opportunities
- provides a working atmosphere

Children are encouraged to develop organisational skills and independence through:

- appropriate tasks
- confidence building
- example
- co-operation
- provision of suitable opportunities
- responsibilities

Display

Display in the school is used to create an attractive and stimulating environment. The work displayed is of a high standard and uses both 2D and 3D in a variety of media and is changed frequently. It includes work on different aspects of the curriculum and reflects the individual child's efforts as well as ability.

Routines and Rules

Routines and rules in the classroom contribute to a healthy learning environment. To ensure effectiveness they are:

- agreed by the children and clearly understood
- fair and consistent
- realistic and positive
- kept to a minimum but enforced
- daily activities with which the children are familiar

All rules result in the children knowing the boundaries of behaviour and are set within the terms of The Behaviour Management Policy.

Achievement

Social, physical, creative and academic achievements are celebrated in many ways as an on going process in all aspects of school life, by:

- verbal praise by staff, peers and parents
- displays of work
- opportunities to perform or share
- encouraging self esteem
- sharing success with the community

Staff arranges time to observe, assess, reflect and review achievements with each child on a regular basis. This process is discussed and shared with parents on a formal and informal basis throughout the year.

Responsibilities

All members of St. Anne's Nursery Unit (teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils, governors and visitors) are expected to work towards the school's aims by:

- valuing children as individuals and respecting their right to education in a caring, secure environment
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community
- providing a well-ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations.
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviour and work.
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another

Staff work towards the school's aims by:

- providing a stimulating programme of study ensuring that the teaching styles, resources and tools pupils encounter are varied and challenging, offering opportunities for the highest standard of personal achievement by pupils across the ability range
- providing a curriculum, which is prepared, structured and paced to make the most effective use of the child's time in nursery
- ensuring, through assessment and accurate record keeping, that learning is progressive and continuous
- ensuring that pupils have a clear and common understanding of the high expectations held of them individually, according to their ability and aptitude and of the targets to which they are working
- giving pupils opportunities to review and reflect upon their progress and, where possible, to involve them in planning the next steps in their learning
- maintaining an up to date knowledge of the curriculum they are delivering
- establishing links with the local community and other schools to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education
- communicating with parents and keeping them informed of children's progress, topics to be studied and curriculum developments
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Supply Teachers

To ensure continuity, staff leave written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom The teacher's planning will always be available showing lesson plans, timetables and curriculum documents.

School Policies

School policies are set out in the staff handbook and school policy file. It is the duty of each staff member to be familiar with school- policies and to apply them.

Voluntary Helpers

Voluntary helpers are a valuable resource and we should welcome their involvement in the classroom. They can help in many ways across the whole curriculum. Help can be on a regular basis or a specific event. In all cases it is very important that the teacher should take the time to ensure that the volunteer fully understands and is well prepared for the activity in which he or she is involved.

Volunteers should be made to feel welcome in the school.

Equal Opportunities

All children have the right to equal opportunities. Teachers' expectations of behaviour and performance by all children should be the same. Groups, lines and all activities should be mixed where possible. Particular care should be taken in the areas of Technology and Physical activities. Teachers must ensure that the same children do not dominate in group work, especially when using the computer. All activities at our Nursery Unit are open to all children.

Record Keeping

All teachers should keep detailed records of their work with the class and of individual children's activities and progress.

PHYSICAL ORGANISATION

Furniture

Both classrooms have tables arranged for:

- ease of working
- flexibility
- purposeful discussion
- provision of quiet corners
- large working surfaces

Chairs should normally:

- be sufficient in number for the activities in the classroom
- leave enough room for children to move easily around the room

Storage units arranged to:

- support different areas of the curriculum
- support a project or activity
- give character to a room
- house children's personal belongings

An annual inventory of furniture and a planned programme of renewal and decoration will be done in consultation with staff and governors.

Resources

Materials in all areas should be well organised, be of good quality 1 be clean, tidy, attractive, accessible and well labelled. As far as possible materials should be near the appropriate working area. Stocks should be checked and replenished regularly. Children are taught and shown by example that resources are finite and that we all have a duty to care for equipment and not misuse, damage or waste it. Books and other equipment represent a considerable investment of money.

Resource Finance

Curriculum areas are allocated money according to the needs identified in the School Development Plan and the accompanying School Budget Plan. The staff will discuss resource needs on a monthly basis and purchases will be made accordingly.

In setting up each classroom we ensure:

- Quiet areas (such as books, art, table toys and private spaces) should be separated from noisier areas (such as blocks and house corner)
- Materials used together should be grouped together (e.g. crayons near drawing paper, block props near the blocks).
- Shelves, furniture, and carpets define areas.
- The art area should have a washable floor and be located near water.
- Blocks need clearly marked floor space and protection from traffic. Flat carpeting has been fitted for this area
- The book corner needs good light

Each classroom focuses upon the following activities:

- Block
- House Corner
- Table Toys
- Art
- Sand and Water
- Book Corner
- Music and Movement
- Computers
- Outdoor
- Cooking*

Why Art Is Important

When children apply paint to paper, glue things together, or pound a lump of clay, they experiment with colour, shape, design, and texture. They develop an awareness and appreciation of pleasant sensory experiences-which is the beginning of aesthetic judgment.

Children express their individual ideas and feelings with art materials such as paint, clay, markers, crayons, cornstarch, and collage materials. As they view their own creations and those of other children, they learn to value and appreciate differences. For young children, the process of creating is what is most important, not what they actually create. Engaging in art experiences benefits all aspects of children's development. Children who cannot express in words what they feel and think and how they view the world may be able to do so through art. As children draw, paint, and make collages, they experiment with colour, line, shape, and size. They use paints, fabrics, and chalk to make choices, try out ideas, plan, and experiment. When they mix colours, they learn about cause and effect. Through trial and error, they learn how to balance a mobile and weave yarn. As children tear paper for a collage or use scissors to cut, they refine small muscle movements. Making lines and shapes with markers and crayons helps children develop the fine motor control they will need for writing.

Our curriculum focuses on art materials and projects that allow children to be creative and individualistic in their art play. The specific objectives will reflect the ages and interests of the children in the school.

Social emotional development

- Express feelings (selecting bright colours for a painting to match a playful mood).
- Learn to channel frustration and anger in a socially acceptable way (punching and pounding clay).
- Assert individuality (drawing a pumpkin that differs in colour and design from the traditional).
- Experience pride (making a mobile that is hung in the classroom)
- Share and cooperate with others (working together on making a group mural).

For cognitive development:

- Enhance creativity (combining materials and textures for a collage in a unique way).
- Develop an understanding of cause and effect (observing what happens when blue paint is added to yellow).
- Label shapes and objects (painting a yellow circle and calling it a "sun")
- Solve problems (figuring out how to get a mobile to balance)
- Develop planning skills (determining which colour finger paints to assemble before starting work)

For physical development:

- Develop small muscle skills (colouring with markers)
- Refine eye-hand coordination (pouring tempera into an easel paint can)
- Learn directionality (painting a circle with one continuous brush stroke)

What Art Is and Isn't

The purpose of art experiences for three- to five-year old children is to allow them to explore on their own, using materials in their own ways. If an adult does artwork for children, children become watchers and learn that their own abilities are not valued. We

take the position that colouring books, patterns, and pre-cut models are not appropriate methods for enhancing children's creative art.

Why Blocks Are Important

Blocks are an essential part of our curriculum. Hollow blocks encourage dramatic play when they become a puppet stage, a house, a bus, or fire engine. Wooden unit blocks enable children to explore concepts in math, science, social studies, and more.

Blocks are open-ended play materials; there is no right or wrong way to build with them. Sometimes children start with an idea of what they want to make at other times the three-dimensional designs grow as children place blocks together randomly or in patterns. The creations children produce with blocks are often reminiscent of things they have seen, and so they will begin to name what they build: a house, road, or rocket ship.

As children use blocks, staff can support social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. In the block area children play together and share experiences. One child's idea of how to build something may differ from another's, so they learn to respect different ideas and to learn from one another. As children build together, they solve problems and enjoy the benefits of cooperation. Through play with blocks, children create representations of their experiences-an important skill for abstract thinking. In addition, they learn about sizes, shapes, numbers, order, area, length, and weight as they select, build, and clean up blocks. Physically, children use their large muscles to carry blocks from place to place. They use their small muscles to carefully place blocks together.

Objectives for children's learning

For socio-emotional development:

- Work independently and in a group (deciding when, how, and with whom to play)
- Express needs, concerns, and fears in socially acceptable ways (creating a hospital or cave with monsters and playing make-believe)
- Share and cooperate with others (trading materials and props and planning joint building projects)
- Demonstrate pride in accomplishments and a positive self-concept (sharing their buildings by talking about what they have created)

For cognitive development:

- Understand concepts of length, height, weight, and area (carrying blocks and using them in constructions)
- Classify and sort objects by size, shape, and function (placing blocks of the same size together)
- Make use of physical principles (making towers of blocks that balance, creating bridges and tunnels)
- Predict cause-and-effect relationships (seeing how high they can build before the blocks fall)
- Solve problems related to construction (making steps to a house, building a bridge)

- Organize in a sequence (laying out blocks from short to tall and counting in correct order)
- Use addition, subtraction, and fractions (judging how many blocks are needed to fill a space)
- Utilize emergent reading and writing skills (making signs for buildings)

For physical development:

- Use large and small muscle skills (grasping, lifting, placing, and balancing blocks)
- Develop eye-hand coordination (placing blocks in desired patterns)
- Control the placement of objects (under, over, above, below, on top of, and next to when constructing with blocks)

Why the House Corner Is Important

The work children do in the house corner is called dramatic play, pretend play, or make-believe. Whatever it is called, it involves taking on a role and engaging in imitative behaviour. Although this area of the room may be called the house corner, it is really a stage that can be transformed by the staff and the children into a shop, cafe, hospital, post office, vet, hairdressers, or whatever theme is being focused on.

Pretend play is very important for children's development and learning. In the house corner children take on roles from familiar family scenes, local community experiences, and fantastic imaginings. The ability to collect and draw upon previous experiences, to ask and answer questions, and plan with others requires a level of abstract thinking essential to learning in other areas.

As children act out roles, they develop many skills. They play cooperatively, negotiate turns, exchange ideas, and work together to solve problems. As they relive life experiences, they take on roles they fear and learn to control their anxieties. (Think about the child who fears an operation and pretends to be the doctor and "in charge") In dramatic play, children draw upon their previous experiences. This requires that they judge and select relevant information so they can enact play episodes. Finally, dramatic play provides practice in using small motor skills as children put on and take off dress-up clothes, "write" notes or take orders, or use play dough to make hamburgers.

Objectives for Children's Learning

For socio-emotional development:

- Interact with others (taking on roles and playacting).
- Express individuality and creativity (developing play themes based on individual preferences and experiences).
- Play cooperatively with others (taking turns and sharing materials).
- Demonstrate an understanding of the social expectations and attitudes of others (role playing and re-enacting life experiences).
- Anticipate how to act in new situations (developing the ability to imagine).

- Address fears and worries (trying out roles and replaying difficult and scary experiences).
- Demonstrate empathy for others (developing more complex roles and showing concern for others while in those roles).

For cognitive development:

- Use symbols to represent real objects and situations (using a block to represent a telephone or a string for a fire hose). Identify and plan play episodes with others. ("Let's play store. You be the storekeeper. I'll come shopping.")
- Draw on past information and experience to solve problems. ("Doctors don't give shots in the hand. My doctor gives shots in my arm.")
- Identify solutions to problems that arise during play. ("What are we going to feed this baby? There's no cereal in the house! We'll need to go to the store.")
- Classify props according to common characteristics. ("You put away the pots and pans and I'll put away the food.")
- Arrange objects according to size (cleaning up props and returning them to labelled places).
- Persevere at a task (remaining involved in a play episode for increasing periods of time).

For physical development:

- Improve small muscle control (putting on dress-up clothes and snapping, buckling, zipping, and buttoning).
- Use eye-hand coordination (dressing dolls and matching pots and pans with outlines on the shelves where they are stored).
- Use visual discrimination skills (matching and grouping like objects such as dishes or utensils)

Why Table Toys Are Important

Table toys are games, manipulative, puzzles, and activities that children can play with at a table or on the floor. A good variety with differences in texture, colour, shape, and degree of difficulty is available on a daily basis. Some should be self-correcting, structured toys which fit together in a specific way, such as a puzzle, or a game which is played in a specific way, such as lotto. Others should be open-ended toys, such as pattern blocks, cubes, or felt boards, that can be used in multiple ways.

Playing with toys is a quiet activity that children can do alone, with a friend, or with a staff member. They offer children challenging opportunities to learn new skills. Table toys can also serve as excellent teaching tools for working with children individually or in small groups.

Children grow in all areas of their development as they play with table toys. They have to share and take turns as they play a game or build an intricate design. They develop feelings of competence when they complete a puzzle or finish a project. As they build with table blocks or make designs with pattern blocks and parquetry blocks, children use creative problem-solving skills. They can work on emerging math skills such as seriation,

matching, and classification. While completing puzzles or placing pegs in a pegboard, children practice eye-hand coordination. As children string beads or construct with interlocking cubes, they refine small muscle skills.

Objectives for children's Learning

For socio-emotional development

- Work cooperatively in small groups (playing lotto, dominoes, and memory and matching games)
- Develop self-control (sharing toys and waiting for a turn with a desired toy)
- Demonstrate perseverance and self-discipline (working with a puzzle until it has been completed)
- Experience pride in accomplishments (seeing a task through from start to finish)

For cognitive development:

- Demonstrate creative abilities (experimenting with open-ended toys)
- Sort and match objects by attributes such as colour, size, texture, and shape (using collections such as buttons, shells, or bottle caps)
- Demonstrate an understanding of number concepts related to sequencing, seriation, and classification (using table blocks, parquetry, and attribute blocks).
- Develop emergent reading skills such as directionality, figure-ground discrimination, matching like objects (using such table toys such as pegboards, puzzles, dominoes, and collectibles).

For physical development:

- Develop fine motor control (placing pegs in holes, stringing beads, piecing together puzzles, and manipulating buttons, marbles, or shells)
- Develop eye-hand coordination (sewing with yarn, sorting buttons, and returning puzzle pieces to their frames)
- Demonstrate visual discrimination skills (sorting objects according to attributes of size, colour, and shape)
- Refine sense of touch (learning to distinguish toys made of different materials)

Why Sand and Water Are Important

The natural attraction that most children have for these materials makes them perfect for exploration in the early childhood classroom. Sand and water play can be two separate activities. Each one on its own provides children with many learning opportunities. As a liquid, water can be splashed, poured, and frozen. As a dry solid, sand can be sifted, raked, and shovelled. Sand and water play are enhanced when the two are merged to form a third type of play-wet sand play. By housing the materials near one another, children can use them separately, or at times, together.

Children's explorations with sand and water naturally help build various skills. By sifting sand and scooping water, children improve their physical dexterity. By joining others in blowing bubbles or making a sand castle, they develop social skills. At the same time, they enhance their cognitive skills as they explore why certain objects sink in water and others float.

Wet sand play allows children to encounter principles of math and science firsthand. When children mix sand with water, they discover that they have changed the properties of both: the dry sand becomes firm and the water is absorbed. The textures of both materials change, too. Unlike dry sand or liquid water, wet sand can be moulded. Individually and together, sand and water play can be used effectively to challenge and soothe children's minds and bodies.

Objectives for Children's Learning

For socio-emotional development:

- Play cooperatively with others (sharing water play props with another child)
- Explore social roles (washing dolls and dishes)
- Develop pride (requesting that a castle made in the sand tub not be knocked down at the end of play)
- See a task through to completion (mixing up and using a bubble solution and then cleaning up)

For cognitive development:

- Observe materials to see how they compare and contrast (adding water to dry sand to see how it changes)
- Understand cause-and-effect relationships (predicting what will happen when soap flakes are added to water)
- Observe conservation of volume (pouring sand, water, or wet sand into differently shaped containers and comparing them)
- Develop problem-solving skills (figuring out how to dig a tunnel in wet sand so that it won't collapse)
- Develop creativity (moulding wet sand into a variety of shapes)

For physical development:

- Strengthen fine motor control (using a tongue depressor to trace figure-eights in the sand)
- Develop eye-hand movements (shaking sand through a sieve)
- Improve coordination skills (filling measuring cups and spoons)

Book Corner

A book corner is an essential element in our classroom. This is where children will listen to stories and poems and have opportunities to explore books on their own. The book area may include a listening centre with tapes, flannel boards, and puppets. These media, along with storytelling by teachers and children, promote literacy skills (reading, writing,

and communication). At the same time, the book corner facilitates children's progress in other areas of growth and development.

Through books, children:

- expand their imaginations and creativity
- learn about the importance of print as a means of communication
- gain information and adjust to new experiences by reading and listening to stories on such topics as the birth of a sibling, moving, going to a new school, or visiting the dentist or doctor
- learn to deal with difficult events, such as being hospitalized, the death of a family member, the death of a pet, divorce, or sibling rivalry
- acquire knowledge of science, math, history, health and safety, and famous people
- learn about social responsibilities, such as how to be a good friend, how to care for the environment, or how to behave in specific social situations and become familiar with different literary genres, including stories, poems, rhymes, folk and fairy tales, and biographies

Exposure to books and storytelling helps children understand that their feelings, fears, questions, and problems are not unique. Acquiring a love for books is one of the most powerful incentives for children to become readers.

Objectives for Children's Learning

For socio-emotional development:

- Develop concern for others (demonstrating empathy after hearing a story about people with disabilities or people who have suffered from prejudice)
- Tryout different roles (play-acting characters from a story)
- Share time and materials with others (inviting another child to join in listening to a tape)
- Develop awareness about relationships (making a book composed of photos of themselves and their families)

For cognitive development:

- Develop an understanding of symbols (relating the picture of a boy to the written word "boy")
- Increase vocabulary (learning the names of animals in a book on Africa)
- Predict events (telling what's going to happen next in a story being read aloud)
- Recognize objects, colours and shapes (pointing to objects on a flannel board and describing their attributes)
- Understand sequence (opening up a book and turning the pages in order)
- Apply knowledge to new situations (making up a nonsense rhyme after hearing poems of this type on a tape)

- Develop storytelling abilities (dictating stories to a teacher or creating a story with scribbles or invented spellings)
- Develop phonemic awareness (recognizing rhyming sounds and thinking of other words with that sound)
- Recognize sight words (recognizing their names and words from a familiar book)

For physical development:

- Develop small muscle skills (writing with a marker)
- Strengthen eye muscles (following pictures and words in a book as it is being read aloud)
- Coordinate eye and hand movements (placing objects on a flannel board)
- Refine visual discrimination skills (finding an object or person in a complex illustration such as Waldo in the Where's Waldo? books)
- You can use the library area to accomplish a wide range of learning objectives. Not all the objectives indicated here are appropriate for any one child You can individualize by selecting objectives that best match the developmental levels of the children in your group

Why Music and Movement Are Important

Music naturally delights and moves most children. Throughout the early childhood years children are learning to do new things with their bodies. They are also learning that movement can communicate messages and represent actions. An early childhood program that includes time for music and movement provides an outlet for children's energy and high spirits and benefits their development in a number of ways.

Most young children begin to learn about the world by acting on objects and people, and they "think with their bodies" well before they think with words. Movement activities offer children opportunities to solve problems. Children aren't limited by their verbal abilities when you ask, "What are some different ways you can think of to get from this side of the mat to the other?" Singing or chanting can help make routine activities and transitions (such as gathering children into a circle for a group activity), smoother and more enjoyable. And music helps to set a mood. Quiet, soothing music calms and relaxes children, while a lively marching tune rouses them for an energetic clean-up time. Music and movement are also social activities that help children feel part of the group.

Objectives for Children's Learning

For socio-emotional development:

- Participate in a group (singing or dancing with other children)
- Develop social skills by playing cooperative musical games (simple games such as "Ring Around the Rosy ," or those requiring more cooperation such as "Farmer in the Dell")
- Express anger, fear, joy, and other emotions through music and movement (creating a happy dance to celebrate snow)
- Recognize that music and dance express moods and feelings

- Enhance self-concept by sharing the music and dance of each child's culture (teaching the group a familiar song from home)

For cognitive development:

- Refine listening skills by noticing changes in tempo or pitch (adapting one's dancing or clapping to shifts in tempo or beat)
- Increase awareness of different movements or body positions (folding legs like a child in a picture book)
- Develop creativity and imagination by responding to problems in movement or music (creating thunder sounds with instruments)
- Learn new words and concepts through songs and movement (learning body parts by singing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes")
- Explore cause and effect (experimenting with musical instruments and other devices for creating sounds)

For physical development:

- Explore the many ways in which a body can move (finding different ways to get to the other side of a line without stepping on it)
- Develop large motor skills (moving to music and participating in other creative movement activities)
- Improve balance, coordination, and rhythm through dancing and other movement activities (playing "Follow the Leader")
- Improve small motor skills (learning finger plays and playing musical instruments)

Why computers Are Important

Including computers as a learning area in the classroom promotes equal opportunities for all children. Many children today have access to and are familiar with home computers. Many others-particularly those from low-income families-do not and are therefore at a disadvantage. Because there is little doubt that society's needs for a computer-literate population will only increase over time, including computers in the classroom is a way to enable all children to become comfortable with this technology .

In addition, computer play, when designed in a developmentally appropriate way, can encourage open-ended explorations that are rewarding and enriching for children. The computer area should be one of many areas in the classroom where children can learn in a variety of ways at a pace that meets their individual needs.

Staff can support all areas of development as children work in the computer area. When the computer area is arranged for children to work in pairs or small groups, you can observe and encourage turn taking, sharing, and peer tutoring. When you choose good programs, you promote making choices, being creative, solving problems, and learning from the process. Of course, when children use a keyboard or mouse, they are using small muscle skills. Properly conceived, the computer area enhances many types of learning for all children.

Objectives for children's Learning

For socio-emotional development:

- Work cooperatively with others (working in pairs at the computer)
- Take responsibility for one's own work (directing the flow of a program)
- Develop perseverance (seeing a program or task through to completion)
- Take pride in one's accomplishments (making a printout of completed work)

For cognitive development:

- Identify and sort objects by attributes such as colour, shape, and size (using programs that develop classification skills)
- Learn sequencing and order (using programs that focus on size and patterning)
- Develop early reading skills (relating word labels to graphics)
- Understand cause and effect (seeing what happens when keys are pressed and feedback is given during a program)
- Extend creativity (using programs that encourage free explorations or simple graphics-creation programs)

For physical development:

- Develop small muscle skills (putting a disk in the disk drive, clicking a computer mouse, using the keyboard)
- Refine eye and hand coordination (moving the cursor to a desired place on the screen)
- Improve visual skills (tracking movement on the screen)

These objectives are just some of the skills and knowledge children can develop when computers are included in an interest area

Why the Outdoors Is Important

Outdoor play is enjoyable for children and important for their growth and development. Opportunities to climb, run, jump, skip, hop, throw, catch, and use their "outside" voices provide a healthy release and break from the quieter activities of the classroom. Being outside allows children to stretch their muscles, breathe in fresh air, take in sunshine, and enjoy the freedom of space. The natural landscape around our school offers many new objects to observe and collect and textures to examine.

What goes on outdoors, however, is much more than physical activity. Science, for example, comes alive as children explore nature and make firsthand observations. As children see leaves change colour, taste snow, touch the bark of a tree, hear bees, or smell the air after a rain shower, they are using all their senses to learn about the world. Art, music, reading, dramatic play, constructive play, social play, and caring for pets can all take place outdoors.

Just as staff design and organize the indoor space to ensure that children are exposed to activities and materials that support growth and development, careful thought is given to planning and using the outdoor space in a structured manner.

Objectives for Children's Learning

For socio-emotional development:

- Demonstrate social skills (pushing and being pushed on swings, helping care for a garden, participating in social play with peers)
- Take turns, negotiate compromises, and cooperate (using playground equipment, sharing art materials, playing group games)
- Express creativity (making art, sand, and woodworking creations, developing a new game)
- Enhance self-confidence (learning to use small and large muscles in competent ways)
- Increase independence (climbing a stepladder or going down a slide unassisted)
- Demonstrate pride in accomplishments (performing physical feats, caring for pets, growing plants from seeds)

For cognitive development:

- Make decisions (choosing an outdoor activity)
- Plan and carry through ideas (playing games, building sand structures, doing woodwork, creating artwork, growing plants)
- Solve problems (making a tunnel through sand, getting from one place to another on playground equipment, connecting two pieces of wood)
- Re-enact life experiences (playing ambulance driver, painting a fence with water, washing dolls or dishes)
- Identify cause and effect (making sand hold together by adding just the right amount of water, running through a sprinkler and getting wet)
- Learn about science (taking nature walks, observing growth in the garden, seeing outdoor animals in their habitat, noting seasonal changes)
- Develop an understanding of basic math concepts (counting jumps or hops, estimating distance, measuring the growth of plants)
- Increase vocabulary (conversing in the sandbox or at the woodworking table, acquiring new names for plants, animals, and objects found in nature)

For physical development:

- Develop large muscle skills (climbing, swinging, jumping, skipping, running)
- Develop small muscle skills (playing with sand and water, drawing, painting, picking up small objects)
- Coordinate eye-hand movements (catching, throwing, woodworking, decorating the sidewalk with chalk)
- Improve balance (climbing, swinging, sliding, using the balance beam, using spring-rocking equipment, hopping, walking on different surfaces)
- Increase spatial awareness (swinging, climbing up, down, in, out, over, and under)

- Demonstrate persistence and endurance (playing group games, climbing on playground equipment or pumping on a swing for an extended period, banging nails into a tree stump)

Why Cooking Is Important

Cooking experiences enable children to learn how food is prepared and how it contributes to their health and well being. One of the most appealing aspects for children is that cooking is one of the few activities in which they are allowed to do the same things that adults do. In the block corner they make pretend roads and bridges. In the house corner they imagine they are parents, teachers, and doctors. In cooking, they have an opportunity to behave just as grown-ups do—a rare treat for children. Cooking experiences are scheduled when staff feel the children are familiar with the classroom routines, able to select activities, and work independently.

Cooking can be one of the most satisfying activities in the classroom. Not only is food preparation enjoyable, it's also a true laboratory for learning. As children melt cheese, they learn about science. As they measure a cup of milk for a pudding recipe, they learn about measurement and volume. As they stir rice crispie buns, knead dough, and peel carrots, they develop physical skills and increase their vocabularies. When they make buns for their morning snack, children work together to see a task through to completion and take pride in a group task. Cooking appeals to children's senses and provides a wealth of learning opportunities

Objectives for Children's Learning

For socio-emotional development

- Work cooperatively in small groups (making dough)
- Develop self-help skills (preparing snacks for oneself)
- Complete a task (preparing a recipe from start to finish, including clean-up)
- Show consideration (sharing and waiting one's turn when working with others)

For cognitive development:

- Learn about nutrition (preparing a healthy snack)
- Solve problems (determining how high to fill a muffin tin to allow for rising batter)
- Develop beginning reading skills (relating recipe picture cards to written directions)
- Gain a foundation for math concepts such as sequencing and measurement (filling a bowl with cups of water)
- Learn about the scientific properties of food (turning cream into butter by vigorously shaking the cream)
- Express creativity

For physical development:

- Develop small muscle control (stirring batter and squeezing lemons)
- Enhance eye-hand coordination (cracking an egg)
- Learn directionality (using a wire whisk)