

Emergent Curriculum

Love of Learning, Love of School

Children do not learn because they are taught. They learn as a result of their own doing....through actions, relationships, inquiries, opportunities, and repetition. Young children's brains develop at an amazing rate during the early years. Children learn and develop brain cell connections when they: run, jump, dress up, speak, socialize, read, listen, sing, paint, catch, kick, hit, throw, climb, observe, swing, question, scream, pull, push, rhyme, create, shape, and more.

When children experience delight and success during these activities, their brain cells establish permanent 'connections' between the activity and the feelings of delight and sense of success. Therefore, the most important goal with curriculum is to inspire delight, curiosity, and inquiry in the classroom. This has been shown to build intrinsic motivation (coming from within the child) and a long-term love of learning.

The Creative Preschool, Young Explorers and After School Club purposefully employs an Emergent Curriculum approach. Our curriculum is developed day by day and week by week with teachers thoughtfully making plans that draw on children's interests and developmental needs rather than a teacher dominated curriculum planned weeks or months in advance.

Our teachers use their knowledge of early child development to OBSERVE the children in the room to determine what developmental tasks they are working on. After observation, teachers SUSTAIN the children's explorations with collections of related materials that provide the opportunity for children to make connections, create patterns, and engage in repeated practice of skills and explore in their own way. The teachers then ENRICH the children's explorations and play by adding materials that suggest new ideas, challenges and possibilities for problem solving. Teachers add meaning by DOCUMENTING the children's explorations and growth.

Emergent Curriculum includes environments suitable for:

- A variety of play levels
- Indoor and outdoor activity
- Quiet play as well as active play
- Group play and opportunities to be alone
- Routines, transitions and schedules where free play provides time and space for children's choices

Emergent curriculum balances:

- Spontaneity with planning
- Individuals needs and group needs
- Fun and learning

- Flexibility with goal directed planning
- And adults who take responsibility while avoiding teacher dominated curriculum

What you may observe in our classrooms:

- Teachers observe children at work and play and record what they see
- Charting is used by the teachers during brainstorming sessions with the children to record their interests and development
- Activities continue to be PROCESS-ORIENTED AND PRODUCTS WILL NOT USUALLY GO HOME (no need to assign your child to "do a painting" to bring home)
- Teachers document and display the learning process as it occurs and evolves day by day
- Teachers and/or parents photograph activities when possible and identify learning processes so that we are all aware of what is developing in the classroom.
- The process of acting upon and learning from their environment and interactions are experienced by the children as they observe, experiment, and contribute to life in the classroom
- Rather than seeing program planning ideas listed at the beginning of the week or month, we see the development of the curriculum appear and expand day by day
- Teachers understand how and what children learn and how to recognize moments when they can support children by asking a provoking question, providing a tool, sharing a story, helping seek an answer.....

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

This is how children learn. They learn by doing and being self-directed. They succeed in the future by learning to love school. Their delight and wonder will be our first priority. Reading readiness, writing and math skills are incorporated into all activities as useful tools needed to carry out plans.

WHAT HAVE WE OBSERVED?

Even if we provide the same materials for all three age groups, we observe each group making choices and extending the materials to their individual level of interest and experience. It is exciting for the teachers and free flowing for the children. We see more combinations of materials and interests and more extended play. We are all stimulated and motivated by this next step in our evolution of "process versus product".

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE

If you have any ideas, interests or materials that you could contribute we will love to hear from you.

THINGS TO SAVE:

Below is a beginning list of materials that would be great to have on hand as the curriculum develops in each classroom. We are sure that you have some

"beautiful" and stimulating pieces of nature, fabric, wool, tools, string or wood that will stimulate interest in the children. We plan to have materials for three dimensional constructions including wood, spools, straws, sticks, stones.....

Beads Spools Buttons Discarded costume jewellery Magazines and catalogues Newspapers Paper bags Gift wrap Crepe paper Tin foil Corrugated paper Paper towel rolls Shirt cardboards Egg cartons Aluminum foil containers and pie plates Cardboard and plastic vegetable trays Juice cans and lids Baby food jars and lids Boxes Discarded bamboo from blinds Paper plates and cups Styrofoam cups Sponge pieces Cotton batting Ends of crayons Elastic bands Twist ties Fluted muffin and candy cups Hardware scraps, pulleys, nuts and bolts, washers, inside pieces from broken toys, radios, clocks... Popsicle sticks, straws Tongue depressors Corks Ribbon String Yarn Thread Cloth scraps Tools for woodworking Woodworking bench or slice of tree trunk for hammering

Resources in Early Childhood Education, A Publication of Ryerson's Gerrard Resource Centre; What is Emergent Curriculum? By Marie Goulet, George Brown College; Fundamentals of the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education