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COMPONENT: EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: COGNITIVE AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: To provide for the development of each child’s cognitive and language skills; to ensure opportunities for creative self-expression; and to promote interaction and language use among children and between children and adults.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

- Teachers will set up classrooms so that various learning centers are available which provide opportunities for children to learn through experimentation, inquiry, play and exploration. Classroom learning centers will include a “hands on” approach to learning.
- The outdoor environment is an extension of the classroom and art, music and movement, and stories will be made available outdoors when weather permits it.
- Teachers will plan experiences for children to learn the functions and properties of objects, and to classify materials into groups.
- Teachers will offer a variety of experiences, projects, materials, problems, and ideas to extend children’s thinking and to support their interest.
- Teachers will support children’s cognitive development by posing problems, asking thought provoking questions, and making comments and suggestions that stimulate children’s thinking and therefore their learning through extended conversations.
- Teachers will have conversations with children to expand their thinking and learning and to enhance their communication skills and build vocabulary.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for children to acquire knowledge in the areas of social/emotional skills, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science/technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition.
- Teachers will support the exploration of art materials and demonstrate appreciation of each child’s self expression.
- Teachers will ensure that children are provided with opportunities to engage in rhythmic activities, singing, and the use of musical instruments.
- Teachers will ensure that children are encouraged to express their thoughts and emotions through dance and creative movement activities.
- Teachers will ensure that children are provided with time to talk to one another and to ask questions.
- Teachers will ensure that child conversations as well as child-adult conversations are promoted throughout the day.
- Children will be spoken to in a pleasant manner and teachers should speak to children at the child’s eye level.

- Teachers will find opportunities to expand children’s vocabulary throughout the day using such methods as conversation, books, songs, poems, and stories.
- Teachers will ensure that dramatic play activities are available which allow children to act out familiar activities.
- Teachers will model appropriate language use such as complete sentences and correct grammar.
- Teachers will expand on, rather than correct, children’s speech.
- Teachers will read to the children everyday.
- Teachers will engage children in meaningful discussions about the stories read.
- Teachers will ensure that reading and writing materials are available throughout the classroom.
- Teachers will provide stories from different cultures and traditions, including those of the children in the class. Oral storytelling will also be promoted.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for children to reflect upon experiences and to see their own words being written by adults. This is accomplished through shared writings, class created books, etc.
- Teachers will provide children with books and stories with repetitive verses, words, or sounds, or in which the pictures follow the text closely, so that children can relate what they hear and what they see.
- Teachers will help children develop awareness of the sounds of language by using rhymes and by identifying sounds of letters.
- Teachers will help children to see the functional use of print.
- Teachers will provide objects for counting, sequencing games, and one-to-one correspondence toys, as age appropriate.
- Activities will be provided to include ways to encourage literacy and numeracy within the home.
- Teachers will utilize local libraries, museums, and other community resources to plan educational field trips.

CHILD PORTFOLIOS

Teachers will use child portfolios to help determine each individual child’s ability and track progress in the areas of language and literacy. Portfolios should begin as early in the year as possible, but no later than 45 days after entry.

- Teachers will ensure that each child has a portfolio which consists of:
 - Photos of the child/family-Required minimum of three a year.
 - Self portraits- Required minimum of three a year.
 - Art samples-Required minimum of two per month.
 - Writing samples- Required minimum of three a year.
 - Name writing samples- Required minimum of three a year.
 - Dictated stories- Required minimum of three a year.
 - Book and Print Awareness Checklist
- Teachers will be provided with a portfolio storage box, folders and the Portfolio Record Sheets are to be printed prior to classes beginning.
- The Portfolio Record Sheet will be used to ensure that each child’s portfolio is up-to-date.

- Teachers will use the Portfolio Record Sheet to track portfolio items. Teachers will update this record in September, January, and at the end of the year. This form will be submitted at the end of the Year with Closeout.
- The Area Coordinator will track the Portfolio Record Sheet during regular visits to the classroom. Random portfolio reviews will also take place throughout the year.
- Teachers will remove the Book and Print Awareness Checklist prior to releasing portfolio to the Parent.
- Teachers will submit each Book and Print Awareness Checklist to Education Manager with year-end paperwork.
- Teachers will ensure that the portfolio is given to the child's parent during the end of year home visit.