A PRESCHOOL PROGRAM GUIDE

Preschoolers are those children between three years and five years of age. This is a period of intense curiosity where each child is seeking to understand the world around him/her. His/her world expands as s/he begins to relate to other children and adults as s/he is physically more confident in his/her ability to control his/her muscles and as s/he learns to think and express him/herself.

What do we know about preschoolers and the importance of how they develop?

PART 1: WHAT IS A PRESCHOOLER?

Becoming independent: The preschooler's natural pattern of independence is emerging. By necessity, adults assume a great amount of control over the lives of infants. When a child nears the age of two however, s/he begins to seek out more and more opportunities to do things for him/herself. One of the major tasks of adults working with preschool children is to assist the child in beginning to take control of their own self.

The best preschool environment is one in which the child has many opportunities to choose and decide. With an environment of clearly defined limits a child should be able to decide what s/he would like to play, with what rules and equipment, and with whom s/he would like to play.

By giving choices, adults are acknowledging that each child already knows his/her likes and dislikes or preferences. Children who have difficulty making these daily decisions can be given special encouragement and help from adults. A preschool child is still very dependent upon adults to guide and support their emerging independence.

Understanding others: The preschooler is beginning to respect the feelings and rights of others and to cooperate, but cannot understand things from another's point of view. Through repeated encounters and experiences with other children and aided by the explanations and support of adults, the preschool child begins to understand why another child is angry or sad, that items in another child's cubby are to be left alone, or that by cooperating with another child in block clean-up hastens the completions of the task. Even though this understanding of others is emerging, it is important to remember that preschool children see things only from their point of view and cannot understand the reason or motive behind another's behavior. Cooperation and sharing in children are not fully developed until school age.

Disputes among children are excellent opportunities for adults to guide them in seeing the viewpoints of others. Adults can help with disputes by facilitating the exchange of viewpoints so that children can resolve their own conflicts. Separating children who are arguing only deprives them of learning about social relations.

By restraining the children, calming them down, and saying, "What do you think you should do?", the adult can help the children express their points of view, listen to others, and find a solution on their own. By facilitating a dispute in this way, the adult shows that

s/he values the ideas and desires of the children. For children to respect the rights and feelings of others, they must experience honesty and respect from the adults close to them.

Thinking and Expressing: The preschooler is developing the ability to form a mental symbol where a word or an object stands for something that is not present. For example, a block can be a truck. The ability to express themselves is rapidly expanding.

The preschooler's understanding of mental symbols relates at this stage to role playing, naming objects or pretending something is an object. The relationship is concrete; that is, it represents something the child understands or already knows. Naming symbols such as letters and numbers has very little meaning to the preschooler. Rote memory of letter and number sequences is possible, but is of little or no value because the child has no knowledge of what those symbols represent.

As the preschooler's vocabulary increases, s/he puts words to a variety of uses —to entertain him/herself, to recall the past, to clarify his/her thoughts, and to communicate with others. Much of the young preschool child's language is spoken just for the sake of practicing words. It is not intended to communicate or share ideas. Adults working with preschool children frequently see several children happily playing in the dramatic play area and talking simultaneously about completely unrelated subjects. Often children use words to accompany actions, as the child who is heard to chant "jumping, jumping, jumping" in rhythm while jumping rope. As a child develops his/her knowledge and practices social skills, his/her ability to use language as a tool for sharing ideas and negotiating with others improves.

Children understand much more language than they speak at this age. Adults should realize that a child learns language by hearing language. As models, therefore, they should provide children with simple language that fits what the children are interested in at the moment. A child is more likely to use the language an adult provides if it applies directly and concretely to what s/he is doing.

Exploring and discovering: Preschoolers are alert and curious.
The preschool child requires an environment rich in objects which encourage manipulation and experimentation. S/he needs to be given the freedom and time to explore these objects. Children who are encouraged to pursue their own curiosities will become eager and active thinkers. Exposure to a wide variety of people, places, and things helps the child to build a broad foundation of knowledge s/he will use later. Adults can ask questions or offer suggestions that encourage the preschooler to explore further, remembering that the investigative process at this age is more important than the solution; the process is more important than the product.

In the process of exploring, a child may come up with "incorrect" answers. The role of the teacher is not to correct the answer, but rather, question the child to find out how s/he arrived at hi/hers answer or provide opportunities for the child to build on the concepts s/he has already formed. A child who has come up with an "incorrect" answer through

experimentation will be able to adjust and correct his/her knowledge through experimentation. It is important that children enjoy the pursuit of knowledge.

Developing muscle control: The preschooler is gaining control of his/her muscles and feeling more confident about his/her ability.

The young child's movements are deliberate and often unsteady. Older children, through muscle development and practice, are much more skilled at running, climbing, hopping, and balancing.

Small muscle control also needs time to develop. A two year old child finds a simple puzzle of two or three geometric shapes a challenge. His/her attempts at drawing result in a page filled with scribbles. By the time a child is four or five years old, s/he has mastered many complex actions. S/he can fit manipulative toys together and build complicated structures. His/her drawings have become much more representational.

The role of adults is to be alert to the signs of readiness for more complex actions and provide the child with opportunities to explore and practice movement.

PART 2: THE PRESCHOOL ENVIRONMENT ROOM ARRANGEMENT

Everything in the classroom environment communicates to children. Therefore, the way furniture and equipment are arranged in each classroom helps the children to know what to do and what not to do, e.g., to read quietly in the corner where soft pillows, a low canopy and a cool colored rug are invitingly arranged, hang up his coat where a hook is displayed or put blocks away where the same size pattern outline is taped on the shelf. The arrangement can help children know where to find supplies and equipment, e.g., all art supplies are together on a shelf, sand toys are in the sand box. The arrangement can help prevent behavior problems, e.g., several of the same toys can be available to reduce arguments about waiting, a limited number of chairs can be placed around a table to give each child ample room to work on his/her project. A variety of choices will assure that the children will not become easily bored.

Children respond to all messages the environment gives them. The adult may be trying to impose a rule about walking in the classroom while the slick expanse of floor in the center of the room is inviting the children to run and slide. Improvement in the children's use of materials in that situation might require a reorganization of the physical environment rather than improvement in adult enforcement of a rule.

The importance of careful planning cannot be over—emphasized. Many problems such as overactive or disinterested children, high noise level, over—use of teacher directed activities, large amounts of adult time spent limiting and redirecting children and tired, irritable adults are often related to the way an environment is set up.

The following tips should be considered when arranging the environment.

1 Quiet and noisy activities should be separate so one does not disturb the other.

2 A variety of materials, well spaced on open shelves should be available for children.
3 Some materials should be stored in individual containers so that children can use them alone.
4 Activity centers should be well defined so that children know where to use the materials.
5 Materials should be in good condition with all pieces intact so children will be encouraged to maintain the equipment.
6 Ample work spaces should be available, e.g., group and individual tables, defined floor space, rugs, etc.
7 Enough equipment should be available so that children do not always have to wait.
8 Clean up of toys should be easy and well defined, e.g., large tubs or baskets for one kind of material, shapes drawn on shelves to indicate where brushes and scissors should be returned.
9 Shelves should be neat, orderly, and uncluttered and should contain similar types of equipment.
10 Traffic patterns should be considered. Cubbies, shelves, and other furniture should direct traffic around the activity areas.
11 The room should include places where a child can be alone, e.g., carpet box, quiet area, individual table.
12 The classroom environment should be evaluated daily and planned changes implemented, e.g., broken toys repaired, classroom problems evaluated, and materials rotated. Many problems can be corrected if adults are sensitive to environmental cues.
13 Children arguing over toys. There may not be enough activities and equipment available or often the equipment lacks sufficient complexity. For example, if children are fighting over tricycles, often the answer is not to get more tricycles, but to provide variety in the type of wheel toy and props to go with them. Have some tricycles with rear seats and some with wagons that hook on, traffic signs, and gasoline pumps and perhaps some blocks that can be piled on the wagons, then this activity can absorb far more children without having them fight over the use of the tricycle itself.
14 Some can be riding, some directing traffic, some hooking on wagons, and some piling on blocks. The resulting play will have a richness of theme seldom seen where only simple tricycles are provided.
15 Children not becoming involved. When children cannot find something to do or are bored with an activity, the problem often can be solved by increasing the complexity of play units, thus adding novelty and providing more focus. If play dough has been out for a long time, bringing in buttons and toothpicks will add to its interest.
16 If an activity area is not well protected children will move through it from one activity to another. This traffic will disrupt and discourage the children playing in this area.
17 Children becoming over-active by the end of the morning. One solution provides for increased softness. For example, having children take their shoes off before

lunchtime is a way of letting them wind down and of letting them know there is a different part of the day coming. After the usual end of the morning cleaning-up and washing—up, each adult can take her children into a quiet enclosed area with a rug and pillows and have a nice intimate time together --talking or reading stories. The children may lounge on the pillows and relax before lunch and naptime.

ACTIVITY AREAS

When planning the preschool environment and program, adults make decisions about what equipment to use, what activities to plan and how to meet each individual child's needs. It is imperative that adults involved in the planning understand each child's ability and what appropriate expectations for each age are. The following charts, organized by activity area, show the basic developmental sequence children follow. Generally, beginning three year old stages must be mastered and well developed before a child can move to the next stage. For example, in language a child must understand the names for things and be able to convey simple ideas before he can express his feelings about something or tell a story about a picture. Activity planning in sequence is important in order to give each child a firm foundation upon which new skills can be built.

LANGUAGE

3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

*Uses short sentences
*Listens to stories
*Makes up stories
*Interprets pictures
*Relates personal to express simple
*"Reads" pictures containing experiences and/or activity using descriptive words.

1 Uses plurals
2 Names objects
3 Expresses feelings
4 Sees differences
5 Answers questions
6 Recites short similarities
7 Tells about verses from in pictures
8 Understands yesterday
9 Gives information from memory about today and can remember activities that will happen tomorrow
10 Can identify pictures
11 Repeats
12 Sings songs
13 Personal stories have meaning or proper sequence
14 Conveys simple ideas from pictures
15 Speaks clearly to a group
16 Can tell a story with a beginning, middle and end
17 Asks meaning of words
18 Asks many questions

19 Confuses facts and fantasy
20 Describes what, where, who
21 Can use puppets to act out story

DRAMATIC PLAY
3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

Acts out simple stories by self	**Acts out simple stories with others**	**Acts out experiences or stories in cooperation with others**
❖ uses nonverbal interactions with other children ❖ sings short snatches of songs ❖ uses toys and objects as props role plays familiar people and animals (e.g., Mom and dog) ❖ imitates body postures	❖ uses verbal interactions with other children but others' ideas don't change the story ❖ uses objects to represent something (e.g., block for truck) ❖ role plays specific situations ❖ uses puppets ❖ continues play from day to day	❖ cooperative story development —both children's ideas determine story content ❖ mixes fantasy and fact ❖ demonstrates the meaning of words through pantomime ❖ needs more variety of props ❖ can participate in simple structured performances (plays or puppet shows)

ART
3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

Makes curved, diagonal scribbles, but is gaining control; begins to draw cross and circle	**Enjoys exploring tactile materials**	**Draws basic human figure (head, body, arms legs); traces shapes**	**Uses a variety of materials to construct a picture or sculpture; though unrecognizable, has meaning to child**	**Draws and sculpts recognizable things; can tell a story about a picture**
❖ Uses large pencils, chalk and crayons ❖ Colors have no meaning ❖ Can relate meaning of drawing when asked ❖ Copies circle but often	❖ Likes using finger paints, paper, fabrics, glue, and sand ❖ Process of exploration of material is important ❖ Product has little meaning to the	❖ Uses small pencils and crayons ❖ Child begins to have favorite colors but color representation is not realistic ❖ Drawings	❖ Uses paste and glue ❖ Combines materials (e.g., fabric and paint) ❖ Pictures have meaning; child tells story ❖ Able to do simple	❖ Draws house ❖ Color use becoming realistic ❖ Folds paper ❖ Prints name and numbers ❖ Product is becoming more

is not closed ❖ Paints using large brush	child	still unrecognizable ❖ Traces circle, square, rectangle, triangle, and diamond ❖ Uses scissors, cuts on line	lacing ❖ Process of exploration is still more important than the product .	important to child

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

Begins experimenting with balancing and hand-eye coordination	**Continues improving balance and hand-eye coordination; gains strength and control**	**Beginning to master balance, hand eye coordination; using strength and control, combines several physical tasks**
❖ runs ❖ jumps/hops with both feet ❖ walks up and down stairs ❖ balance on one foot ❖ walks on tiptoes ❖ throws ball	❖ rides tricycle ❖ climbs ladder ❖ catches ball ❖ hops on one foot ❖ somersaults ❖ skips ❖ balances on walking beam	❖ jumps rope ❖ roller skates ❖ rides two wheel bike .

CONSTRUCTION
3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

Puts simple things together not requiring much skill	**Builds simple things showing some imagination**	**Builds more complicated, multi-unit structures related to function in life**

❖ Builds towers - six to eight blocks ❖ Likes mud and sand ❖ Assembles 3-4 pieces of manipulatives (large Legos, bristle blocks)	❖ Combines toys and props with sand, water, and mud ❖ Builds bridges ❖ Uses four blocks to enclose space ❖ Assembles 8—15 pieces of manipulatives ❖ Hammers nails into soft material ❖ Construction is representational ❖ Tells story about structure ❖ Uses construction as props for dramatic play	❖ Builds multi—unit structures (space, farm, prehistoric, city settings) ❖ Uses other props to elaborate ❖ Prolongs dramatic play using construction props ❖ Relates experiences through construction projects ——facts and fantasy ❖ Uses hammer, saw, simple drill and screw driver ❖ Takes things apart (e.g., small appliances)

REASONING
3 YEARS

Classification: compares size	**One-to-one correspondence to four**	**Classification: compares shape, color, and detail**
❖ Compares big and little	❖ Counts touching objects ❖ Matches similar items such as cups to saucers	❖ Describes some properties using texture, shape, weight, and size ❖ Is interested in similarities and differences ❖ Matches similar items ❖ Sorts and groups similar items

REASON ING
4 YEARS

Knows simple relative concepts: weight, light, and distance	**Uses prepositions such as over, under, in, and between**	**Persists in problem solving 15 minutes**	**One-to-one correspondence to ten**
❖ Knows some opposites (open/close) ❖ Begins ordering by size (three items),	❖ Understands using own body ❖ Understands with toys or objects	❖ Performs a variety of actions on an unfamiliar object (stretching, folding, cutting, taping, etc.)	❖ Counts touching object ❖ Matches ten similar items such as cars to

smallest to largest ❖ Orders by volume (three items) empty to full ❖ Orders by color (three items), shades from light to dark ❖ Orders by texture (three items), softest to hardest ❖ Orders by quantity (three items), more or fewer		❖ Enjoys experimenting with cause and effect	garages

REASONING
5 YEARS

Knows more complex relative concepts	**Can identify and repeat patterns**	**Can count using number names**	**Recognizes number symbols; knows names**	**Can do simple adding and subtracting, estimating**
❖ Tells what objects are made of wood, plastic, metal, etc. ❖ Orders ten items by size, volume, shades of color, quantity ❖ Knows opposites ❖ Sees differences in pictures or objects ❖ Sequences time related pictures	❖ Matches bead patterns from card ❖ Repeats clapping patterns ❖ Identifies a pattern through observation	❖ Counts one to ten ❖ in sequence ❖ Counts ten to one backwards Knows which number ❖ comes before or ❖ after another number	❖ Recognizes number symbols ❖ Matches number symbol with number name	❖ Solves simple addition and subtraction using objects ❖ Begins estimating numbers of items

MANIPULATIVES
3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

Puts simple things together using larger objects and few pieces.	**Puts simple things together using more pieces and smaller objects; shows some**	**Constructs more complicated, representational structures.**

imagination.		
❖ Completes simple puzzles without knobs (5—7 pieces) ❖ Connects three to four manipulative pieces (e.g., large Legos, Tinker Toys) ❖ Begins to sort simple shapes (e.g., circle, square, triangle) ❖ Strings large beads	❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖	❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

SELF HELP/GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS
3 YEARS 4 YEARS

Controls bladder and bowels feeds self dresses self	Plays alongside; others, borrows, and lends materials but play is not goal directed	Becoming independent, needs less adult assistance	Experiments on own without teacher direction	Plays cooperatively with others
❖ Uses toilet alone ❖ Puts on shoes ❖ Does not button, zip, snap, lace ❖ Uses spoon effectively ❖ Washes hands ❖ Brushes teeth ❖ Pours from pitcher	❖ Interacts non- verbally with other children ❖ Puts toys away when asked ❖ Understands simple rules ❖ Brings “treasures” to show	❖ Asks for help when appropriate ❖ Continues activity without constant assurance ❖ Separates from parent without fuss ❖ Shares teacher’s attention ❖ Knows body parts ❖ Knows age	❖ Shows satisfaction when task is completed ❖ Uses a variety of approaches to problem solving ❖ Takes time to think before making decisions .	❖ Takes turns ❖ Shares willingly ❖ Stands up for own rights ❖ Understands rules ❖ Accepts others’ ideas and direction in play ❖ Knows names of others

SELF HELP/GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS
5 YEARS

Takes responsibility for self care, contributes to group maintenance tasks	Begins to understand other points of view	Makes decisions based on knowledge of right and wrong and safety
❖ Dresses self; laces, zips, buttons, snaps ❖ Combs hair ❖ Ties shoes ❖ Helps with group clean up ❖ Sets table ❖ Cuts with knife ❖ Knows phone number ❖ Persists until task is completed	❖ Connects feelings and behaviors ❖ Respects other's property ❖ Accepts blame when at fault ❖ Offers to help ❖ Shares and plays cooperatively for long periods of time ❖ Friends are important	❖ Knows address ❖ Can dial phone number ❖ Can decide what to do without being told

ADULT ROLE IN CLASSROOM

The relationships that develop between the adults and children in the group care setting are important factors which influence a child's learning. Keep in mind that honesty and respect are essential to the formation of positive adult/child relationships.

Honesty goes beyond simply being truthful with a child. Honesty means supplying the child with information which is straight forward, understandable, and reflects your real feelings. Honest information is not designed to trick the child into complying with your wishes. Preschool children do not understand teasing and sarcasm. Adult statements are usually taken literally.

Respect in preschool refers to the value adults place on the child, his/her actions, emotions, home, and family environment. By allowing the child to choose from a variety of activities, adults give the message that they respect or value the child's ability to choose what is right for him/her. By holding a sad child and allowing him/her to be sad, the adult gives the child the positive message that it is all right to cry. A homelike environment that includes furnishings, music, and language that are familiar to the child helps him/her to realize that his culture and way of life are respected by and important to others also.

Centers in which there are positive adult-child relationships are characterized by:
o children who feel secure in their environment
o children who have confidence in their abilities to explore and find answers to their questions
o children who are developing their ability to communicate with each other as well as

adults
o adults who have the opportunity to spend time with individuals and small groups of children
o adults who are happy and enjoy their jobs.

There are four types of adult behavior which promote healthy intellectual and social development. These are encouragement, guidance, restriction, and neutral behavior.

Encouragement is that teacher behavior which facilitates the child's expression of his ideas and helps the child to expand self-initiated ideas. Questions like:

1 Do you see anyone else in the class with blue tennis shoes?
2 Can you get enough straws for everyone at the table?
3 What other things in the room can you find that are soft?
4 How did you do that? Can you show Susan?

cause the child to think about the properties of objects, form relationships, develop concepts about number, and communicate his ideas.

Adults are often guilty of squelching a child's initiative and interest in activities through behavior and language like, "Let me make that look better for you," "You know if you take out all the blocks, you will have to put them back," or, "Be careful with the paint; if you make a mess, you will have to clean it up." Remember, the preschool child is interested in starting and doing; those interested in results and finishing are adults.

Some guides for encouraging children are:

1 Set up the activity so that the directions are obvious and children can do the activity without constant direction or help from an adult. Check in frequently to make sure the activity is going smoothly.
2 Be flexible in how you work in the learning center. You may stand to the side and watch; sit down with the children in the center and talk with them; or actively participate without taking over the activity from the children.
3 Let children explore and play freely. This means that it is all right for children to get dirty, to make a mess with the blocks, or to paint on their arms and faces.
4 Let children play alone or do nothing but watch others if that is what they choose to do.
5 Allow children to make mistakes and to correct their mistakes. By making mistakes and correcting their mistakes, they are learning. If a child is so frustrated by his/her error that s/he gets angry and leaves the task, the teacher may step in and guide him/her through the task again so that s/he succeeds.
6 Allow children to play with the same toy over and over or to repeat an activity. Children learn through repetition.

Guidance is that teacher behavior and language that leads or directs children in their construction of social and physical knowledge. Through guidance, adults offer children "tools" they can use to move to more complex learning and behavior.

Children learn social skills (how to act) from people. During the preschool day, adults have many opportunities to guide a child's behavior by suggesting actions or words the child can use. When an adult sees a problem between two children that is not an immediate safety hazard, s/he should hesitate to interrupt until s/he is certain the children cannot solve the problem themselves. When s/he decides to help the children, s/he should guide the child in the solution by helping him/her to express his/her needs and to understand the needs of the other child.

Restriction is adult language and behavior which makes it clear to a child, without damaging his/her self-esteem, that there are limits which must be respected. Cooperating and respecting with the necessary limits in a preschool can be an important step in the foundation of a child's development of internal control and moral judgment. Sometimes a teacher must set an arbitrary limit --such as a time or a turn limit-- for making toys available fairly.

But whenever a teacher establishes such a limit, he/she must take two steps:

1 Explain clearly to the children what the problem is and why you are setting a limit. State the limit clearly.
2 Whenever possible, let the children help by involving them in maintaining or enforcing the limit.
If you, the adult, have set out four chairs at a small table activity and find there are ten children asking to participate in this activity, you have a problem. You could have avoided the problem by providing more tables, chairs, and materials during your set up of the room if space allowed, but now that the children are here ready to begin, it is too late. You must limit the number of children who can participate.

Do explain the problem to the children. Say, "Only four chairs will fit at this table and I don't have enough supplies to set up another table. I can let only four children paste at one time." You might also consider simply stating the problem and then letting the children decide how to solve it.
Keeping a waiting list is a helpful way to involve the child in maintaining limits. With a waiting list, the child who leaves the activity must find the person next on the list and let that child know it is now his turn. Waiting lists work best when you don't want to limit the time allowed each child at an activity, such as painting or cooking.

Remember to establish limits only when they are absolutely necessary to keep order. Whenever possible, set up the environment so that limits are unnecessary. For example: store materials in an area that is totally blocked off so that children cannot reach them or climb up to them. With well-planned storage, you don't need a limit.

Neutral adult behavior results in exchange of information or expression of opinion and is characterized by equality. It is not the intent of neutral behavior to influence the child or cause him/her to change his/her mind.
Examples of neutral behavior and language are:

1. those times when an adult and child can just sit and visit, freely communicating about whatever comes to mind.
2. the times when adults supply children with the language that accompanies their actions. “You are making a wide deep river there in the sand,” “That tower of blocks is almost as high as you are.”
3. when adults support but do not try to change a child’s emotions, as by providing a soft lap to sit on for a child who has bumped his head on a hard door knob.
4. when adults help a child clarify his/her emotions by sharing his/her feelings with the child. For instance, the adult who says, “I know you are terribly sad because your mother left for work. Sometimes saying goodbye to someone I love makes me cry, too.”

PART 3: ROUTINES

Routines are daily living experiences related to body needs and center maintenance. Some routines like lunch, rest time, and general clean up involve all the adults and children at the same time. Other routines, like toileting, dressing, and spot clean up, involve individual children and adults throughout the day.

Children should be involved in routines as these activities affect their lives and comfort. By visiting during meals and encouraging a child to find a friend to help put the blocks away, an adult is offering real life experiences in language and social development. Opportunities for adults to guide the child’s construction of number concepts, make comparisons, observe similarities and differences, and develop communication skills are plentiful in daily routine activities.

Arrivals and Departures: Hello’s and goodbye’s are an important part of the day. How a child is welcomed home from school or greeted in the morning may set the stage for the day or activity period. Arrivals and departures can be times for sharing dreams, last evening’s visitor, weekend plans and family events. They are bridges that help a child cross over safely from home to center, to school, and back again.

Consult the health manual for the daily health screening routine.

Mealtime: Adults should announce mealtime to the children before a meal is to be served and help them get ready to sit down and eat. Thought should be given to the set up, serving, and clean up needs of the meal in order to have a calm, pleasant mealtime experience. Children can set their section of the table if stacks of plates and silverware are available. Disposable cloths and soapy water placed near the table before the meal will simplify spill clean up during meals. Each child should be responsible for his/her own meal clean-up.

Mealtimes that are most pleasant and offer children the chance for social exchange and concept development are those in which children eat in small family groups and have chances to:

1. set the table
2. serve themselves
3. visit with friends

4 expand their food preferences
5 observe similarities and differences in food texture, temperature, and taste
6 help with after meal clean up

SPECIFICS OF THE FEEDING PROGRAM FOR CHILD CARE

Well-balanced meals including a variety of well-prepared and served foods will provide a base for developing positive attitudes toward food. However, food is only one part of the mealtime experience, routines before and after meals are also important.

Menu Standards

1 Meals and snacks will contain as a minimum, food components in the amounts indicated in the Child Care Food Program requirements for different age groups.
2 Menu plans will take in account the ethnic, cultural, and individual preference.
3 Food served will have variety in form, size and shape, color, texture, and flavor.
4 Food purchased and prepared will promote the reduction of salt, sugar, and fats and the increase of whole unprocessed foods.

Mealtime

All food service will encourage favorable food attitudes and good eating habits in the following ways:

1 Use a bright, attractive, well—ventilated, and comfortable room for serving meals.
2 Have a physical setting ——tables, chairs, dishes, glasses, silverware, and serving utensils-- suited to young children.
3 Provide a quiet time just before meals so that the atmosphere can be friendly and relaxed at meal time.
4 Avoid delays in mealtime so the children will not have to sit and wait.
5 Set a good example. Young children sense adult attitudes toward food.
6 At the table, create an atmosphere of acceptance and respect for each child as an individual so that the meal will be both nutritionally and emotionally satisfying.
7 Serve foods family style. An adult should eat at the table with the children.
8 Arrange foods on plates to make meals interesting and attractive from the standpoint of color, texture, flavor, and temperature, as well as nutritious.
9 Give small servings and allow second servings if desired.
10 Permit children to make some food choices and recognize when their food needs have been satisfied.
11 Temperature extremes are unpleasant to most young children. Usually a child does not object to his food being lukewarm. Beverages are often more pleasing to a child when served at room temperature, rather than ice cold or piping hot.
12 De-emphasize the clean plate idea. A child may rebel if forced to eat unwanted food.
13 Do not let children use food to gain attention --for example, by refusing to eat or by making special demands.

Rest/Nap: Each child should be given the opportunity to rest. Resting can be done in

several ways. Some children will fall asleep; others will lie on their mats wide awake but quiet; and some older children prefer to rest while doing a quiet activity on their mats. Teachers need to observe each child and help him/her rest in the style most suited to individual needs. Allow each child to participate in the set up and clean up by taking responsibility for his/her own mat or cot.
Clean-up: Clean up times apply to the group, as when the room is readied for lunch or rest, and to the individual, as when a child uses a disposable cloth to wipe up spilled milk. Children have not developed an adult sense of order.

The following suggestions are offered to help manage clean up.

1 Have clear, realistic expectations. Preschool children can and will develop the routine of putting all the Lego pieces into a plastic tub or bag, but should not be expected to replace the pieces into the slots in the original packing container.
2 Be watchful. If you catch the child as he is about to leave one activity, you can assist him/her with quick, simple clean up. Eventually, most children will develop the habit of putting things back when they finish using them.
3 Do not interrupt a child who is involved in an activity and force him/her to leave what s/he is doing to put away something s/he left out.
4 Evaluate individual situations. For example, if two children are playing together in the block area and one is ready to leave, it makes no sense to have the child who is leaving put away half of the blocks because s/he would be taking away half of the blocks the remaining child is still using.
5 Set up learning centers so that order can be maintained with a minimum of effort.
6 Always be appreciative of a child's clean up efforts even though they may not meet your adult standards.

Daily Schedule: A balanced schedule that incorporates daily living routines and meets the child's varying energy levels is essential. Well-functioning daily schedules are those that:

1 provide long blocks of time for activities
2 provide a balance of inside and outside time
3 provide opportunities for children to learn individually as well as in small mixed-age and developmental—level groups
4 Involve the child in daily living routines which affect him/her.

ENVIRONMENT AND ACTIVITY PLANNING WORKSHEET
PRESCHOOL
NAME OF ROOM
SELF-HELP

ACTIVITY AREAS	SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT FOCUS	ACTIVITIES REQUIRING NEW MATERIALS SPECIAL ADULT GUIDANCE AVAILABLE OR OBSERVATION	CHILDREN TO INVITE TO ACTIVITY BASED ON ASSESS- MENT TOOL OR OBSERVATION
LANGUAGE			
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT			
CONSTRUCTION			
ART			
REASONING, DISCOVERY, EXPERIMENTS			
MANIPULATIVES			
DRAMATIC PLAY			

LANGUAGE
3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

Uses short sentences to express simple ideas	Listens to stories	Makes up stories “Reads” pictures	Interprets pictures containing several ideas	Relates personal experiences using descriptive words

❖ Uses plurals ❖ Answers questions ❖ Gives information ❖ Repeats ❖ Conveys simple ideas ❖ Asks many questions -- what, where, who	❖ Names objects in pictures ❖ Tells about action in pictures	❖ Expresses feelings ❖ Recites short verses from memory ❖ Sings songs ❖ Speaks clearly	❖ Sees differences and similarities in pictures ❖ Can identify missing objects from picture or group ❖ Asks meaning of words	❖ Uses connected sentences ❖ Understands yesterday, today, and tomorrow ❖ Personal stories have proper sequence; beginning, middle, and end ❖ Confuses facts and fantasy ❖ Can use puppets to act out story

DRAMATIC PLAY
3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

Acts out simple stories by self	Acts out simple stories with others	Acts out in experiences or stories cooperation with others
❖ uses nonverbal interactions with other children ❖ sings short snatches of songs ❖ uses toys and objects as props role plays familiar people and animals (e.g., Mom and dog) ❖ imitates body postures	❖ uses verbal interactions with other children but others' ideas don't change the story ❖ uses objects to represent something (e.g., block for truck) ❖ role plays specific situations ❖ uses puppets ❖ continues play from day to day	❖ cooperative story development --both children's ideas determine story content ❖ . mixes fantasy and fact demonstrates the meaning of words through pantomime ❖ needs more variety of props ❖ can participate in simple structured performances (plays or puppet shows)

ART

3 YEARS	4 YEARS	5 YEARS		
Makes curved, diagonal scribbles, but is gaining control; begins to draw cross and circle	**Enjoys exploring tactile materials**	**Draws basic human figure (head, body, arms legs); traces shapes**	**Uses a variety of materials to construct a picture or sculpture; though unrecognizable, has meaning to child**	**Draws and sculpts recognizable things; can tell a story about a picture**
❖ Uses large pencils, chalk and crayons ❖ Colors have no meaning ❖ Can relate meaning of drawing when asked ❖ Copies circle but often is not closed ❖ Paints using large brush	❖ Likes using finger— paints, paper, fabrics, glue, shaving, cream, and sand ❖ Process of exploration of material is important ❖ Product has little meaning to the child	❖ Uses small pencils and crayons ❖ Child begins to have favorite colors but color representation is not realistic ❖ Drawings still unrecognizable ❖ Traces circle, square, rectangle, triangle, and diamond ❖ Uses scissors, cuts on line	❖ Uses paste and glue ❖ Combines materials (e.g., fabric and paint) ❖ Pictures have meaning; child tells story ❖ Able to do simple lacing ❖ Process of exploration is still more important than the product	❖ Draws house ❖ Color use becoming realistic ❖ Folds paper ❖ Prints name and numbers ❖ Product is becoming more important to child

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

3 YEARS	4 YEARS	5 YEARS
Begins experimenting with balancing and hand-eye	**Continues improving balance and**	**Beginning to master balance, hand-eye coordination; using**

coordination	hand—eye coordination; gains strength and control	strength and control, combines several physical tasks
❖ runs ❖ jumps/hops with both feet ❖ walks up and down stairs ❖ balance on one foot ❖ walks on tiptoes ❖ throws ball	❖ rides tricycle ❖ climbs ladder ❖ catches ball ❖ hops on one foot ❖ somersaults ❖ skips ❖ balances on walking beam	❖ jumps rope ❖ roller skates ❖ rides two wheel bike

CONSTRUCTION
3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

Puts simple things together not requiring much skill	Builds simple things showing some imagination	Builds more complicated, multi-unit structures related to function in life
❖ Builds towers - six to eight blocks ❖ Likes mud and sand ❖ Assembles 3-4 pieces of manipulatives (large Legos, bristle blocks)	❖ Combines toys and props with sand, water, and mud ❖ Builds bridges ❖ Uses four blocks to enclose space ❖ Assembles 8—15 pieces of manipulatives ❖ Hammers nails into soft material ❖ Construction is representational ❖ Tells story about structure ❖ Uses construction as props for dramatic play	❖ Builds multi-unit structures (space, farm, prehistoric, city settings) ❖ Uses other props to elaborate ❖ Prolongs dramatic play using construction props ❖ Relates experiences through construction projects - facts and fantasy ❖ Uses hammer, saw, simple drill and screw driver ❖ Takes things apart (e.g., small appliances)

REASONING
3 YEARS

Classification: compares size	One—to-one correspondence to four	Classification: compares shape, color, and detail
❖ Compares big and little	❖ Counts touching items ❖ Matches similar objects such as cups to saucers	❖ Describes some properties using texture, shape, weight, and size ❖ Is interested in similarities and differences ❖ Matches similar items ❖ Sorts and groups similar items

REASONING
4 YEARS

Knows simple relative concepts: weight, light, and distance	Uses prepositions such as over, under between and in	Persists in problem solving 15 minutes	One-to-one to ten correspondence
❖🗁 Knows some opposites (open/close) ❖🗎 Begins ordering by size (three items), smallest to largest ❖🗏 Orders by volume (three items) empty to full ❖🗐 Orders by color (three items), shades from light to dark ❖🗄 Orders by texture (three items), softest to hardest ❖⌛ Orders by quantity (three items), more or fewer	❖ ❖	❖ ❖	❖ ❖

REASONING
5 YEARS

Knows more complex relative concepts	Can identify and repeat patterns	Can count using number names	Recognizes number symbols; knows names	Can do simple estimating, adding and subtracting

❖ Tells what objects are made of wood, plastic, metal, etc. ❖ Orders ten items by size, volume, shades of color, quantity ❖ Knows opposites ❖ Sees differences in pictures or objects ❖ Sequences time relate pictures	❖ Matches bead patterns from card ❖ Repeats clapping patterns ❖ Identifies a pattern through observation	❖ Counts one to ten in sequence ❖ Counts ten to one backwards ❖ Knows which number comes before or after another number	❖ Recognizes number symbols ❖ Matches number symbol with number name	❖ Solves simple addition and subtraction using objects ❖ Begins estimating numbers of items

MANIPULATIVES

3 YEARS 4 YEARS 5 YEARS

Puts simple things together using larger objects and few pieces	**Puts simple things together using more pieces and smaller objects; shows some imagination**	**Constructs more complicated, representational structures**
❖ Completes simple puzzles without knobs (5—7 pieces) ❖ Connects three to four manipulative pieces (e.g., large Legos, Tinker Toys) ❖ Begins to sort simple shapes (e.g., circle, square, triangle) ❖ Strings large beads	❖ Completes puzzles with eight to fifteen pieces ❖ Uses scissors, cuts on line ❖ Follows pattern when stringing beads ❖ Sorts shapes ❖ Tells story about structure	❖ Completes puzzles with 16-30 pieces ❖ Can follow pattern ❖ Can follow simple construction directions ❖ Uses key to unlock ❖ Uses scissors, cuts on curve ❖ Developing control of fine muscle movements

SELF HELP/GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS

3 YEARS 4 YEARS

Controls bladder and bowels; feeds self; dresses self	**Plays alongside others, borrows, and lands materials but play is not goal directed**	**Becoming independent, needs less adult assistance**	**Experiments on own without teacher direction**	**Plays cooperatively with others**

❖ Uses toilet alone ❖ Puts on shoes ❖ Does not button, zip, snap, lace ❖ Uses spoon effectively ❖ Washes hands ❖ Brushes teeth ❖ Pours from pitcher	❖ Interacts non— verbally with other children ❖ Puts toys away when asked ❖ Understands simple rules ❖ Brings "treasures" to show	❖ Asks for help when appropriate ❖ Continues activity without constant assurance ❖ Separates from parent without fuss ❖ Share's teacher's attention ❖ Knows body parts ❖ Knows age	❖ Shows satisfaction when task is completed ❖ Uses a variety of approaches to problem solving ❖ Takes time to think before making decisions	❖ Takes turns ❖ Shares willingly ❖ Stands up for own rights ❖ Understands rules ❖ Accepts others' ideas and direction in play ❖ Knows names of others

SELF HELP/GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS
5 YEARS

Takes responsibility for self care, contributes to group maintenance tasks	Begins to understand other points of view	Makes decisions based on knowledge of right and wrong and safety
❖ Dresses self; laces, zips, buttons, snaps ❖ Combs hair ❖ Ties shoes ❖ Helps with group clean up ❖ Sets table ❖ Cuts with knife ❖ Knows phone number ❖ Persists until task is completed	❖ Connects feelings and behaviors ❖ Respects for other's property ❖ Accepts blame when at fault ❖ Offers to help ❖ Shares and plays cooperatively long periods of time ❖ Friends are	❖ Knows address ❖ Can dial phone number ❖ Can decide what to do without being told

	important	