

Celebrating 50 Years of Head Start

# HEAD START® BULLETIN

ENHANCING HEAD START COMMUNICATION



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ★ Administration for Children and Families ★ Administration on Children, Youth and Families

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## Curriculum in Head Start

By Helen H. Taylor, Associate Commissioner, Head Start Bureau



Helen H. Taylor

Curriculum plays a vital role in achieving Head Start's goal of enhancing the social competence and school-readiness of children. The 1998 legislation reauthorizing the Head Start program, passed in October 1998 by Congress, places additional emphasis on this goal and establishes additional outcome standards in this central area of Head Start program quality.

The key to a quality educational experience continues to be the development of a quality Head Start curriculum implemented in keeping with all of the Program Performance Standards by grantees and delegate agencies of excellence. This issue of the *Bulletin* provides a comprehensive overview of curriculum in Head Start, responds to commonly asked questions, and identifies Head Start resources that programs can use in developing a curriculum to meet the particular needs of children in their communities.

In the Reauthorization, Congress mandated that the Program Performance Standards be expanded to require that children: (1) develop print and numeracy awareness; (2) understand and use an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary; (3) develop and demonstrate an appreciation of books; and, for non-English-speaking children, (4) progress toward acquisition of the English language. In addition, Congress augmented Head Start Performance Measures to include the following outcomes: "that children know that letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named, recognize a word as a unit of print, identify at least 10 letters of the alphabet, and associate sounds with written words."

However, this does not mean that we drill children on the alphabet or enforce rote learning!

In Head Start, curriculum is implemented within the context of sound child development principles and what we know about how children develop and learn. One of our highest priorities is—and always has been—to improve the educational experience of every child in Head Start, whether enrolled in center-based, home-based, family child care, or in a locally designed program option.

No one does early childhood education like Head Start. We will continue to enhance the quality of services we offer to children and families and to serve as the nation's laboratory for innovations in the early childhood field. Together, we can achieve the goals we have set for ourselves, and the goals set by Congress.

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## Please Read Me First

By Michele Plutro

**R**eaders rarely read the *Head Start Bulletin* the way they read a novel or short story, from page one to the end. However, starting at the beginning and reading through to the end is the most effective way to read and benefit from this particular issue.

This issue of the *Bulletin* begins with the Head Start Program Performance Standards' definition of curriculum and a context-setting article by E. Dollie Wolverton, Chief of the Education Services Branch at the Head Start Bureau. An article by Ron Lally provides an overview of curriculum for infants and toddlers.

Next, each element of the Head Start definition of curriculum is highlighted. The Head Start Program Performance Standards define curriculum as a written plan that includes:

- **Goals** for children's development and learning;
  - **Experiences** through which they will achieve the goals;
  - **Roles** for staff and parents to help children to achieve these goals; and
  - **Materials** needed to support the implementation of a curriculum.
- Curriculum in Head Start is also based on the **Program Performance Standards** and **Sound Child Development Principles**.

There is a two-page description of each of these aspects of the definition, as well as "real life" examples of how programs across the country are implementing each aspect. A partial list of available Head Start resources is also provided for each element of the definition.

This first half of the *Bulletin* (pp. 8–18) is followed by contributions from Head Start staff and T/TA providers (pp. 19–29) that can further develop an understanding of curriculum implementation in Head Start,

along with a curriculum checklist and a series of questions and answers.

In addition, this *Bulletin*, like other issues, is rich with suggested resources to expand learning, thinking, and planning (pp. 32–35).

Few aspects of Head Start matter to children as much as curriculum. This is true across all program options and settings—center-based, home-based, and family child care, in both Head Start and Early Head Start. Children remember their Head Start experiences: how they spend their time; what they do and accomplish; how successful they feel; who notices; and what staff and parents do as part of these experiences called curriculum.

The term "curriculum" might not come to mind when you hear children making joyful sounds or talking about the good food they shared with their friends, the bus ride, the variety of books, the water table, building with blocks, songs, or even hugs—but that's what it is all about for the child.

This issue of the *Head Start Bulletin* provides an illustrated definition of curriculum as it is referenced in the Program Performance Standards. This, in turn, provides a solid foundation for focusing on curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation in your Early Head Start programs. But this issue of the *Bulletin* does not attempt to convey all we need to know about curriculum in Head Start, and it is not a substitute for ongoing staff development and reflective supervision.

The more effectively programs select, adapt, create, plan, implement, and evaluate their curriculum, the more children are able to talk about it and gain from it, and the more vivid the memories and other positive outcomes are likely to be.

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## The Curriculum: A Written Plan for Action

By E. Dollie Wolverton

Some sources of guidance for implementing curriculum in Early Head Start and Head Start include:

- *Guidance to the Program Performance Standards*
- *Zero to Three*
- *WestEd's Training Program for Infant and Toddler Caregivers*
- *The Guide and Video for Head Start Education Coordinators*
- *The Head Start Home-Based Training Materials*
- *The Head Start Family Child Care Training Materials*
- *Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community*
- *Head Start's A Creative Adventure — Art, Music, Movement, and Dialogue*
- *NAEYC's 1997 Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Early Childhood Education*
- *NAEYC's Learning to Read and Write (birth to 8 yrs)*
- *The National Research Council's Starting Out Right — Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children (birth to 8 yrs)*
- *NHSA's "Position Paper: Reading and Writing Now!"*
- *Early Intervention — Early Special Education Recommended Practices, Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Early Childhood*
- *The Council's "Essentials" for the college-based CDA*
- *Journals and early childhood education magazines*
- *Research, college courses, child development texts*

Curriculum in Early Head Start and Head Start is a written document that serves as a road map for implementing a quality child development and education program.

No two curricula in Head Start and Early Head Start look exactly the same. There are two basic approaches programs use to determine the curriculum. Staff and parents may base a curriculum on an already-developed model and adapt or “tailor” it for the group of children being served. Or staff and parents may develop a local curriculum. Either way, the curriculum must be in keeping with all requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards and based on sound child development principles.

### Performance Standards and Child Development Principles

The standards first require that when serving infants, toddlers, or preschoolers, including children with disabilities, the curriculum must include: (1) The goals for children’s development and learning—what do we want children to achieve this year?; (2) The experiences through which they will achieve these goals—what learning experiences will we offer them?; (3) The roles of staff and parents in helping children achieve these goals—what are our individual and shared responsibilities as a team to help children achieve the goals?; and (4) The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum—what furniture, equipment, and supplies are appropriate for the ages and stages of children’s development?

Think of these four aspects as the framework for the curriculum. As we continue to develop or adapt the curriculum, we also have to keep in mind the child development principles that guide the ways in which we work with children. Such child development principles are universal, applying to all children regardless of their gender, race, culture, or country of origin. They include:

- Patterns of growth and development are orderly and sequential—all children learn to walk before learning to run, and all children babble before they use words.
- Human growth and development proceeds from simple to complex—children learn individual words before they learn to put words together into sentences, and children use their hands to eat before they use a spoon.

- Learning is influenced by the child’s social and cultural context—what their culture values and doesn’t value influences what and how children learn.

Next, we have to make certain that the curricula we develop or adapt are consistent with all of the Program Performance Standards. We do this because Early Head Start and Head Start are comprehensive child development programs, concerned with all aspects of children’s education and development (including medical, dental, mental health, and nutritional development) as well as staff qualifications and the roles of parents and other adults in program planning and implementation.

### Curriculum Influences

Even though each program across the country must mold its curriculum to the Program Performance Standards and to sound child development principles, we all know that all Early Head Start and Head Start programs do not look alike. Nor would we want them to. Each community has its own context and characteristics, strengths and needs. These individual differences must be taken into account when a local program is “tailoring” or designing the curriculum.

Some factors to consider, for example, are how location and context influence program goals, child experiences, roles of staff and parents, and learning materials and environments. Is the program located on an Indian reservation, in a migrant camp, or in the middle of a major city? What do parents and staff feel children need to know? Do children need to know water, hurricane, or earthquake safety? What are the cultural beliefs and traditions of the families served? (Articles on pages 9, 11, and 13 of this *Bulletin* illustrate how environment and culture influence the curriculum.)

To fine tune our teaching approaches and the learning experiences within the curriculum, we need to be aware of a number of things about each infant, toddler, and preschooler. What do the children already know? What are they interested in? What are the temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles of the children? All of these elements, and many more, must be considered when adapting or developing a curriculum. Like each child, each curriculum is a unique creation.



## Goals for Children’s Development and Learning

“Goals” describe what competencies we want children to develop. While each child is unique, there are some overarching goals for children in Head Start. One such overarching goal is to increase the child’s everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. Examples of more specific goals are:

- Develop positive and nurturing relationships with adults and peers
- Develop a sense of trust and security
- Identify and solve problems
- Express thoughts and feelings
- Think critically
- Increase self-confidence
- Respect the feelings and rights of others
- Use creativity and imagination
- Work independently and with others
- Develop literacy, numeracy, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making skills that form a foundation for school readiness

## Learning Experiences for Mobile Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

For every goal identified, developmentally appropriate experiences are selected from the program curriculum, planned, and intentionally presented to children. For example, one goal for children is to gain increasing competence in the area of numeracy. Children need active, hands-on experiences to develop age-appropriate mathematical understanding. Teachers take advantage of everyday materials, daily routines, and child interests to foster emergent mathematical thinking within the curriculum. Staff members create environments and select materials that support mathematical thinking, and they engage children in meaningful conversations about the work they are doing. Experiences that support learning include:

- Classification: Shells, juice cans, and Legos are great for sorting and classifying by size, color, shape, or use, and for making patterns or counting.
- Patterning: Stringing beads in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes, or playing dominoes and matching the number of dots.
- One-to-one correspondence: Distributing napkins, plates, and cups—putting one in front of each chair at a table.
- Ordering and sequencing: The process of ordering relationships: more/less; bigger/smaller; big/bigger/biggest; small/smaller/smallest.
- Providing books to children, such as Anno’s Counting Book, and reading other stories about number concepts.

## Observations and Ongoing Assessment

Once we’ve identified the goals and presented an array of

learning experiences to support progress toward them, we assess children’s prior knowledge and then track their progress in meeting the goals through ongoing assessment, observation, and recording of the child’s development. Parents and other adults in the child’s life are encouraged to share with staff things they know about the child. No one knows the child better than his or her immediate family. With such input, parents and staff can plan a curriculum that reflects the needs and interests of each child in a group, whether the child is an infant, toddler, or preschooler. All of the information we gather allows us to individualize learning experiences (increasing or modifying the degree of challenge) to make the Early Head Start and Head Start programs relevant and meaningful for every child.

The information on each child’s progress towards achieving the goals is referred to as a “child outcome.” This outcome tells us how the child is different at the end of the program than he or she was at the beginning. Sometimes this is referred to as “value added.” How has the child benefited from his or her time in Early Head Start or Head Start? What documentation or “proof” do we have?

## Evaluating the Curriculum

Throughout the year, staff and parents take time to discuss the ways the curriculum seems to be working for the children as a group and for individual children. Based on these discussions of child progress, changes are made to keep the curriculum responsive and supportive of children as they grow and learn, as their interests expand, and as their skills and knowledge change.

## In Closing

I hope my comments have helped you to understand why having a written curriculum—a “roadmap”—is important; why a curriculum helps to ensure that nothing related to children’s development and learning is overlooked; and why, although the overall curriculum is planned for a given group of children of a certain age range, we consciously “individualize” the curriculum for each child within the group to support each child’s rate of development as well as individual interests, temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds, learning styles, and prior knowledge. The learning environment is, therefore, arranged to accommodate a variety of children’s strengths and needs, and to stimulate learning across all domains of development: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical.

## And Remember... Have Fun

My wish for each of you is to enjoy, nurture, and have fun with the children and their families, as well as to support them as they thrive and learn.

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# Infants Have Their Own Curriculum: A Responsive Approach to Curriculum Planning for Infants and Toddlers

By J. Ronald Lally

**I**nfant-toddler programs often look like either watered-down versions of preschool or glorified versions of baby-sitting. Unfortunately, most of the curriculum approaches and lesson plans that program managers require don't necessarily improve practice.

In infant-toddler programming, what is usually seen is the implementation of curriculum extremes. For example, one common curriculum approach is based on the belief that very young children need only safe environments and tender loving care and that specific attention to learning is inappropriate. Another even more common approach is based on the belief that in order for infants and toddlers to grow and develop cognitively they must be stimulated intellectually by adult-developed and -directed lessons and activities, carefully planned ahead of time and programmed into the child's day. Both of these positions are based on a lack of true understanding of infant-toddler development.

In high-quality infant-toddler programs, the interests of the child and the belief that each child has a curriculum are what drive practice. It is understood that very young children need to play a significant role in selecting their learning experiences, materials, and content. Curriculum plans, therefore, do not focus on games, tasks, or activities, but on how to best create a social, emotional, and intellectual climate that supports child-initiated and child-pursued learning and the building and sustaining of positive relationships among adults and children.

## Planning a Responsive Approach to Curriculum Development and Implementation

Responsive curriculum planning focuses on finding strategies to help infant-toddler teachers search for, support, and keep alive children's internal motivation to learn, and their spontaneous explorations of people and things of interest and importance to them. This should begin with study of the

specific children in care. Detailed records of each child's interests and skills are kept to give guidance to the adults for the roles they will take in each child's learning. It should also be realized from the start that plans should not be static. Adaptation and change are critical parts of the learning process and should be anticipated. Once an interaction with a child or small cluster of children begins, the teacher has to be ready to adapt his or her plans and actions to meet the "momentary" needs and interests of each child.

Appropriately developed plans are strategies to broaden the caregiver's understanding of, and deepen their relationship with, each child and family. Good planning should: 1) reflect activities that orient the caregiver to the role of facilitator of learning rather than the role of "director" of learning; 2) assist the caregiver in reading the cues of each child; and 3) prepare the teacher or home visitor to communicate effectively with other adults in the child's life. Another essential component of planning is attention to a responsive learning environment and specific attention to how environments should be changed. The planning of learning environments is more important to infant-toddler development than specific lessons or specific activities. The environment must be seen as part of the curriculum, creating interest and encouraging and supporting exploration. Research has shown that much of how infants and toddlers learn best comes not from specific adult-directed lessons but from teachers knowing how to maximize opportunities for each child to use natural learning inclinations.

## Selecting or Developing a Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers

From all we know about how infants and toddlers learn best, we know that they must have a hand in selecting what they learn. Therefore, the infant or toddler should be an active partner in the process of "selecting" curriculum content. The curriculum should be dynamic enough to move and flow on a daily

**Curriculum plans focus on how to best create a social, emotional, and intellectual climate that supports child-initiated and child-pursued learning.**

basis with the infant's developing interests and changing needs. In this way, the curriculum is responsive and respectful of what the children bring to and want from these early experiences.

A general point of caution: Do not select a curriculum or planning format that is simply a prescribed sequence of adult-initiated and -directed activities that leaves the child out of the process of selecting what is focused on and pursued. Both the child and the caregiver should play a role in the selection process, with the child initiating the activity at times and the caregiver at other times.

Curriculum planning, implementation, and supportive materials should anticipate developmental stages and allow for individual variations in learning styles and temperaments. These aspects of curriculum must be broad enough in scope to respond to all developmental domains simultaneously.

## Responsive Curriculum

In a responsive curriculum, implementation of subsequent planning has to do with caregivers preparing themselves and the environment so that infants and toddlers can learn—not in figuring out what to teach children. “Lesson planning” involves exploring ways to help caregivers get “in tune” with each infant-toddler they serve and learn from the individual child what he or she needs, thinks, and feels. Even “in-tune” teachers need to

plan and replan how to form a relationship with each infant-toddler to best meet the child's needs and relate to the child's unique thoughts and feelings. Very little positive learning will take place, regardless of what daily plans look like, if the curriculum and planning do not include:

- 1) Grounding caregivers in the family culture, and in the cognitive, social, and emotional experiences in which infants and toddlers are naturally interested;
- 2) Developing a safe and interesting place for learning;
- 3) Establishing small groups for learning and care;
- 4) Selecting materials appropriate for the individual needs and interests of the children served;
- 5) Optimizing program connections with the child's family; and
- 6) Establishing management policies that support the child's need for security in care and continuity of connection with the caregivers.

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## Specific Factors to Consider When Developing An Infant-Toddler Curriculum

**1) Infancy has three stages.** Between birth and age three, a child goes through three distinct developmental stages: young infant, mobile infant, and toddler. The type of care and experiences given should change when the child's stage changes and should also take into consideration transitions between stages.

**2) Infants learn holistically.** Infants do not experience social, emotional, intellectual, language, and physical learning separately. Adults are most helpful to the young child when they interact in ways that reflect an understanding of the fact that the child is learning from the whole experience, not just the part of the experience that the adult gives attention.

**3) Relationships are primary for development.** The infant is dependent on close, caring, ongoing relationships for positive physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth. Infants develop best when they are sure of having trusted caregivers who can read their cues and respond to their needs.

**4) Infants are developing their first sense of self through contact with**

**others.** An infant or toddler learns most of how he or she thinks and feels by imitating and incorporating the behaviors of those who care for her or him—how they first see themselves, how they think they should function, how they expect others to function in relation to them.

**5) Home culture is an important part of a child's developing identity.** Because an infant's sense of self is such a crucial part of a child's make-up, early care must ensure that links with family, home culture, and home language are a central part of program policy.

**6) Infants are active, self-motivated learners.** Environments and activities that keep motivation, experimentation, and curiosity alive must be constructed to facilitate the infant learning process.

**7) Infants are not all alike—they are individuals with unique temperaments.** Because of these differences, staff need to individualize and adapt to each child.

**8) Language skills and habits develop early.** The development of language is

particularly crucial during the infant-toddler period. Quality care provides many opportunities for infants to engage in meaningful, experienced-based communication with their caregivers, and have their communications acknowledged and encouraged.

**9) Environments are powerful.** Infants and toddlers are strongly influenced by the environments and routines they experience each day. This is particularly true for very young infants who cannot move themselves from one environment to another. The physical environment, group size, daily schedules, plans, and routines must foster the establishment of small intimate groups in which relationships with trusted caregivers can develop.

**10) Adults exhibit strong emotions and opinions when entrusted with the care of infants.** Parents and caregivers of infants and toddlers often experience heightened emotions about how to care for infants and toddlers. Strategies for dealing with conflicts that may emerge between parents and staff must be considered by each program.

# Goals

*Goal: To establish and maintain trusting relationships as a basis for exploration of the world*

*To learn that people respond when I am in need*

**young infant**

*To learn that people protect me when I explore my world*

**mobile infant**

*To learn that it's O.K. to try to do things independently of others*

**toddler**

*To learn that I can work alone or with others and know that adults are there for me if I need them*

**preschooler**

## Infant



## Preschooler

### Head Start Resources

- *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations*
- *Setting the Stage: Including Children with Disabilities in Head Start (Training Guide)*
- *Curriculum in Head Start/Individualizing in Head Start (video and user's guide)*
- *Enhancing Children's Growth and Development (Training Guide)*
- *For Children, Life is a Creative Adventure (video, adult guide, and wallchart)*
- *Leading the Way: Disabilities Services and the Management Team (Training Guide)*
- *Nurturing Children (Training Guide)*



# The Goals for Children's Development and Learning

## Seeds of Growth and Development: Curriculum Goals for Migrant Children

By Bob Stechuk

In families of migrant farm workers parents typically work together, often beginning before sunrise and ending after sunset. A six- or even seven-day work week is common. Employment may last three or four months, or no more than a day. Once a particular job is completed, families may move hundreds of miles to obtain other employment. These conditions characterize some of the significant factors in the lives of the children of migrant farm workers.

The Migrant Programs Branch funds 25 grantees and 41 delegate agencies across 33 states. Annually, Migrant Head Start (MHS) programs serve more than 30,000 children from birth through compulsory school age as their parents provide agricultural products for the U.S. and the world.

### Meeting Your Program Needs

Commercially available curricula offer little that is directly applicable to the migrant population. To develop relevant goals, MHS programs must draw upon their knowledge of the migrant lifestyle, the individual needs of children, and family strengths—including parents' life goals and goals for their children.

Developing goals that focus on these areas is consistent with the learning strategy termed "elaboration" by Chamot and O'Malley. Simply put, elaboration allows children to communicate — frequently and in-depth — on topics that are personally meaningful. It is through such communication that children expand their linguistic and many other capabilities.

In Weld County, Colorado, agricultural fields extend as far as the eye can see. At the Jefferson MHS center, the fields extend into the classrooms as well. Stalks of corn grow in the entry foyer. A basket of local crops brought in by a parent, including onions, cucumbers, corn, and chilies, waits in the Science Area for

several different activities to take place.

At California's Chico Center, parents visit the classroom to talk about their work and to create and maintain an on-site vegetable garden. At the Live Oaks Center, staff members take pictures of parents working in the fields. The photos are enlarged and copied to use in the classrooms so children may reflect and comment on the value of their parents' work. At the Woodlawn MHS Center, local crops such as tomatoes, corn, and squash are the basis of many curriculum goals, ranging from an investigation of seeds to experiments with planting. Children especially enjoy grinding corn into meal, mixing the dough, and then tasting and talking about the product of their efforts.

At the Woodburn center in Oregon, individualized, daily transitions are both a goal of the curriculum and a method to meet the needs of children. Individualized transitions can be observed as children finish eating breakfast. Those who finish early move on to individual, paired, or small group activities. Children brush paint at easels or finger paint at tables, act out a family routine in the drama area, read or be read to, work with puzzles, or help teachers with clean-up tasks. Children who want to spend more time at breakfast are allowed to move at their own pace.

Although these activities occur simultaneously, the classroom environment is purposeful and orderly. The teachers' approach permits children to make choices about how and where they spend their time. This combination provides children with enough freedom so the environment is relaxed, and enough structure so they can make appropriate decisions for themselves.

These examples highlight two key principles for informing classroom practice. First, curriculum goals should incorpo-



rate familiar objects and patterns of events, including patterns of communication. Second, classroom materials and social interactions (both teacher-child and child-child) should be arranged to invite comments and questions. Elaboration for migrant children (who change physical, cultural, and linguistic environments frequently) supports social-emotional development, as well as cognitive and language goals.

All the goals described above make deliberate use of migrant children's background knowledge and present conditions of migratory life in a positive light. Background knowledge is a context for curriculum goals. When it underlies the curriculum, children can demonstrate their highest levels of cognitive and communicative abilities. When learning experiences are meaningful, integrated, and child-centered, the curriculum goals, like development itself, belong to the child.

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# Experiences

*Goal: To support the development of children's language and literacy*

## Infant

*Having a trusted adult read short stories on a regular basis*

**young infant**



*Having favorite stories reread and recognizing familiar characters*

**mobile infant**



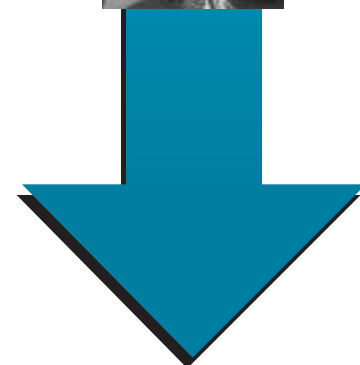
*Engaging in finger plays when actions illustrate objects, such as three fingers representing three monkeys jumping on a bed*

**toddler**



*Drawing or painting pictures and asking the parent or teacher to write what the child says the picture is about*

**preschooler**



## Preschooler

## Head Start Resources

- *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations*
- *Setting the Stage: Including Children with Disabilities in Head Start (Training Guide)*
- *Curriculum in Head Start/Individualizing in Head Start (video and user's guide)*
- *Effective Transition Practices: Facilitating Continuity (Training Guide)*
- *Emerging Literacy: Linking Social Competence to Learning (Training Guide)*
- *For Children, Life is a Creative Adventure (video, adult guide, wallchart)*
- *Nurturing Children (Training Guide)*
- *Responding to Children Under Stress*
- *Supporting Children with Challenging Behaviors: Relationships are Key (Training Guide)*
- *Translating the IEP Into Everyday Practice*

# The Experiences Through Which Children Will Achieve These Goals

## Understanding Culture Through Experiences

By Brenda Krupa

One of our primary goals at the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) Head Start in Fairbanks, Alaska, is to help our children develop an understanding of our native culture and its influence on our lives and values. One experience that helps our children learn more about who they are and where they come from is our trip to Steven's Village fish camp.

The camp is on the Yukon River, about 20 miles downstream from the village. About 80 people live in Steven's Village, and their livelihood is fish farming. This group is a sharp contrast to those of us who live and work in Fairbanks with a population of 80,000.

At the end of the last school year, 39 FNA Head Start students, parents, and staff got on buses and traveled to the fish camp to experience the difference between living in the city and living off the land and water. For many children, this was the first time they had witnessed the calm power of the Yukon River, but to most of our parents this sight was as familiar as the skin they walk in. They grew up in villages around Alaska, fishing and hunting to survive. In fact, some of our parents return with their families to spend each summer at their ancestral fish camps.

The weeks before we left for Steven's Village were filled with rich experiences of our native culture. We made miniature birch bark canoes to show our children what their ancestors and families have done for centuries. Also, we helped the children understand that they must respect the power of the Yukon River, exposing them to boat and water safety. The Yukon River is the largest river in North America, and its lulling quiet can be deceptive, masking its force and danger.

Our overnight trip to the fish camp gave the children a deeper understanding of the real workings of a fish camp. The highlight of the trip was the children seeing a real-life fish wheel. A fish wheel resembles the back end of an old steam-



*Dakota of FNA Head Start roasts marshmallows during his trip to Steven's Village fish camp.*

boat; it spins in the water with large scoops that catch fish and funnel them down to the fishermen. When the children fished for themselves and went hunting for roots, they also got a sense of what life is like when people depend on the river and the land for survival.

We camped on the river and, when night fell, we lit a campfire. Our parents, staff, and children gathered around the fire and told stories. We cooked over the fire, and more importantly, we danced and sang together. We sang our traditional songs, parents danced with their children, and we showed our children how we danced together in our villages.

It is difficult to articulate the feeling of togetherness that we experienced on this trip. It was an evening to get in touch with our traditional values and allow our children to develop a clearer understanding of themselves and their ancestors. We feel a sense that we are one, connected by our culture and beliefs, and this brings with it an immense sense of pride. We are extremely lucky to have such a strong cultural heritage and such a deep sense of belonging to a greater family—our cultural family.

We could not have had a successful trip to the fish camp without the involvement of parents. The trip allowed them to share their culture and identity with their

children through genuine experiences. But it was not only parents who brought their knowledge with them—grandparents were also involved. One of our grandmothers acted as our protective guide during the night. Since we camped very close to the Yukon River, we had someone on watch at all times to make sure that none of our little ones wandered too close to the water. That night, Grandma sat up on a hill all through the night to keep watch. Many other parents offered to relieve her, but she wanted to stay and watch the children—all her children—to make sure they were safe.

We chose to visit Steven's Village fish camp because it offered us materials and opportunities that aren't available in our Head Start center, and it provided an invaluable learning experience for our children. Our classroom goals and teachings became transformed into meaningful cultural experiences that helped our children develop pride in their traditions and tribal way of life.

*Brenda Krupa is Director of the FNA Head Start, T: 907-456-4989, F: 907-456-5311.*

# Staff and Parent Roles

*Goal: To support the development of children's motor skills*

## Infant

*Place a rattle in the baby's hand*

**young infant**



*Put brightly colored objects around the play area to encourage mobile infants to develop the ability to crawl or walk to them*

**mobile infant**



*Offer words of encouragement as toddlers try new things, such as jumping, feeding, drawing, or painting*

**toddler**



*Encourage participation in activities such as an obstacle course that requires running, jumping, and crawling by ensuring that they are attractive to the children as well as safe*

**preschooler**



## Head Start Resources

- *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations*
- *Setting the Stage: Including Children with Disabilities in Head Start (Training Guide)*
- *Building Supportive Communities (Training Guide)*
- *Engaging Parents (Training Guide)*
- *Fun and Learning for Parents and Children*
- *Head Start Handbook of the Parent Involvement Vision and Strategies*
- *Home Visitor Handbook*
- *Linking Our Voices*
- *Nurturing the Promise*
- *Our Stories Keep Us Connected*
- *Partners in Decision Making (Training Guide)*
- *Translating the IEP Into Everyday Practice*

## Preschooler



# What Staff and Parents Do to Help Children Achieve These Goals

## Curricula for Indian Head Start Programs

By James E. Kennedy

Seminars hosted by the American Indian Programs Branch often discuss curriculum in Indian Head Start programs. Participants identify several key components of curriculum for Indian programs, including the importance of community involvement and cultural relevance. The need for a holistic approach—one showing the interconnectedness of the world—is also emphasized. To provide these key elements, staff and parents must be involved in choosing or developing the curriculum, and the agency must provide ongoing training on the implementation of the curriculum.

### Curriculum Development

A culture-based curriculum requires the support and involvement of parents. Some parents may serve directly on the curriculum development team, but support from all parents is critical. Head Start staff must involve parents in the curriculum development process and provide training on various elements of the curriculum.

Developing a curriculum for Indian Head Start presents many challenges, because the issues of cultural relevance are central and quite complex. Each curriculum is individualized to support the philosophy, history, culture, and language of the tribal setting in which the children are served. In addition to being adapted to the local program setting, there are certain common processes and components that every quality curriculum should have.

Development of Indian curriculum must involve a team of individuals from the community that assists staff throughout the process. These individuals offer a range of knowledge and experience and become the ongoing advocates for the program. Ideally, the team includes Head Start staff, parents, representatives from the schools and other agencies, tribal elders, and



*Rabbit Dance at Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos Head Start in Albuquerque, NM*

experts in native language, history, and culture. The role of the team is to set program goals (or review existing ones) and propose specific experiences that support the cultural heritage. As the curriculum is implemented, the team reviews its effectiveness and provides suggestions for any needed adjustments.

In some programs, the curriculum is supported by a theme-based approach to ensure inclusion of important cultural components and to show how the world and skills are interrelated. By beginning with common themes, children are able to initiate activities based on their own experiences. They help generate ideas for discussion and exploration. This approach is consistent with the learning styles that Indian children develop before entering the Head Start setting, as well as with the participatory learning style and philosophy of Native Americans.

The success of a culture-based curriculum will be determined, in part, by the extent to which its goals and expectations are shared at home and within the community.

*James E. Kennedy served as Director of Program Development at Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc.*

### Essential Components

There are some essential elements related to culture and heritage that are to be included in Indian curriculum:

- Native language
- A bilingual approach that includes English language skills
- A bicultural approach that includes the culture of society outside the reservation
- Symbols, stories, art, and music from the tribe's culture and heritage
- An understanding of past and current tribal structure and roles

It is essential that non-reservation programs enrolling American Indian children also be sensitive to and inclusive of these essential elements.



# Materials

*Goal: To support the development of children's language and literacy*

**Infant**

*Short books of cardboard or fabric*

**young infant**



*A few familiar pictures placed at children's eye level at various places around the room*

**mobile infant**



*Puzzles of varying complexity that include familiar storybook characters*

**toddler**



*A variety of accessible culturally-appropriate books featuring familiar characters in new situations*

**preschooler**



## Head Start Resources

- *Head Start Program Performance Standards and other Regulations*
- *Setting the Stage: Including Children with Disabilities in Head Start (Training Guide)*
- *Guide for Education Coordinators in Head Start*
- *Head Start Facilities Manual*
- *Including Children with Significant Disabilities (Training Guide)*
- *Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs*

**Preschooler**

# The Materials Needed to Support the Implementation of the Curriculum

## A Little Can Go a Long Way

By Jane Davidson

My class of four-year-olds had been playing airplane for a few weeks with a row of cardboard boxes. To add richness to the play, I took the children to a local flying school to see some real airplanes. The most exciting part of the trip was when the owner let the children climb inside one of the planes. They were awed by the buttons and dials that filled the dashboard, spreading across the whole front of the plane.

On the way home we talked about what the inside of the plane was like. Brianna wanted to know, “Why did it have so many clocks?” She assumed all the dials were clocks. After the children left for the day, I turned the bulletin board in the block corner into an enormous dashboard. Circular “dials” were glued onto the dashboard, and small sticky dots where scattered here and there as buttons. A moveable steering wheel was attached in the middle of the dashboard.

### Cockpits and Cardboard

At circle time the next day, we discussed what types of dials and buttons pilots might need. Peri said, “You need a start button.” She decided it should be green, so I wrote “start” over the green button. The children told me to write “stop” over the red button. We labeled a dial for speed, another for gas, and one to tell the temperature of the clouds.

As soon as playtime started, Nick, Cole, and Jolonda began labeling the other dials. Nick used the blocks to build the body of the plane. “Oh no! It’s crashing,” called Cole, who began making loud noises and running around the area.

“What’s wrong?” I asked. “The engine is broke,” he told me. “Do you need tools to fix it?” I asked. Cole liked this idea, so we got some plastic tools out of the closet, only to discover that the engine wasn’t broken—it was missing! We looked in the closet for something we could use to build an engine so the plane wouldn’t crash. We found a box of straight and

curved plastic tubes that fit together to make long curving pipes. Cole and Jolonda became engine assemblers, while Nick piloted the plane so it would not crash before the engine was done.

The plane flew smoothly until Cole discovered that the engine was on fire. “Do you have a fire extinguisher?” I asked. Cole picked up a cylindrical block, pointed it at the engine and made water sounds. “I got it just in time,” he declared with relief.

### Moon Rocks and Muffin Tins

Over time, the plane evolved into a rocket that could find aliens in space. Four sets of steering wheels and dials were constructed. A picture of the planets was posted in the cockpit corner to help children decide on a destination. Cardboard stars, small nerf balls (planets), and a beach ball globe of the world were hung from the ceiling. Telescopes were made from paper towel rolls.

House furniture was used to enclose another small area. A crawl-through tunnel connected the two areas. One corner held a small table with a scale for weighing moon rocks, and a muffin tin for sorting them. Equipment to walk in space was placed near the exit. Liter soda bottles became air tanks by attaching two elastic, backpack-like straps. Small plastic baskets with pipe cleaner handles were handy to collect moon rocks, and in each basket was a pair of tongs or a melon baller for picking up the rocks. Additional colored rocks were scattered on the floor just outside the rocket.

The children loved the new space play area. Cole pointed at the poster and shouted, “Let’s go to Mars!” Wilson put on an air tank, picked up a basket, and began his space walk. He found it took a lot of effort to pick up the rocks with the tongs. But, he informed me, “You can’t use your hands, cause the rocks on Mars are too hot.”

Amy weighed and sorted all the rocks that Wilson found. She’s not much of a pretender and hadn’t been involved in



*Children at the Kootenai Valley Head Start build an art sculpture out of “trash”*

the rocket play—but she loves organizing things. Sorting the rocks offered her a perfect entrance to pretend play. To my surprise, the pipelines, which were a central part of the block area play, were totally ignored in the new rocket. The tongs, rocks, air tank, and planet poster were now the center of attention.

As I look back over the month I am amazed at how a few props — cardboard boxes, plates, paper, cardboard, rocks, tongs, a planet poster, and empty soda bottles—along with a small amount of guidance from a teacher and input from children, can lead to a month of rich, imaginative play.

*Jane Davidson, Master Teacher at the University of Delaware Laboratory Preschool, is a contributor to Head Start’s A Creative Adventure. She may be reached at T: 302-831-1278, E: j davidso@udel.edu.*

## Standards, Curriculum, and Emergent Literacy

By Cindy Bewick, Pamela Murchek, & Mary Salman

Staff at our program recently sat down and thought about how to use curriculum in planning emerging literacy experiences. As the discussion began, Pam Murchek, our Hartford teacher, shared the following story:

*I make poster board name cards for each child with their first name on the front and their last name on the back. The cards are used in helping children keep attendance and assigning classroom jobs; they also act as templates for name puzzles. I keep all the cards in a basket by the job chart so children may “read” them whenever they wish.*

*One day, Steve and Cody, both four-year-olds, sat on the rug playing with the stack of classroom name cards. I sat down with the two boys, and we took each name card and matched it to the name spots on the circle-time rug. Steve realized the card he was holding matched the name where **he** sat. Cody then took the name tag he was holding over to his spot. He called us over and showed us how it matched **his** name on the rug. The difference between the two names became obvious to both.*

Use of name tags is consistent with the Head Start definition of curriculum by having *GOALS* (recognizing and matching letters and words); *EXPERIENCES* (using your name card, go around the room and find your cubby, coat hook, placemat, etc.); and *MATERIALS* (each child's name printed onto cards, which are then placed on the circle rug, and on a cubby, coat hook, nametag, placemat, and job chart tag); and this curriculum is based upon *SOUND CHILD DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES* (matching letters and words is challenging but achievable for Steve and Cody and therefore appropriate for their age). Pam's *ROLE* as the teacher is obvious. *PARENTS* also have a *ROLE* as they help write the name tags, place tags around the room, or play a name-matching game. They can extend the learning by playing similar games at home.

### Curriculum in Action

Pam also talked about her center's garden and how it works its way naturally into the curriculum throughout the year. In lesson plans, Pam and parents write activities and goals and explore various materials to use with the children that involve the gardening experience. Pam also uses a variety of professional resources on curriculum, nature, and gardening with young children.

Goals, experiences, and activities at the beginning of the year often involve grouping or counting small sets of vegetables, matching “real” vegetables to their pictures, cooking vegetables in a variety of ways, and tasting them. Adults read stories and informational books aloud daily. By the end of the year, children are matching vegetable name cards to pictures of the vegetables that have the words written underneath them. Some also copy the words onto their own papers to add to a classroom garden book. Others draw and label a garden layout that they might use at home. Graphs contain lists of favorite vegetables and the best way to “make ‘em taste good.” Children read favorite garden books to themselves and to friends and adults.

Parents play a big role in helping the children have positive experiences in exploring vegetables and trying new foods. Many parents enjoy taking fresh vegetables and herbs home with them, which helps us to promote healthy food choices at school and home.

The wonderful thing about the garden is that all the materials are multi-sensory, useable indoors or outdoors, and easily translated into representational writings and drawings as individual children demonstrate those tasks. Emergent literacy is not left out of this curriculum—it is an integral part of learning about and exploring the garden.

### Curriculum in the Classroom

As we continued our discussion, we confirmed that emerging literacy is a



strong part of our current curriculum. We weave writing, reading, and numeracy skills into the classroom on a daily basis. As children sign in for attendance, count the number of children present, tell stories from pictures in a book, calculate the number of napkins needed at the snack table, or read the many labels throughout the classroom, they practice a variety of literacy- and numeracy-based skills. Tasting vegetables, writing choices on a graph, and counting the resulting quantities link sensory experiences to symbolic and abstract written records. Even gross motor activities, such as a child jumping into hoops while others count the number of jumps, help children learn.

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# Curriculum and Reauthorization

By Cindy Bewick, Pamela Murchek, & Mary Salman

- Have you discussed the 1998 Head Start Reauthorization Act with your colleagues?
- Are the new Education Program Performance Standards and Performance Measures circulating faster than the latest best seller?
- Do you wonder what the new legislation means for your curriculum?
- Do you think you must **immediately** hire a consultant, buy new materials, change your activities, and develop new teaching strategies?

These questions and many others are on the minds of Head Start education staff throughout the country. Tri-County Head Start in Paw Paw, Michigan, is no exception. We have explored how we make professional decisions about curriculum, and we've identified possible pitfalls. We've also taken a close look at our curriculum to see if it is compatible with the new mandates from Congress, and we realize there are two relatively simple steps in this process.

**Step 1:** *Have a working knowledge about child development principles.*

When adults are knowledgeable about early childhood development, they present appropriate curriculum. In addition, each child's learning style and cultural context must be addressed by presenting appropriately challenging experiences that allow for positive achievement and engage children in multidisciplinary activities. Both are necessary to make curriculum meaningful for children as well as adults.

**Step 2:** *Understand curriculum as defined by the Program Performance Standards.*

Before you can recognize curriculum, you must have a clear understanding and working knowledge of the definition. It's not enough to list the different aspects. You must be able to apply the definition and evaluate whether some-

thing IS or is NOT Head Start curriculum. The rewards for this understanding are increased program quality, and the ability to act as an informed professional and to share accurate information with families and community partners.

In Paw Paw, we wrote self-instructional units for staff on how to achieve these two steps. Throughout each unit, **Wow, GERMS!** serves as a reminder for each part of the definition. Here's how it works:

**Wow** = **WRITTEN** plan

**GERMS** = **GOALS** and objectives for children's development and learning  
**EXPERIENCES** or activities to meet the goals  
**ROLES** of staff and parents  
**MATERIALS**, space, and equipment necessary for optimal development and learning  
**SOUND** child development principles and the Head Start Program Performance **Standards**

**Wow!** These **GERMS** are AMAZING because they help staff remember the curriculum definition and apply the definition. We suggest they think about how quality curriculum is contagious—the better it is, the greater it spreads, and the more children learn—and that they picture children learning and being challenged because of these good germs. We ask that they see families with big smiles saying, "Wow, GERMS are great for curriculum!"

## Cautions in Implementing a Curriculum for Your Head Start Program

We have identified two things to watch out for in developing curriculum: folks marketing curriculum that does not meet

the Head Start Program Performance Standards (and GERMS reminds us of what we must have), and pressure from others.

Remember that child development principles form the foundation for everything we do in Head Start. Be an educated consumer. Carefully review curriculum and related materials **BEFORE** you purchase them, and make sure they have GERMS and fit your program goals.

**Caution #1:** Some publishers are more concerned about selling their product than offering quality curricula based on sound child development principles. Beware of statements such as:

- This will make it easy to meet the Performance Standards and Performance Measures.
- Head Start children will develop print and numeracy awareness with these activities.
- These are the 10 letters all Head Start children must know!

**Caution #2:** How many times have you heard other people say:

- Research shows that direct instruction is the only effective teaching strategy.
- A little skill and drill never hurt anyone.
- Doing written work will make it easier for them in kindergarten.

The results of teaching children primarily through "drill" comes nowhere near our goals for quality curriculum in Head Start. We don't expect a child to walk before (s)he crawls, so why would we expect a child to read and write before (s)he can hold a pencil, make controlled marks, or recognize his/her name?

Your curriculum must be based on sound child development principles and

be individualized to meet the specific needs of each child in your program. As you plan your curriculum, ask yourself the following:

- Are the goals suited for children’s individual development?
- Do I rely on the various learning domains and disciplines?
- Do my experiences, teaching strategies, and materials allow an appropriate degree of challenge?
- Am I knowledgeable about the developmental sequences for reading, writing, and numeracy?
- How are parents involved in developing curriculum? Are their roles evident?
- How do I use children’s, parents’, and my own ideas to develop plans

based upon ongoing observation and assessment, rather than falling back on “old plans”?

- What evidence do I have that individual children have increased their knowledge and skills?

### Conclusions

Our team reached several conclusions when discussing the Program Performance Standards, the Performance Measures, and the 1998 Reauthorization Act. Most importantly, we understand that **much of the new legislation reflects our current curriculum.** We will not immediately hire a new consultant, completely change our activities, throw out current quality teaching strategies, or use any other reactive response. We WILL assure that all chil-

dren have the opportunity to engage in intellectually challenging experiences based upon the Program Performance Standards’ definition of curriculum (think Wow, GERMS). We will also demonstrate how children learn as a result of their Head Start participation. As long as we continue to implement a quality curriculum as defined by the Head Start Program Performance Standards, we achieve quality outcomes for children.

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## The Process of Developing a Head Start Curriculum

All published curriculum need modification to suffice as a Head Start curriculum. Necessary modifications may include: (1) individualizing the curricular practices to meet the needs of every Head Start child, including those with disabilities; (2) expanding the scope of the curriculum to address all aspects of Head Start programming; and (3) assuring that the curriculum reflects the families served and the local community.

Modifying or developing a curriculum is a process that programs must go through—one that involves staff and parents and community partners. At least four phases are usually involved: (1) gathering background information; (2) gathering materials and potential resources; (3) the process of developing and implementing the curriculum; and (4) evaluating the outcomes. These phases are outlined in the chart below.

Background Information	Materials to Review	Process—involves staff and parents	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program’s philosophy</li> <li>• Head Start Program Performance Standards</li> <li>• Community assessment and other information regarding the community’s cultural heritage, and physical and safety issues</li> <li>• Information on the children’s ages and assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published curricula</li> <li>• Activity books/ activities</li> <li>• Specific interests and needs identified by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff/parents</li> <li>• cultural heritage</li> <li>• physical necessity</li> <li>• IEP/IFSP</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine background and program information.</li> <li>• Develop desired program outcomes.</li> <li>• Evaluate published curricula in light of information from previous examination.</li> <li>• Identify additional ideas from community resources.</li> <li>• Work with staff and parents.</li> <li>• Identify and review published curriculum if appropriate to use as a base from which to develop the Head Start curriculum.</li> <li>• If a published curriculum is not selected, identify specific goals around which to structure the Head Start curriculum. These goals drive decisions on environment, schedules, activities, experiences, and materials to implement goals. Review goals to ensure that the curriculum follows good child development practices and encompasses the Head Start Program Performance Standards.</li> <li>• Identify additional goals to supplement those included in the published curriculum, if a published one is selected.</li> </ul>	<p>A Head Start curriculum that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals for all children;</li> <li>• Experiences for children;</li> <li>• Activities for parents and teachers to foster children’s development;</li> <li>• Materials to be used; and</li> <li>• A curriculum that is consistent with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and based on sound child development principles.</li> </ul>



# Planning For Linguistic and Cultural Diversity— We Must Continue to Respond

By Michele Plutro

**H**ead Start has always embraced the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of its enrollment and the communities in which it operates. Head Start programs have responded to diversity as an opportunity for children and families to learn about different cultures and customs. Instead of reducing opportunities for bilingualism among children, Head Start has built upon the skills and culture that each child and family brings to the program.

## Multicultural Principles in Head Start

To formalize Head Start's commitment to diversity in enrollment, program design, and services, Head Start developed *Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs* and distributed it in 1992. In 1996, these principles were expanded and incorporated into the revised Program Performance Standards, which became effective on January 1, 1998.

Four elements of Head Start's overall philosophy are particularly relevant to the task of developing and implementing multilingual and multicultural programming: building trusting relationships, being sensitive to cultural preferences of families, building bridges between cultures for both children and adults, and acknowledging that staff and parents are in a true partnership.

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families has completed a "Descriptive Study of Head Start Bilingual and Multicultural Program Services." This study revealed that, across the country, families enrolled in Head Start programs speak more than 150 languages and dialects. For more than 160,000 of Head Start children (nearly 20 percent), the language spoken in the home is not English. Though Spanish is the most common, Chinese, Hmong, and Vietnamese are

also spoken by a significant number of Head Start children and families.

## Resources

There are a number of publications and web sites that can help Head Start programs expand and refine services to bilingual children and families and to speakers of languages other than English (see p. 35). As an example, the NAEYC web site includes "Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity — Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education." NAEYC's position statement reads, "For young children, the language of the home is the language they have used since birth, the language they use to make and establish meaningful communicative relationships, and the language they use in constructing their knowledge.... The home language is tied to children's culture, and culture and language communicate traditions, values, and attitudes."

One final example from NAEYC summarizes the importance of encouraging linguistic and cultural diversity in all early childhood programs: "For the optimal development and learning of all children, educators must accept the legitimacy of children's home language, respect (hold in high regard) and value (esteem and appreciate) the home culture, and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families, including extended and nontraditional family units."

Related literature suggests a number of guidelines for curriculum planning that respond to diversity, including:

- Becoming conscious of personal biases and working to overcome them.
- Learning the most important child-rearing values held by each family.
- Supporting children's speech patterns and emergent language.

## Web Site Resources

Ask ERIC

[www.askeric.org](http://www.askeric.org)

The Center for Study of Biracial Children

[www.csbc.cncfamily.com](http://www.csbc.cncfamily.com)

The National Academy of Sciences

[www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

[www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/Hispanic](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/Hispanic)

Yahoo's Education web page

<http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/>

Additional multicultural resources are listed on page 35.

- Structuring some child experiences and activities around materials contributed by parents.
- Reflecting parents' occupations and talents in classrooms, on home visits, in community celebrations, and in other program activities.
- Avoiding a "holiday syndrome" or holiday-driven approach to curriculum.
- Developing some activities in which groups of children can focus on "aliveness" as well as difference.

As programs continue to grow and change in keeping with both the Program Performance Standards and community and family design, there are always new sources of useful information.

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**A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSING HEAD START CHILD,**

This chart provides an overview of key Head Start policies and systems for defining, tracking, and improving program quality and outcomes. This framework will form the basis for additional Head Start Bureau initiatives to implement provisions from reauthorization, including the integration of additional

**HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND OTHER REGULATIONS**

*45 CFR Parts 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304 and Guidance, 1305, 1306, and 1308 and Guidance*

“The foundation of a quality, comprehensive, child development program.”

<p><b>CURRICULUM</b></p> <p>“What are the experiences that support children’s learning and development and lead to positive child outcomes?”</p>	<p><b>AREAS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR CHILDREN • FAMILIES • PROGRAMS • COMMUNITIES</b></p> <p>“How are our children progressing and what are the changes in families, programs, and communities?”</p>	<p><b>PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ONGOING MONITORING</b></p> <p>“How are we doing?”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A philosophy shared by the program and the parents, and a planned, organized, and consistently implemented curriculum, support child development and education in Early Head Start and Head Start.</li> <li>• The curriculum is a written plan that addresses the goals for children’s development and learning and includes the children’s experiences, roles of staff and parents, and materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum.</li> <li>• The curriculum is consistent with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and is based on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn.</li> <li>• The Head Start Program Performance Standards require that qualified staff, in partnership with parents, select and adapt or develop a curriculum. Staff members also implement and individualize the curriculum to support each child’s learning and developmental progress.</li> <li>• Staff receive consistent and ongoing training on the philosophy and appropriate implementation of the curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Head Start Program Performance Standards include the physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and language areas of children’s development and learning.</li> <li>• Curriculum is the critical mechanism for achieving Head Start’s goal of enhancing the social competence and school readiness of children. The 1998 reauthorization of the Head Start Act by Congress emphasizes this goal and mandates several new measures of Head Start quality and performance.</li> <li>• Each child receives screening for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns upon entry to the program.</li> <li>• Through ongoing child observation and assessment, staff and parents follow children’s progress from arrival at Early Head Start or Head Start to the time they leave. This information is used to individualize the curriculum for children and to determine what the outcomes are...what children accomplish over a period of time as a result of meaningful, cumulative experiences.</li> <li>• The Program Performance Standards identify specific areas where families, because of their enrollment in Early Head Start or Head Start, are to be involved through the family partnership agreement process in their children’s development and learning; in increasing their own literacy; and in the governance process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grantees establish procedures for the ongoing monitoring of their own operations, as well as those of their delegate agencies, to ensure effective implementation of all Federal regulations.</li> <li>• At least once a year, Early Head Start and Head Start agencies conduct a self-assessment to check how they are doing in meeting their goals and objectives, and in implementing the Head Start Program Performance Standards and other regulations.</li> <li>• The process involves the policy group, governing body, parents, staff, and the community.</li> <li>• The results of the self-assessment process influence the agency’s program planning—the continuous improvement process.</li> </ul>

## FAMILY, AND PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OUTCOMES

Program Performance Standards and Performance Measures, and the incorporation of the Performance Measures into local program self-assessment and program monitoring.

### SYSTEMS AND OUTCOME MEASURES FOR HEAD START NATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

<b>FEDERAL ON-SITE SYSTEMS MONITORING</b>  “What is the level of compliance with Head Start regulations?”	<b>HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>  “Congress wants to know: How is the Head Start program doing nationally?”	<b>F.A.C.E.S. FAMILY AND CHILD EXPERIENCES SURVEY</b>  “What are some key outcomes and indicators of Head Start program quality and effectiveness?”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the first full year of operation, grantees are monitored every three years.</li> <li>• A review of whether effective management systems are supporting the implementation of a comprehensive child development program leading to positive child outcomes.</li> <li>• A partnership between Federal and grantee staff to monitor the progress of Early Head Start and Head Start grantees in implementing the Head Start Program Performance Standards.</li> <li>• A team of Federal staff and experts conducts an on-site review of grantee management systems and program quality through a combination of focus groups and individual interviews; observations; discussions with parents, staff, and policy group members; and written program documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head Start's Program Performance Measures were developed in 1997 as a comprehensive statement of outcomes to guide Federal accountability and program improvement efforts.</li> <li>• Based on an extensive consultation and consensus-building process with Head Start leaders and experts, the F.A.C.E.S. Performance Measures include a conceptual framework of 5 overarching objectives, a set of measures, and a related set of performance indicators.</li> <li>• Five objectives of Head Start are as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Objective 1:</b> Enhance children's growth and development</li> <li><b>Objective 2:</b> Strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children</li> <li><b>Objective 3:</b> Provide children with educational, health, and nutritional services</li> <li><b>Objective 4:</b> Link children and their families to needed community services</li> <li><b>Objective 5:</b> Ensure well-managed programs that involve parents in decision-making</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Head Start Program Performance Measures form the framework for reporting to Congress on the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act and Head Start research efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F.A.C.E.S. is a national research study of a representative sample of 40 Head Start programs to examine the quality and effects of Head Start on 3,200 preschool children and families.</li> <li>• F.A.C.E.S. examines the relationship between program quality and child and family outcomes grounded in the Head Start Program Performance Standards.</li> <li>• Research includes direct assessment of children in Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade as well as teacher, other staff, and parent interviews and observation of classroom quality.</li> <li>• Initial F.A.C.E.S. findings show that classroom quality is good—children are gaining important cognitive and social skills, program quality is linked to child outcomes, and families are involved and highly satisfied with Head Start.</li> <li>• F.A.C.E.S. findings suggest that parental reading to children is key to their vocabulary knowledge, and is an area where Head Start programs could do more to encourage regular parent-child reading.</li> <li>• F.A.C.E.S. does not report outcomes by individual children or individual programs.</li> <li>• F.A.C.E.S. does not monitor grantees for compliance with the Program Performance Standards.</li> <li>• The F.A.C.E.S. assessment system is not designed for direct implementation by local grantees.</li> </ul>

# Individualization: An Essential Element of the Curriculum

By Willa Choper Siegel

**T**he Program Performance Standards require that learning experiences in Head Start be individualized. It is possible to design experiences to be appropriate for a child at various ages and stages of development, and with changing interests and needs. An activity can be done in a variety of ways that respond to the interests and learning styles of the child.

Sharing stories between adults and young children is an excellent example of how an experience can be individualized. The following vignettes examine how story sharing provides opportunities for many kinds of experiences: the emotional closeness of sitting on the lap of a trusted adult and hearing a familiar voice; the security of hearing familiar words from a favorite book; the fun of anticipating and recognizing an upcoming word in a story; the sense of pride that comes from being able to chime in with the next word when the reader pauses; the excitement of recognizing letters or words on the page.

Each of the following vignettes proposes a goal for the activity—in this case, story sharing—and illustrates how the activity can be adapted to meet the developmental needs of a child. They describe the experience of a young girl, Cathy, in two Early Head Start programs, a Head Start program, and as she moves from one home to another and to a homeless shelter.

## Six Months Old

**Goal: To help Cathy adjust to a new situation**

It's Cathy's first day at her local Early Head Start program and she's very scared. Things smell and sound different here. She can see other children playing, but all she does is cry. Her teacher understands and picks her up, holds her close, and whispers in her ear. When Cathy starts to calm down, her teacher reaches for a board book with pictures of other babies. These pictures interest Cathy—she reaches for the pages and looks at whatever pictures she chooses.

## One Year Old

**Goal: To make the sharing of stories a fun activity**

Discovering that legs can take her anywhere she wants to go, Cathy is so busy. She explores with pull and push toys and loves to kick. Her teacher makes story time special by picking out books about other children who are busy running

and playing. The teacher reads these stories when Cathy is ready to sit and relax a while in her lap.

## Eighteen Months Old

**Goal: To introduce the idea that books are handled in particular ways (e.g. books have a front cover)**

Each morning, Cathy comes to Early Head Start excited to play with all the toys, and especially the dolls. She is often seen “reading” to her “babies.” Her teacher notices that the books are often held upside down and the pages are turned in both directions. Without correcting Cathy, her teacher uses this opportunity to help Cathy identify the front of the book. Cathy is later seen “teaching” her baby about the front of books.

## Two Years Old

**Goal: To foster familiarity between Cathy and a new teacher**

Cathy's family has moved from a small rural community to the city, and Cathy is now in a different Early Head Start program. The new program means a different teacher, a bigger building, and many more people around. Since the change occurred in the middle of the year, the other children and teachers have already formed close relationships. The special one-on-one time Cathy and her teacher spend reading provides Cathy with a familiar sense of security.

## Three Years Old

**Goal: To recognize that books are handled in particular ways (e.g., books have a front and back, a top and bottom, and they are read from left to right)**

Cathy has demonstrated that her favorite activities include books. Cathy's teacher, Miss Vanessa, lets Cathy find the front covers of books. Cathy is also beginning to understand that books have beginnings and endings. Miss Vanessa encourages her to turn the pages, reinforcing the idea that books go from the front to the back and left to right. In this way, Cathy shows her teacher that she can “read.”

## Four Years Old

**Goal: To understand the connection between spoken and written language**

Cathy's family has just moved into a homeless shelter. She isn't sleeping or eating very well, and her teachers have noticed that she is taking less initiative. She isn't talking very much and is more hesitant to play with other children. Miss Vanessa makes a special effort to stay close to Cathy. When the class takes field trips, Cathy holds on to Miss Vanessa's hand at all times. Miss Vanessa takes advantage of this by talking with her about what they see on their trips. When they return, Cathy draws pictures of the trip and shares them with Miss Vanessa. As they talk, the teacher writes Cathy's story at the bottom of each picture. Cathy helps write letters and some words of her own. Miss Vanessa staples the pictures together and reads the "story" back to Cathy, who smiles as she hears her words repeated. Cathy asks to take her "book" home to the shelter to "read" to her mother and some of the other children.

## Five Years Old

**Goal: To facilitate transition**

Cathy and some of her classmates will be entering kindergarten in the fall, and her Head Start teachers have been working with the kindergarten teachers and families to finalize transition plans. They have arranged to have some of the same books in both classrooms, so the children will see something familiar when they enter their new class. Cathy's Head Start teachers read and discuss books about children going to school. The Head Start children and parents visit the new school and kindergarten classes several times. When they return from each trip, Cathy and the other children discuss their upcoming adventure and some decide to "write" a book about the new "big school." They draw pictures and the teacher helps write their words.

## A Checklist for Early Childhood Curriculum

### Does the curriculum ...

- Promote interactive learning and encourage the child's construction of knowledge?
- Help children achieve social, emotional, linguistic, physical, and cognitive goals?
- Encourage development of positive feelings and dispositions toward learning while leading to acquisition of knowledge and skills?
- Have expectations that are realistic and attainable at this time?
- Include children with disabilities in the curriculum?
- Build and elaborate on children's current knowledge and abilities?
- Lead to conceptual understanding by helping children construct their own understanding in meaningful contexts?
- Facilitate concept learning and skills development in an integrated and natural way?
- Challenge children with disabilities to attain goals beyond those specified in the IEP/IFSP?
- Permit flexibility for children and teachers?
- Encourage active learning and frequently allow children to make meaningful choices?
- Foster children's exploration and inquiry, rather than focusing on "right" answers or "right" ways to complete a task?
- Promote the development of higher order abilities, such as thinking, reasoning, problem solving, and decision making?
- Promote and encourage social interaction among children and adults?
- Respect children's psychological needs for activity, sensory stimulation, fresh air, rest, and nourishment?
- Promote feelings of safety, security, and belonging?
- Provide experiences that promote feelings of success, competence, and enjoyment of learning?
- Promote positive relationships with families?

### Is it ...

- Based on sound child development principles of how children grow and learn and grounded in the Head Start Program Performance Standards?
- Meaningful for these children? Is it relevant to the children's lives? Can it be made more relevant by linking it to personal experiences the children have had or can have easily?
- Sensitive to and respectful of cultural and linguistic diversity? Does the curriculum expect, allow, and appreciate individual differences?

*Adapted from NAEYC*



## Head Start Teachers Recognized for Excellence in Teaching Through the Arts

The Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts honored eight teachers from Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Maryland who excelled in developing creative and outstanding lessons using music, movement, and drama.

The honorees were nominated by Wolf Trap artists participating in a seven-week residency. During the residency, the teacher and the artist worked together to develop lessons and activities that integrated the performing arts into the curriculum. Each teacher then developed her own lessons using the techniques and skills gained from working with the Wolf Trap artist. These creative lessons are used to teach young children academic skills such as math and reading, as well as life and social skills, through multicultural and multisensory activities.


*Wolf Trap Institute honorees  
from left to right:  
Latitia Jarvis (VA)  
Begum Ahmed (VA)  
Miriam Camacho (VA)  
Brenda Thomas (MD)  
Michele Isemann (MD)  
Katherine Warner (DC)  
Olubusola Ayangbesan (DC)  
Carmen Benitez (DC)*



Founded in 1981 with a grant from the Head Start Bureau, the Northern Virginia-based Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts is a program of the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts. The Institute places professional performing artists in classroom residencies working with children three to five years old, their teachers, and parents through the disciplines of music, movement, and drama. The program is now being presented on a national basis and can be found in nearly 1,000 classrooms in cities across the country, including Atlanta, Memphis, Los Angeles, New York, Tucson, and Nashville.

*For more information about the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts, contact Miriam Flaherty at T: 703-255-1933 or consult the Wolf Trap Foundation web site at [www.wolf-trap.org/institute](http://www.wolf-trap.org/institute).*

### Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections



This publication, put out by the Goals 2000 Arts Education Partnership, makes the case for the role of arts education in early education. The Partnership's Task Force on Children's Learning and the Arts: Birth to Age Eight prepared this report, which begins to identify guiding principles and activities, programs, research, and resources that exemplify them.

*To order a copy of the report, e-mail a request to [aep@ccsso.org](mailto:aep@ccsso.org), or mail your request to Arts Education Partnership, Council of Chief State School Officers, One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-1431.*

### Head Start and PTA: Partnering in the Arts

E. Dollie Wolverton, Chief of the Head Start Bureau's Education Services Branch, presented a session on *Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections* at the Annual National PTA Convention. Dollie emphasized the importance of integrating the arts into children's earliest experiences and provided sample activities, examples of developmentally appropriate practices, and new research findings on how children develop and learn. *Information about the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is available on the Web at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org), or contact their national headquarters at T: 1-800-307-4782, E: [info@pta.org](mailto:info@pta.org).*

## TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS

## “For a Child, Life Is a Creative Adventure”

By E. Dollie Wolverton

**I**n a recent speech, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton stated, “Supporting arts education is not only the right thing to do, but it is the smart thing for our nation and for both the public and private sector to do.” Mrs. Clinton also gave recognition to Head Start’s contributions: “We also have new [Program Performance] Standards for our 2,000 Head Start centers that recognize how we can best get our children ready for schools by developing their creative self expression through activities in art, music, movement, and dialogue.”

The First Lady’s remarks are supported by research findings showing that creative experiences, implemented in developmental- and age-appropriate ways, have a positive influence on a child’s learning. The arts are an excellent avenue for supporting emerging literacy and numeracy, nurturing the growth of the imagination, and increasing self-confidence.

To support creative learning, the Head Start Bureau — in consultation with a variety of local programs, organizations, parents, and early childhood experts — has developed multimedia materials to help adults incorporate art, music, movement, and dialogue in the education of young children, beginning in infancy. The package, entitled *For Children, Life Is a Creative Adventure*, is distributed widely to Head Start, Early Head Start, Even Start, Title I, and child care programs. It can be used as the basis to train teachers, home visitors, child care providers, parents, and volunteers. There are three parts to the *Creative Adventure* resource package:

- **A Video** that illustrates some of the ways adults can help children engage in a wide variety of art, music, movement, and dialogue experiences, both individually and in small groups.

- **A Guide for Parents and Professionals** that describes and illustrates the activities presented in the video. It includes discussion topics and questions that will help viewers get the maximum benefit from the video, along with additional activities not presented in the video. The guide also provides a variety of suggestions for working with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to support growth and learning through creative expression.

- **A Wall Chart** that communicates some of the ways adults can encourage creative expression through a variety of art, music, movement, and dialogue activities based on the continuum of child growth and development.

*To order A Creative Adventure materials, fax your request to the Head Start Publications Management Center at 703-683-5769. For general information on A Creative Adventure, contact E. Dollie Wolverton, Chief of the Education Services Branch, Head Start Bureau, T: 202-205-8418; E: [dwolverton@acf.dhhs.gov](mailto:dwolverton@acf.dhhs.gov).*

## Learning Life Skills Through Physical Play

When the Alexandria Head Start program in Alexandria, Virginia, wanted to enrich and expand its curriculum in the area of motor development and focused play, it turned to a local resource and established a powerful collaborative partnership. The Joy of Sports Foundation, also located in Alexandria, is a nonprofit organization concerned with helping children grow and develop through structured play. Its Star Program has been praised for its focus on children's developmental needs and was recognized by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports as a model program.

Developed by Andrew Oser, founder of the Joy of Sports Foundation, the Star Program addresses five goals for children's development: self-esteem, concentration, imagination, relaxation, and cooperation. Originally created for children in kindergarten through second grade, the Star Program had to be adapted for younger children. For example, the "Circle Catch" game calling for children to stand a few feet apart and throw a small ball to each other was modified to have the preschool children stand much closer together and gently toss a larger ball. Younger three-year-olds might simply pass the ball around to one another.

### Program Performance Standards

In developing *Star Power for Preschoolers*, Oser relied heavily on the wisdom and experience of Angie Godfrey, Director of the Alexandria Head Start program. What Godfrey and Oser came to realize was that the Star Program works very well with the Program Performance Standards. Standard 1304.21 (a)(4)(i-ii) states:

- Grantee and delegate agencies must provide for the development of each child's cognitive and language skills by:
- (i) Supporting each child's learning, using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play, and exploration;
  - (ii) Ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement, and dialogue.

Godfrey felt that the Star Program supports her Head Start curriculum goals. In addition, the materials needed for the Star Power experiences can be very simple and are accessible to Head Start programs.



This "star position" is an important part of the Star Power program.

Physical play is crucial to positive child development. "Virtually all constructive learning throughout childhood takes place through play, beginning almost from the moment of birth," writes Joseph Chilton Pearce, author of the book *The Magical Child*, in his forward to *Star Power for Preschoolers*. "It is nature's way of building our fundamental knowledge of world and self, and the relationship between the two."

Play is a powerful vehicle for helping young children develop life skills—it is how children learn about themselves and explore the world in which they live. The time children spend in unstructured, free play provides them with essential growth opportunities. However, free play can be complemented by structured play, designed to offer learning experiences that may not be readily available through free play.

For more information, contact Angie Godfrey at T: 703-549-8685, F: 703-549-2097, or Andrew Oser at T: 703-768-4077, E: [joysports@patriot.net](mailto:joysports@patriot.net).

## Curriculum Q+A

**Q.** How will the aspects of curriculum be reviewed as part of on-site monitoring with I-99+ and later with PRISM?

**A.** The I-99+ Review process is quite comprehensive in guiding team members through the review. (For full details refer to a complete copy of the I-99+ package.) The I-99+ Review creates a picture of the relationship between program systems and program services. The various phases of each review contribute to the overall understanding of any grantee or delegate agency's curriculum. Information reviewed by the team is related to: 1) understanding the context; 2) collecting data on implementation; 3) integrating the findings; and 4) building team consensus and making recommendations concerning compliance. These phases precede the reporting of final results.

Each of the 17 core questions that are part of the I-99+ Review contributes to the understanding and discussion of curriculum development and implementation. Each question enhances a team's understanding of the curriculum process, information from focus groups, and classroom and home observations. Record reviews, interviews, and team discussions also contribute information for a better understanding.

Some core questions are designed to lead the discussion in the area of curriculum. Implementation of services through the systems for Child Development and Health makes major contributions toward understanding prevention and early intervention, individualization, disabilities services, and the overall curriculum.

The Program Performance Standards establish the relationship of curriculum to each of these areas: program governance; planning; communication; record keeping and reporting; ongoing monitoring; program self assessment; human resources; fiscal management; prevention and early intervention; health care tracking and follow-up; individualization; disabilities services; the curriculum process; family partnership building; parent involvement; community partnerships; eligibility, recruitment, selection, and attendance; and facilities, materials, and equipment.

A comprehensive review of the I-99+ offers a great deal of detail regarding this question; a few specific examples are included here. As part of each review, teams will examine:

**A. Program Planning**—The written plans for implementing quality services for children and families. This includes references to the curriculum. Additionally, the Performance Standards require the curriculum to be written and to include specific elements.

**B. Communication**—In classrooms and in homes, what is the extent and quality of communication among children, parents, staff, and management?

**C. Human Resources**—What is the system for training and development, including orientation of staff, consultants, and volunteers? What is the approach for people to acquire and increase knowledge and skills needed to fulfill job responsibilities? (This includes educating staff and parents and being able to skillfully plan for and implement the curriculum.)

**D. Prevention and Early Intervention**—This includes developmental screening ongoing observations, and assessments of children.

Using these four examples, staff and parents are encouraged to become more familiar with the total I-99+ and to extend the list through ongoing discussions.

**Q.** How does Head Start support the nation's first educational goal that "All children in America will start school ready to learn"?

**A.** One of the basic goals of the Head Start program is to promote the social competence of children in their everyday lives and in dealing with both the present environment and later, in school.

Readiness is a broad term that encompasses many aspects; only some of them are addressed here. Readiness includes children receiving necessary nutrition and health care for healthy minds and bodies.

Head Start provides comprehensive child development services which include early childhood education, medical, dental, mental health, nutrition, parent involvement, and effective community partnerships so that children are better prepared for school because of their experiences and the community's support.



The Head Start Program Performance Standards require developmentally and culturally appropriate curricula and daily experiences for children, including a print-rich environment, daily exposure to books and stories, and support for emergent and family literacy, to promote the use of language(s).

Readiness areas include language and literacy skills, such as following directions, participating in conversations, making up and retelling stories, showing interest in reading activities, and demonstrating knowledge about books through reading pictures, following print on a page, and pointing to familiar words.

There is also a dimension of “readiness” which recognizes that parents are a child’s first teacher. Head Start sponsors, arranges, or offers many opportunities for parents to enhance their own skills in reading, writing, and speaking to more fully support their children’s development. Head Start programs focus on emergent literacy for children, adult literacy to help parents achieve personal goals, and family literacy to promote parent-child interaction around books and reading. Ideas for extending children’s learning may be shared during home visits and parent meetings; through newsletters, lending libraries, videotapes, and trainers and consultants; and through participation in parent-child programs at public libraries and community-based museums.

### Q. How can child assessment information be used?

A. Information obtained through an individual child assessment and from ongoing assessment of child progress is used in significant ways related to individual children and overall program services and practices.

At the point of entry into the Head Start program, each child is screened to determine skills, strengths, interests, and needs in the areas of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, as well as health and sensory screening.

As the year progresses, both staff and parents participate in ongoing assessment and observations of

each child’s progress across developmental domains to individualize and refine program planning, curriculum implementation, and goal setting and attainment.

At the conclusion of a child’s Head Start experience, assessment provides a comprehensive look at a child’s progress over time and informs effective transition to another program, including entry into kindergarten and elementary school.

Child assessment data can also be used by the program in looking at the overall effectiveness of its curriculum and child development approach, its training and parent education, and as part of the information that helps determine if all children are making progress and achieving goals and outcomes in Head Start. This information becomes part of the program’s self-assessment and is then used as a basis for planning for new groups of children.

### Q. Can “time out” be used in Head Start as a means to affect behavior that is interrupting the implementation of the curriculum?

A. This is not a simple question to answer, since there are various interpretations of “time out” and multiple ways to implement it. The use of time out is not inherently positive or negative; it depends on how and how often the procedure is used.

The Head Start Program Performance Standards and Guidance are clear about the manner in which adults are to respond to child behaviors. These behaviors are addressed in the Education and Early Childhood Development section, as well as in the Human Resources Management section of the Standards.

The revised Head Start Program Performance Standards prohibit the use of punitive discipline and encourage the use of positive developmental guidance and discipline. So each program’s definition of “time out” will determine whether and how it can be used in preschool Head Start classrooms.

Time out procedures should be planned and implemented with the guidance of a program’s mental health professional in coordination with the child’s family.

## INVITED RESPONSES TO TWO KEY QUESTIONS

## Q. What is the relationship between a curriculum and activity books?

A. by Diane Trister Dodge,  
President, Teaching Strategies

It is a common misconception that activity books can take the place of a curriculum. They are very different, and each serves a unique function.

A curriculum is a comprehensive framework for planning and implementing a program that is responsive to the children and families it serves. It gives teachers the “what, why, and how” to apply the components of developmentally appropriate practice. The Head Start Program Performance Standards clearly define what a curriculum model must include.

Curriculum provides a framework for determining what kinds of experiences will be authentic, engaging, appropriate, and effective in achieving goals. This framework may change depending on the ages of the children being served. For example, *The Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers* emphasizes relationships. This is because children under three are developing trust and autonomy, which they acquire in the context of relationships. *The Creative Curriculum* for programs serving preschool children focuses on the environment because three- to five-year-olds are at the stage of initiative. They learn best when they have choices about materials and activities.

Activity books, in contrast, are a collection of ideas and suggestions of activities. By their nature, activities are usually short term—e.g., an art project, a collection walk, a recipe for cooking. Activities may or may not be developmentally appropriate. The only way to determine if an activity is appropriate is to assess its value in relation to the curriculum and the child or children.

For example, one activity book describes how to make spiders out of paper plates and construction paper, and gives a pattern to follow. Teachers using a curriculum model based on developmentally appropriate practices would reject this activity. It asks children to follow a pattern. Its primary purpose is to have children follow

directions, rather than learn about insects through authentic and meaningful experiences.

In choosing activities to supplement the curriculum, teachers must ask themselves questions such as:

- Does it address the goals and objectives of our curriculum?
- What should staff and parents do to help children achieve these goals?
- Is the activity relevant to what we are doing, and will it be meaningful to children?

A good activity book can be a helpful resource to teachers who may need ideas to inspire them. Just as you carefully select a curriculum that meets the criteria in the Program Performance Standards and promotes learning experiences that are appropriate to the general age and developmental stage(s) of the individual children, you should select your activity books with care and consideration. Activity books cannot take the place of a comprehensive curriculum model.

## Q. Culture and celebrations: who should decide?

A. by Carol Brunson Day,  
Executive Director, The Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition

As we continue to learn about the most appropriate ways to approach multicultural education in early childhood, new issues arise. Experts say we should spend less time thinking about holidays, food, and dress (the surface features or isolated activities of culture) and more time thinking about values, interaction patterns, and child-rearing practices (the deep structural features of culture). I agree and have said, “Let’s worry less about teaching cultures to children, and more about teaching children in a culturally consistent context.” Our program practices should be attitudinally and behaviorally consistent with the cultural communities of the children and families.

Reaching further into the depths of culture has caused some teachers,

parents, and curriculum developers to question whether holidays should be celebrated in Early Head Start and Head Start. Some think that too many celebrations unfairly consume the early childhood curriculum. Others think that if we celebrate holidays we are being trivial and superficial in dealing with culture in the program. Still others think that celebrating every group’s holidays will unfairly impose unfamiliar cultural values on some.

None of these views is meant to be disrespectful or trivial or to subjugate the beliefs of any group to those of any other group. But if holiday celebrations are totally removed from children’s school experiences for the wrong reasons, all of these errors are committed.

“To celebrate or not to celebrate” is not the issue. Rather, the issue is how to decide what to celebrate. The dialogue about what constitutes a curriculum that is culturally consistent for children (and is anti-bias and teaches children to value cultural differences and similarities) should be ongoing among parents and staff as part of sound decision making and curriculum planning.

When discussing the issue with parents, staff should bring information about the principles for providing culturally appropriate environments for children. Parents should bring the cultural material from their socialization and socializing experiences — the attitudes, beliefs, and practices they enjoy and at which they are good. Program practices regarding culture should be the result of an interactive process among parents and staff where the final decisions are negotiated. The goal is always to develop a program that, in a dynamic way, best meets the needs of the children.

Everything we know about culture suggests that holiday celebrations contain deep-seated, value-based elements. They are the rites and rituals through which the distinctive historical contributions of groups are captured and maintained. Older children can be taught such information directly. For the little ones, it’s more fun and generates feelings of security to be in a place where their family and community life is valued.

## A Head Start on Science

By Jean Simpson and William C. Ritz

**Observing, communicating, comparing, and organizing are all developmentally appropriate processes for children at a very young age.**

**M**any years ago, Biologist Rachel Carson offered this advice in her book *Silent Spring*: “If a child is to keep alive his or her inborn sense of wonder...,” he or she needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, “rediscovering with that child the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.” The “A Head Start on Science” project at California State University, Long Beach, has adopted Carson’s “sense of wonder” for children, while simultaneously rekindling that same spirit in the adults who are their parents and teachers.

“A Head Start on Science” hopes to increase Head Start staff members’ ability to create settings that encourage children to discover and explore the world around them. The overall goal is to link colleges and universities with Head Start programs to facilitate and encourage a lifelong interest in science. “A Head Start on Science” training and materials are appropriate for Head Start teachers, assistants, home visitors, children and their families.

Children gain a “sense of wonder” by examining and exploring the world around them. “A Head Start on Science” does not spoon-feed scientific information to children. Rather, children are encouraged to expand their perceptions of the world by learning ways to observe day-to-day phenomena, such as how to compare the smells of various foods, how to classify leaves collected on a walk, and how to communicate what they have observed and learned.

“A Head Start on Science” takes the view that children learn science by going

through the same type of processes as a scientist. No longer will a child observing a snail see only a slow-moving object in the grass. Instead, the child will notice the sticky trail the snail leaves, compare the snail to other slow-moving objects, observe what the snail eats, and begin to ask questions and comment on the snail’s environment. Observing, communicating, comparing, and organizing or classifying are all developmentally appropriate processes for children at a very young age.

An adult training and science curriculum is being developed for “A Head Start on Science,” including a teaching guide and a manual for those planning to carry out similar science training activities. Overall guidance for the program is provided by an advisory board comprised of experts from Head Start, science education, and early childhood education. There has also been an intensive follow-up program involving on-site visitations and continual interaction to assess the effectiveness of “A Head Start on Science” in encouraging that vital sense of wonder in the staff, children, and families involved.

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*For more information, contact Dr. William C. Ritz, Chair, Department of Science Education at California State University, Long Beach T: 562-985-4801; F 562-985-7164; E: [sci4kids@csulb.edu](mailto:sci4kids@csulb.edu); or visit the department’s web site at [www.csulb.edu/~sci4kids/](http://www.csulb.edu/~sci4kids/).*

### Grants Available from Honda

The American Honda Foundation invites Head Start programs to submit applications for grant awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Honda is especially interested in the following areas: science, math, environment, and technology. Applications are accepted quarterly, on the first of February, May, August, and November. To receive an application, send a self-addressed label to The American Honda Foundation, P.O. Box 2205, Torrance, CA 90509-2205.

## HSB Literacy Initiatives

By Trellis Waxler

**S**chool readiness has always been a central focus of Head Start, and an important aspect of school readiness is helping children to be ready to read. In recent years, the Head Start Bureau has launched literacy initiatives that emphasize the importance of establishing a foundation for reading for children and their families.

### The Head Start Family Literacy Project

The Head Start Bureau has entered into a five-year cooperative agreement with the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) to help Head Start grantees provide comprehensive family literacy services. NCFL will provide workshops, training, and individualized technical assistance to grantees. NCFL is also working to develop a Promising Practices Network that will document family literacy services Head Start programs provide around the country, as well as a system to increase collaboration and networking with potential partners invested in family literacy services. For more information, contact Sharly Emberton or Bonnie Lash Freeman at 502-584-1133.

### The Center for the Book

Beginning in 1989, Head Start and The Center for the Book joined forces to demonstrate how libraries that serve young children can plan and work with Head Start staff to enhance learning and parent involvement in children's literacy and language development. An Act of Congress in 1977 established The Center for the Book to stimulate public interest in books. Since that time, the Center has become a nationwide force, establishing over 30 centers across the country.

In working with Head Start and its literacy initiatives, the Center for the Book held several symposiums across the country with Head Start grantees and their library partners. A Video and User's Guide for promoting family literacy was also developed under this partnership. The video is divided into four segments that can be viewed as individual units or in total.

- Segment One describes the partnership between Head Start and the Center for the Book.
- Segment Two demonstrates the wide variety of library program formats and techniques that can help make books a joyful discovery, including storytelling, reading aloud, puppets of various types, dramatic play, and related video and audio tapes.

- Segment Three provides criteria for deciding what makes a good book.
- Segment Four focuses on adult involvement with libraries. Included is an overview of how the presence of library materials and staff in children's lives supports their educational and emotional experiences, reinforces parent involvement, and links library resources to all Head Start services.

Call 202-707-5221 for more information.

### Emergent Literacy Grantees

The emergent literacy initiative, begun in 1995, provided funds to the University of Idaho, Western Illinois University, and Children's Literacy Initiative to work with Head Start programs. Initiatives undertaken by these three grantees are as follows:

**The University of Idaho**— The University's Center on Developmental Disabilities developed resources and training materials, held workshops, and developed videos on emergent literacy and creating a print-rich environment for children and families. For more information, contact Carol Nelson at 208-885-3500.

**Western Illinois University**— The University's College of Education and Human Services focused on the Emergent Literacy Instructional Program and Support Services (ELIPSS) Project, an emergent literacy training program for Head Start staff. The package includes ten modules with videos to guide participants through the training. For more information, contact Patricia Hutingger at 309-298-1634.

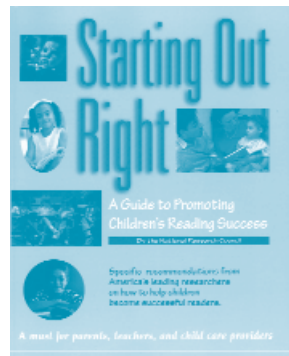
**Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI)**— CLI provided training in Head Start centers and hosted several major institutes training Head Start staff to create literacy-based environments, set up classroom libraries, and read to children, explaining the importance of each step. CLI also distributed books under the initiative and developed a literacy kit, which includes a checklist and a training video, *Teaching Parents to Work with Children*. This video, which features Al Roker, won an award from the International Television and Video Association. For more information, contact Linda Katz at 215-541-4676.

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# Reading and Writing



## Starting Out Right

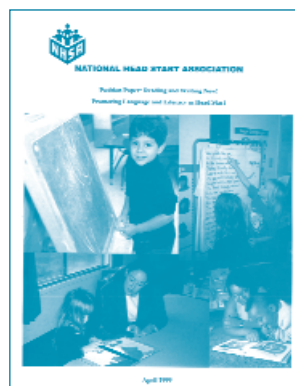
*Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success* is a popularized version of the National Reading Council's *Preventing Reading Difficulties*. This new book includes:

- Checklists of specific accomplishments to be expected at different ages from preschool through third grade
- 55 activities to do with children
- List of recommended children's books
- Guide to computer software, CD-ROMs, and Internet web site resources.

To order *Starting Out Right* contact NAEYC at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) or call their sales department directly at 800-424-2460 x. 604 or 202-232-8777. The cost of the book is \$12.00 plus shipping and handling.

## Reading and Writing Now!

The National Head Start Association's position paper, *Reading and Writing Now!: Promoting Language and Literacy in Head Start*, makes the following recommendations for teachers and parents:



1. Expand children's oral language usage
2. Read several stories every day to children
3. Teach children rhymes and songs
4. Support reading and writing development through children's play
5. Point at the words occasionally when you read to children
6. Encourage children to experiment with writing everyday
7. Provide children a special area where they can experiment with print and books
8. Be a literacy advocate; model reading and writing everyday
9. Encourage children to notice print and how words are read and spelled
10. Encourage a special time each day for enjoying books and writing

Included with these recommendations is an explanation of why these practices are important for children's learning and a description of how to go about implementing them effectively.

To order a copy of *Reading and Writing Now!*, contact NHSA at 1-800-687-5044. The cost of the publication is \$1.00 plus shipping and handling.

## Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children

To ensure that all children learn to read and write by the end of third grade, early childhood educators need to know more and do more to promote literacy in effective, developmentally appropriate ways. The International Reading Association/National Association for the Education of Young Children joint position statement on developmentally appropriate ways of teaching children to read and write comes to life here with photographs, concrete guidelines, and exciting ideas for the classroom.

This resource is available from NAEYC's Web site at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) for \$10.00.

## RESOURCES

## Much More Than the ABCs

*Much More Than the ABCs*, by Judith Schickedanz, is an update of her influential book, *More Than the ABCs*. It emphasizes a multifaceted approach to helping children learn to read. Parents, teachers, and caregivers learn how to help children develop their skills without smothering their enjoyment in the process.

Published by NAEYC, *Much More Than the ABCs* walks the reader through literacy development from birth through preschool and gives useful and important information on setting up an organized environment rich in resources that support emergent literacy. The book also provides concrete suggestions for supporting children's literacy, such as reading aloud with children from infancy through preschool and teaching the alphabet in meaningful ways.

Schickedanz reinforces the idea that one should never underestimate a child's capabilities. "Even though most children will not read and write conventionally until the early grades," writes Schickedanz, "many have considerable knowledge about literacy and are well on their way to becoming conven-



tional readers and writers by the time they encounter formal instruction."

To order a copy of *Much More Than the ABCs*, contact NAEYC at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) or call their sales department directly at 800-424-2460 x604 or 202-232-8777. The cost of the book is \$7.00 plus shipping and handling.

## On the Road to Reading: A Guide for Community Partners Working to Promote Children's Reading

This is a guide published by the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services. It is directed at community projects that support the American Reads Challenge goal. The basic information provided will help community partners begin their literacy efforts. Issues addressed include "How Most Children Learn to Read," "How Tutors Can Support Young Readers," "Involving Families in Tutoring Programs," and "Building Community Partnerships."

For more information, contact the Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN.

## Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Instrument

This popular field-tested management tool put out by the Child Welfare League of America will help child service organizations identify, improve, and enhance cultural competence in staff relations and client service delivery. With a practical, easy-to-use approach, it addresses the major issues of delivering culturally competent service.

The publication costs \$25.95 plus shipping and handling. Contact the Child Welfare League's website at [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org) for an online order form, or call 800-407-6273 for more information.



### Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs—Revised Edition

S. Bredekamp and C. Copple, Eds.

Expanding from the core ideas of the influential 1987 edition, this volume spells out more fully the



principles underlying developmentally appropriate practice and guidelines for classroom decisionmaking. The book offers an overview of each period of development and extensive examples of practices appropriate and inappropriate for those engaged in the care and education of infants and toddlers, 3-through 5-year-olds, or primary-grade children.

*This resource is available from NAEYC for \$9.00; to order contact their website at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).*

### Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups: Developmentally Appropriate Practice

This ZERO TO THREE publication for early childhood professionals outlines the stages of



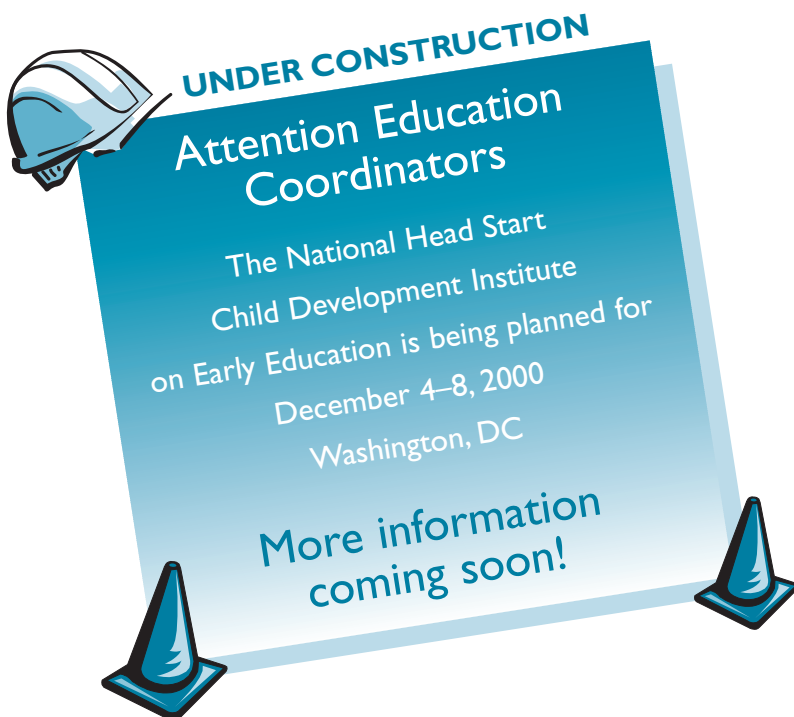
development children go through in their first three years of life, identifies components of quality infant-toddler care, and places infant-toddler care in context. Real-life illustrations are used throughout the book, which also describes appropriate and inappropriate practices.

*The cost of this publication is \$17.00 plus shipping and handling. To order, contact ZERO TO THREE at 1-800-899-4301.*

### Tools for Teaching Developmentally Appropriate Practice: The Leading Edge in Early Childhood Education

This new videotape training series is an ideal tool for staff development. Produced in short, stand-alone programs ranging in length from 5 to 20 minutes, the videos use powerful images and clear, concise language to communicate the key concepts of NAEYC's *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs—Revised Edition*. This series features more than three hours of videotape produced for NAEYC by RISE (Resources and Instruction for Staff Excellence, Cincinnati, Ohio) in conjunction with NAEYC's national videoconference/seminar, THE LEADING EDGE.

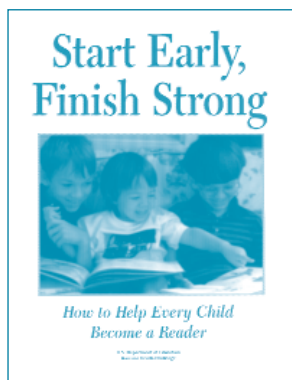
*This resource is available from NAEYC for \$200; to order contact their web site at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).*



## RESOURCES

### Start Early, Finish Strong: How to Help Every Child Become a Reader

This Department of Education resource on children and reading includes easy-



to-understand research, resources, and recommendations for policy makers and others, including families, child caregivers, educators, businesses, and universities. It includes contact information for projects and programs and an appendix that summarizes virtually all the state laws enacted since 1996 related to young children and reading.

To order, call 877-4ED-PUBS or download copies from [www.ed.gov/pubs/startearly](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/startearly)

The Head Start Publications Management Center (HSPMC) has a wide variety of publications and resources available. For a current catalogue, or to place an order, contact the HSPMC by fax at 703-683-5769 or by e-mail at [puborder@hskids-tmssc.org](mailto:puborder@hskids-tmssc.org)

### Multicultural Resources (also see article on p. 19)

Available from ERIC ([www.ericcece.org](http://www.ericcece.org)):

- *Asian-American Children: What Teachers Should Know*, a digest by Jianhua Feng
- *Multiculturalism in Early Childhood Programs*, a book by C. Treppete, V. Fu, and A.J. Stremmel. (Full text is available on ERIC's web page)

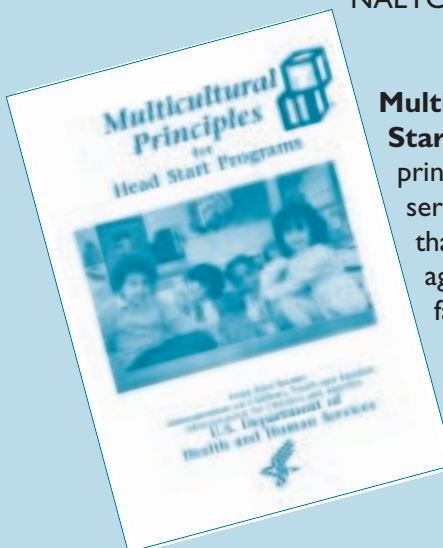
Available from the National Council on LaRaza (NCLR):

- *Testimony on Smart Start: The Community Collaborative for Early Childhood Development Act of 1988*
- *Hispanic Educational Trends and Needs*
- *Hispanic Education: A Statistical Portrait (1990)*

(For more information, contact NCLR's web site at [www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org) or call 301-604-7983)

Available from NAEYC:

- "What Early Childhood Educators Need to Know: Developing Effective Programs for Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Children and Families." This article by Patton Tabors appears in the November 1998 issue of NAEYC's journal, *Young Children*.



### Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs

describes ten principles related to individualized services for children and families that can help grantees and delegate agencies ensure that every child, family, and staff member feels respected and valued. To order, fax your request to HSPMC at 703-683-5769 or send e-mail to [puborder@hskids-tmssc.org](mailto:puborder@hskids-tmssc.org). This publication is available in both English and Spanish.



# C•L•A•S

Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services  
Early Childhood Research Institute

<http://clas.uiuc.edu>

The CLAS Resource Library offers a quick and easy way to learn more about working with children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It's a valuable resource for new ideas and activities covering a wide range of topics, including:

- Dealing with challenging behaviors
- Enhancing young children's social skills
- Enriching caregiver-child interactions
- Supporting first and second language acquisition.

The CLAS collection includes materials in many formats, such as books, kits, videotapes, audiotapes, CDs, and multimedia. Some materials are translated into

other languages. Some materials are available in full text and can be downloaded directly from the Web site. For other materials, ordering information is available.

## Coming in 2000

*Second Language Acquisition* (Janet Quiñones-Eatman)  
*Emerging Literacy* (Georgia Garcia and Crissa Almughrabi)  
*IFSPs and IEPs* (Tess Bennett, Chun Zhang, and Laura Hojnar)  
*Promising Intervention Strategies for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Young Children with Special Needs* (Rebeca Valdivia)

*For more information or to submit materials, contact: CLAS Early Childhood Research Institute, University of Illinois, 61 Children's Research Center, 51 Gerty Drive, Champaign, IL 61820, T: 800-583-4135 (VITTY), F: 217-244-7732, E: [clas@uiuc.edu](mailto:clas@uiuc.edu).*

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