LESSON PLAN INFORMATION

To help ensure that activities made available to children are not only relevant to program objectives, but actually allow children to perceive, think, and do the skill stressed in the objectives, it is important to write-up the activity/lesson prior to conducting it. Lesson plans become valuable teaching tools for the classroom teacher. Not only does writing activities force teachers to adjust the teaching process (show, discuss, practice, and reinforce) to the learning process (perceive, think, do, and feel), but the write-up (a) is valuable in assessing teaching models, (b) becomes an in-service teaching device for parents and paraprofessionals in the program, and (c) enables staff to repeat successful activities while standardizing the procedures and minimizing preparation time. Lesson plans are NOT created in order to micro-manage or adult-direct all aspects of a child’s play. Rather, they allow the adult to ensure that they are prepared to support the child’s exploration and interests. Comprehensive lesson plans for structured activities consist of the following information:

Goals: Goals are broad and should state your overall desire for the activity. What is the concept you want to teach or expose the children to? Example: “The child will understand classification by color.”

Objectives: Objectives focus on the individual child and are realistic (can the child reasonably accomplish the objective, given the parameters of the activity?) What are the specific, measurable ways you will know the goal has been met? Objectives have 3 parts:

- Each objective begins with the words, “The child will...”. Teachers assess children individually, so do not write objectives for all of the children as a group, but rather for each child.
- The second part is adding an action word to the statement. Example: “The child will sort...” For more information on appropriate words, please see Bloom’s Taxonomy:
- The last part is what you want the child to do in the activity. Example: “The child will sort plastic bears by color.”
- Make sure each objective is behaviorally stated and indicate the minimum performance standards. You should only have 1-2 objectives per activity. Any more, and you are unable to assess each child as they work on the activity. Consider the developmental emphasis of your objectives: social/emotional, cognitive, language, physical/motor, etc.

Materials: List all materials needed to conduct the activity. Materials should include both things the adult uses as well as what the children use. Materials should include: demonstration items; clean-up, storage, and carrying items; children’s tools, etc.

- Include the quantity or amount needed for each activity per child.
- Indicate the materials in columns or list form rather than in paragraph form. This makes it easy to check to make sure you have the needed items.
- List any materials you will need to use at the center, for instance, tables and chairs or a stove.

Procedure:
- Make a broad statement of the expectation of prior knowledge based on the age/developmental stage of the child. Example: “The child will be familiar with the primary colors of red, yellow, and blue.”
- Write up a step-by-step description of how activity is to be conducted—how the adult is to show, discuss, and allow the children to practice the skill and reinforce the child’s prior knowledge.
For readability, use outline form, numbering each separate step. Using outline form makes it easier to revise/modify the lesson (activity) write-up after evaluation.

Steps should include everything you plan to do and in the order you plan on doing it in (but not necessarily in this order):

- How the activity is to begin: how children are attracted, any direction the adult gives.
- How the adult provides any demonstration or description which allows children to perceive what is expected of them.
  - Indicate concepts to be stressed verbally or physically to children.
- How the adult will get children to think about their perception. Include possible questions that can be asked of children. (Questions should be written as they would be asked of children and in the order they would be asked.)
- How adults will support children in participation in the activity. Indicate specific directions/cues to be given to children, if any are needed.
  - Anticipate potential management challenges (ex: behaviors, use of the materials, etc.)
- How and what the adult will reinforce with the children. Indicate specific things adult should comment on about child behavior or about the activity. Remember that most adults tend to use global praise or to focus on children’s inadequacies, and that this should be avoided.
- How activity is to end (i.e., what children are to do who complete or tire early of the project, what adult does with group of children at the end of project). Note: Children need to know the beginning, middle, and end of structured activities. Activities that end on a positive note are more likely to be those that attract attention in the future.
- List opportunities for extension. How does this activity relate to the other curricular areas and activity choices available to children in the classroom?
- Methods of evaluation of objectives- how will you know that the child has met the objectives for the activity? This should NOT be done by testing or quizzing the children! Example: “The child successfully sorted all 12 of the bears into the appropriate canister by primary color with minimal prompts from the teacher.”
- Methods of potentially adjusting this activity for individual needs. How will you allow the children’s learning styles and interests to help guide this activity? How is it flexible?

References:

- List in APA 6th edition format any sources you used in compiling ideas for the lesson plan. This could include books, websites, magazines, etc.
- Why did you choose this activity?

Evaluation: Be sure to leave yourself some space at the end of the lesson plan write-up to evaluate the activity for future planning and reference. This will be done only on CHDV assignments that require activity implementation (i.e. you must actually carry out your plan with children)

- Strengths of Activity (i.e., what worked).
- Weaknesses of Activity (i.e., what did not work).
- What you would change the next time you do the activity.
- Any observations you made of the children. You will fill in this portion during and immediately after your activity with the children.