

# Content Chart

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### Use a range of teaching strategies.

#### Observe, acknowledge, and describe children's learning.

- Describe what children are doing (e.g., *I see that you are making a tall tower. You used only rectangular blocks.*).
- Help children build their vocabularies (e.g., *I heard you describe the playdough as sticky and gooey. Those are interesting descriptive words for playdough.*).

#### Encourage children by acknowledging their efforts and by making suggestions.

- Avoid nonspecific praise, such as saying, *Good job*, or *Nice work*.
- Support sustained attention (e.g., by saying, *You have been working hard on that puzzle for a long time. You only have two more pieces to put in!*).
- Help children use deliberate strategies (e.g., suggest, *You are getting much better at solving conflicts by talking with your friends. Try to remember to use their names when you talk with them.*).
- Acknowledge initiative and independence from adults (e.g., say, *You began cleaning up the art area when you heard the cleanup song, and you hung the paintings up all by yourselves!*).
- Nurture imagination and flexible thinking (e.g., *You discovered a way to paint thick and thin lines. Will you show Carmen how to do that?*).
- Be patient. Give children time to investigate, think, and talk.

#### Extend children's thinking with open-ended questions, prompts, and conversations.

- Promote children's observation and exploration (e.g., *What do you notice about this shape?... How is wet sand different from dry sand?*).
- Encourage children to talk about their work (e.g., *I see you are using blue paint for that part of your picture. I wonder what you are thinking about.*).
- Help children make connections (e.g., *What does this remind you of?*).
- Encourage problem solving and reasoning (e.g., *What can you do to keep the tower from falling?*).
- Encourage children to make predictions (e.g., *What do you think will happen if you put another rock on that side of the balance scale?*).
- Ask children to explain their thinking (e.g., *Why did you choose that book?*).

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## Routines and Transitions

### General Procedures: Routines

B

#### I might see teachers...

Establish a few procedures for children to follow during routines.

P

Establish consistent routines and procedures. Give children clear directions and make adaptations for individual needs.

R

Establish increasingly complex procedures. Help children learn mathematical language as they follow sequential directions (e.g., *First sign in. Second, put away your belongings. Third, find a book to read on the rug.*).

### General Procedures: Transitions

B

#### I might see teachers...

Prepare children to transition from one activity to another (e.g., give a 5-minute warning before cleanup).

P

Facilitate smooth transitions (e.g., give advance notice or a signal, use a sand timer, have materials ready for the next activity, limit the number of transitions). Use songs, rhymes, chants, and games to teach skills and concepts during transitions.

R

Have children transition individually or in small groups. Reduce or eliminate waiting time.

### Arrival and Departure

B

#### I might see teachers...

Greet children and families warmly and provide some guidance during their arrival. Prepare children for the end of the day and departure.

P

Support children as they separate from family members at arrival time (e.g., show sensitivity, provide comfort, guide children to an activity, involve family members in good-bye rituals if necessary). Talk with children informally.

R

Upon their arrival, encourage children to check the daily schedule and make sure that each child knows what to do first. Help children remember the day's sequence of routines and activities before they leave.

## Block Area



### Basic Materials

#### Furnishings and Equipment

- Area rug (low pile)
- Shelves to hold a full set of unit blocks and props
- Storage unit for hollow blocks (optional)
- Bins or plastic tubs for storing props

#### Blocks

- Full set of unit blocks (approximately 200 for 3-year-olds and 300+ for 4-year-olds)
- Set of at least one other type of block:
  - hollow block set
  - cardboard brick blocks
  - foam blocks
  - large plastic blocks
- Props from three or more categories
  - people figurines (multiethnic family and community sets)
  - traffic signs
  - farm and zoo animals, and pets
  - small vehicles (e.g., cars, trucks, buses, boats)

### Literacy and Math Enhancements

#### Literacy Materials

- Books and pictures about construction, buildings, workers, tools, construction and emergency vehicles, architecture, repairs, roads, bridges
- Other texts such as blueprints, advertisements for construction materials and tools, newspapers, operation and repair manuals
- Environmental print (e.g., logos of local businesses, labels on bins, signs)
- Writing and drawing materials

## Observe How Teachers Support Literacy Learning

### Literacy as a Source of Enjoyment

- Model literacy behaviors.
- Make literacy-related activities enjoyable and meaningful.
- Interact with children in the Library Area during choice time.
- Create opportunities for children to work together during literacy experiences.

### Vocabulary and Language

- Serve as a good language model:
  - Use conventional language for a variety of purposes.
  - Expand children's language by building on what they say.
- Offer children a variety of experiences and encourage them to talk about what they are doing.
- Use new words in a variety of contexts.
- Have frequent conversations with children, and talk about more than the here and now.
  - Encourage at least five exchanges.
  - Talk about meaningful topics.
  - Teach the social rules of conversation (e.g., taking turns and staying on the topic).
- Use open-ended questions and prompts.
- Play language games.
- Provide opportunities for children to hear and speak their home languages.

### Phonological Awareness

- Know each child's level of phonological awareness and provide appropriate experiences every day to strengthen its development.
- Draw children's attention to the sounds and units of language as appropriate (e.g., sentences, words, syllables, onset and rime, and phonemes).
- Use songs, stories, and rhymes that play with language.
- Encourage children's curiosity about and experimentation with language.

## Observe How Teachers Support Mathematical Learning

### Components of Mathematics

#### Number and operations

- Model a variety of counting strategies, e.g., pointing, touching, and tallying.
- Prove a variety of materials to help children develop an understanding of quantity.
- Use ordinal numbers in everyday classroom situations.
- Make obvious mistakes so that children can identify the errors and solve the problems.
- Model and explain the solution of a variety of problems that involve combining, separating, sharing, or set making.
- Act out stories that involve mathematical operations.
- Use books that encourage mathematical reasoning.
- Encourage children to tell stories about *how many*.
- Make class number books.
- Create a numerically rich environment.

#### Geometry and spatial sense

- Encourage the discovery of shape attributes.
- Provide a rich variety of shapes for investigation.
- Name shapes correctly as children explore them. Compare the shapes with everyday objects, e.g., *This orange is a sphere. It is round like a ball.*
- Introduce three-dimensional shapes before two-dimensional shapes.
- Ask children to predict and investigate what happens when two shapes are combined.
- Describe two- and three-dimensional shapes and model how to make them with various materials.
- Provide other activities that ask children to visualize and represent particular shapes.
- Have children put blocks away by matching them to the shelf labels on which the block shapes are outlined.
- Guide children to act out stories that use positional words.
- Make classroom maps and have children use them to find particular objects in the room.
- Use words like *turn*, *flip*, or *slide* with children as they work puzzles.

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## Studies

### Integrating Content Knowledge and Skills

B

**I might see teachers...**

Address two or more content area skills during a single topic-related activity.

P

Include opportunities for children to use knowledge and apply skills in multiple content areas during investigations.

R

Use assessment data to individualize expectations for which skills each child will practice and apply during the study. Help children construct explicit understandings about content (e.g., by saying, *When scientists study balls, they figure out ways to measure bounciness. That's what you are doing!*).

### Providing Opportunities for Children to Document Their Learning

B

**I might see teachers...**

Display children's work related to the topic.

P

Help children document their learning, language, and thinking through artwork, writing, diagrams, maps, graphs, collections, and photographs when they engage in study investigations. Display the documentation.

R

Add interpretive and assessment information about children's learning to displays of their work (e.g., write a caption, *Children demonstrated persistence as they tested different tools to find out which works best for this job.*). Involve children in the documentation process.

### Closing Studies

B

**I might see teachers...**

Plan a special event to bring the study to a close.

P

Use ideas from *The Creative Curriculum Study Starters* to help children think about and celebrate what they have learned about the study topic.

R

Engage children in planning and carrying out closing events that celebrate their learning and involve families.

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## Assessment

### Planning for Assessment

B

#### I might see teachers...

Collect materials for taking observation notes about each child weekly (e.g., clipboard, sticky notes, note pads, and pens or pencils).

P

Establish a system to organize and store assessment data (observations and samples of children's work).

R

Collect particular types of documentation (e.g., writing samples, self-portraits, examples of patterning) over the course of the year in order to document a child's development and learning.

### Observation and Documentation

B

#### I might see teachers...

Write some observation notes and collect a few samples of children's work (e.g., artwork, writing samples, photos) to document children's learning.

P

Regularly write objective, factual observation notes that relate to the curricular objectives and select samples of children's work that document progress.

R

Write detailed observation notes and use other forms of documentation in varied contexts to capture what children know and can do (e.g., timed samples, running records, matrices, rating scales).

### Analyzing and Responding

B

#### I might see teachers...

Respond immediately to what they observe.

P

Analyze observations systematically (e.g., record related objectives on notes and other documentation) and then respond to children accordingly.

R

Collaborate with colleagues (e.g., assistants, teachers, coaches, and specialists), discussing and analyzing children's work in relation to the curricular objectives.