**TODDLER THEME 1 – All About Me**

**Week 2: Senses**

**Flourishing Teachers, Thriving Classrooms** (only 1 time per theme)

**Classroom Expectations**

**Picture:** Use what is in prototype please

**Manuscript:**

**Use Positive Reinforcement**

Encouraging and praising toddlers when they follow rules or meet expectations is a powerful way to promote positive behavior and create a supportive atmosphere.

By recognizing their efforts and accomplishments, you help build their confidence, foster self-esteem, and strengthen their understanding of appropriate actions.

Positive reinforcement can take many forms, such as verbal praise, smiles, clapping, or small rewards like stickers. Consistently acknowledging their good behavior helps toddlers associate their actions with positive outcomes, making them more likely to repeat those actions in the future.

**Teacher Self-Care**

**Picture:** Use what is in prototype please

**Manuscript:**

**Practice Deep Breathing**

Deep breathing exercises are rooted in modern neuroscience. Here’s what happens when you breathe deeply:

**Stress Reduction:** Activates the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), counteracting the “fight-or-flight” response triggered by stress.

**Calms the Nervous System:** Slows your heart rate and lowers blood pressure, fostering a sense of calm and balance.

**Enhances Focus and Clarity:** Delivers more oxygen to the brain, improving cognitive function and decision-making.

**Supports Emotional Regulation:** Helps manage overwhelming emotions by grounding you in the present moment.

**Assessment Tips**

**Picture:** Use what is in prototype please

**Manuscript:**

**Observe During Play**

Play is a child’s primary way of exploring the world, learning, and expressing themselves. It is also when they are most likely to display authentic behaviors.

**Capturing Authentic Behavior:** Play reflects a toddler’s interests, problem-solving strategies, and natural tendencies, offering a genuine look at their abilities.

**Identifying Developmental Milestones:** Observations can reveal where a child stands in areas like physical development, language acquisition, social interaction, and emotional regulation.

**Spotting Areas for Growth:** Recognizing potential delays

or challenges allows caregivers to provide targeted support or intervention early on.

**Engaging Families, Empowering Futures** (only 1 time per theme)

**Communication Tips and Strategies**

**Picture:** Use what is in prototype please

**Manuscript:**

**Daily Communication Logs**

Send home a daily or weekly communication log that summarizes the child’s day. Include what they ate, activities they participated in, and any new milestones or challenges.

For example, Today, Sarah was excited to try stacking three blocks together and smiled when she succeeded. She had some difficulty at lunchtime with using a spoon, but we will continue practicing together.

**Modeling and Supporting Play**

**Picture:** Use what is in prototype please

**Manuscript:**

**Parallel Play: “Playing Alongside”**

Demonstrate how parallel play can look when children engage side-by-side with little interaction. Invite parents to sit next to their child and play, modeling how

to offer verbal encouragement without interrupting their child’s space.

For example, See how Mia is playing with blocks right next to Jack? I’m sitting here with her, and I’m making gentle comments like ‘I see you’re building a tower!’ Parents can do the same with their child.

**Understanding Developmental Milestones**

**Picture:** Use what is in prototype please

**Manuscript:**

**Explain the Importance of Developmental Milestones**

Let parents know that developmental milestones are guideposts that track their child’s progress. These include skills such as language development, motor abilities, and social-emotional skills. Highlight that each child grows at their own pace but share general age expectations to foster understanding.

**Week at a Glance – Inquiry and Exploration**

**Quiet Zone**

**Picture: child looking in mirror**

**12-18 months**

**Manuscript: Explore facial expressions.**

**18-24 months**

**Manuscript: Make facial expressions.**

**24-36 months**

**Manuscript: Find details in faces on Photo Card.**

**Active Zone**

**Picture: child holding a ball**

**12-18 months**

**Manuscript: Hold and carry balls.**

**18-24 months**

**Manuscript: Throw balls into a bucket.**

**24-36 months**

**Manuscript: Throw balls through a hoop.**

**Imagination Zone**

**Picture: Children pretend to cook with pots and pans**

**12-18 months**

**Manuscript: Pretend making soup in a pan.**

**18-24 months**

**Manuscript: Set the table and make a pretend snack.**

**24-36 months**

**Manuscript: Set the table and make a snack.**

**Sensory Zone**

**Picture: child painting**

**12-18 months**

**Manuscript: Paint with scented paint on paper.**

**18-24 months**

**Manuscript: Make straight and curvy lines with scented paint.**

**24-36 months**

**Manuscript: Use scented paint to paint with peppy and calm music.**

**Outdoor Zone**

**Picture: Child holding a rock, stick or flower**

**12-24 months**

**Manuscript: Explore rough, smooth and soft natural Items.**

**18-24 months**

**Manuscript: Explore and distinguish between rough and smooth natural Items.**

**24-36 months**

**Manuscript: Find a rough, smooth, hard and soft Item in nature.**

**Week at a Glance – Greeting Circle**

**Unite**

Song: This Is the Way We Wash Our Face

Photo Card: Facial Expressions (card 3) and Five Senses (need to create with 5 pics of all senses)

**Calm**

Calming Strategy: S.T.A.R. Breath

**Connect**

Activity Title: Greetings

**Commit: Building Community**

Commitment: Safekeeper Ritual

**Week at a Glance – Activity Ideas**

**Language Development**

Language and Literacy

Music and Movement

Hide and Seek

Paper Plate Faces

**Cognitive Development**

Math

Transitions

STEAM

Science

**Physical Development**

Motor Play

Mindful Movement

**Social Emotional Development**

Self-Regulation

Mindfulness

Whisper Words

Feather Touch

**Closing Circle**

Review and Reflect

On Day 1, send home the “XX” family connections letter.

**Materials for the week**

**Greeting Circle**

Lilypad: This Is The Way We Wash Our Face

Photo Cards: Facial Expressions (card 3), Senses (need to create)

Posters: Calming Strategies

Other Materials: Max with House

**Language Development:**

Materials:

Language & Literacy

* *Hide and Seek*
* *Facial Expressions* Photo Card
* *Senses* Photo Card (need to create)

Music & Movement

* digital device for music

Activity 1

* blanket

Activity 2

* Paper plates
* Precut construction paper eyes, nose, mouth, ears
* Glue stick

**Cognitive Development:**

Materials:

Math

* Face Puzzles
* *Senses* Photo Card

Transitions:

* digital device for music

STEAM

* dough

Science:

* Magnifying glass, Face Puzzles

**Physical Development:**

Materials

* Small soft balls

**Social-Emotional Development:**

Materials:

Main Activity:

* Hat

Mindfulness:

* None

Activity 1: Whisper Words

* None

Activity 2: Feather Touch

* Feather

**Inquiry & Exploration**

Quiet Zone

Materials

* mirror
* *Facial Expressions* Photo Card
* Magnifying glasses

Active Zone

Materials

* Balls of different sizes
* Bucket or Container
* hula hoop

Imagination Zone

Materials

* Play dishes, pots, pans, and pretend food
* Bananas
* Salty crackers
* Plastic knives or tongue depressors

Sensory Zone

Materials

* Washable Tempera paint
* Paper
* Peppermint or Vanilla Extract
* Paint Brushes
* Music (Lilypad)

Outdoor Zone

Materials

* Natural items (rocks, sticks, flowers)

**Teaching Tips**

**What Should You Do?**

Picture: Use what is in the prototype

Manuscript: Theme 1, Week 2, page 20

**Engaging and Inclusive Classrooms**

Picture: Use what is in the prototype

Manuscript: Theme 1, Week 2, page 20

Create an inclusive environment by displaying diverse face photos and discussing how features make us unique. Emphasize that everyone is more than their appearance. Celebrate differences through conversations and activities, helping children appreciate diversity, cultural awareness, and the richness of individuality in physical features, talents, and personalities.

**Approaches towards learning**

Picture: Use what is in the prototype

Manuscript: Theme 1, Week 2, page 20

**Manages emotions with growing independence**

Toddlers gradually learn to manage emotions independently, starting with basic expressions like crying or smiling and later using gestures to communicate feelings. Recognize these signals and provide positive reinforcement. Support self-soothing by offering comforting items like stuffed animals. Over time, toddlers recover from frustration more quickly with less intervention. Foster emotional growth with consistent routines, encouraging independent use of calming strategies. Praise their progress to build confidence in managing emotions.

**Greeting Circle: Starting the Day**

**Learning Outcomes:**

**Posters:**

Calming Strategies

Greetings

**Lilypad**

This Is The Way We Wash Our Face

**Other Materials**

Max with House

**Conscious Discipline in Action**

The first classroom commitment begins with you! Introduce yourself as the Safekeeper and explain your role. Say, “*My job is to keep you safe, and your job is to help keep our classroom safe*”. Emphasize teamwork and the importance of creating a safe, supportive environment together.

**Unite**

* Greet each child by name as they enter the room.
* Wake Max from his house to be part of the classroom community for the day.
* Sing *This Is The Way We Wash Our Face*

**Calm**

* Introduce Smile, Take a deep breath, And Relax (S.T.A.R)
* Guide children to “smell a flower” by deep breathing through their nose.
* Refer to the Calming Strategies poster for S.T.A.R reference

**Connect**

* Refer to the Greetings Poster to explain friendly greetings.
* Introduce Max, shake his hand, and invite children to greet him and each other with eye contact, gentleness, and a greeting option.

**Commit**

* **Introduce your role as the Safekeeper (p. XX).**

**Language Development**

Learning Outcomes

Materials:

Language & Literacy

* Hide and Seek
* *Facial Expressions* Photo Card
* *Senses* Photo Card (need to create)

Music & Movement

* digital device for music

Activity 1

* blanket

Activity 2

* Paper plates
* Precut construction paper eyes, nose, mouth, ears
* Glue stick

Did you know?

Theme 1, Week 2, page 16

Language & Literacy – [Hide and Seek book, facial expressions and senses Photo Cards]

Prepare:

Display *Hide and Seek* and the *facial expressions* and *senses* Photo Cards.

Discover:

12-18 Months

Introduce *Hide and Seek* and play peek-a-boo.

Take a picture walk, asking children to point to features like eyes, ears, mouth, and nose.

18-24 Months

Take a picture walk through the book *Hide and Seek* and invite children to mimic actions from the book, such as hands over eyes, and hiding a toy under a blanket.

24-36 Months

Invite children to name and touch their facial features and talk about the sense they represent. Read the story and talk about how specific facial features are used in playing hide and seek.

Develop:

Share the *facial features* and *senses* Photo Cards to enhance discussions or movement. Invite engagement in meaningful ways.

Music & Movement – Sensory Icon

Invite children to dance and sing to *I Can, Can You?* (p. xx, Lilypad)

*My Hands on My Head* (p. XX, Lilypad)

Activity 1 – Play Icon

**Hide and Seek**

Discuss safe places to hide in the classroom. Cover your eyes and ask children to hide in one of these safe places. Ask them to say their name so you can find them using your ears.

Activity 2 – Art Icon

**Paper Plate Faces**

Provide one paper plate and precut construction paper eyes, nose mouth and ears for children to arrange as they like. Talk about the senses those features represent.

**Cognitive Development:**

Learning Outcomes

Materials:

Math

* Face Puzzles
* *Senses* Photo Card

Transitions:

* digital device for music

STEAM

* dough

Science:

* Magnifying Glass, Face Puzzles (Instructions in Appendix)

Did you know?

Page 17, theme 1, week 2

MATH – [Image of toddler face only ]

Prepare:

Laminate a picture of each child's face.

Discover:

12-18 Months

Sit with children and invite them to hold and explore their face picture. Talk about facial features.

18-24 months

Provide a laminated face puzzle cut in half for each child. Ask them to put the two pieces together. Talk about the facial features you see. Say, *You have two eyes, two ears, one nose and one mouth.*

24-36 Months

Encourage children to piece together their own 4-piece face puzzle. Talk about the facial features and ask them to point to each feature as you say it. Say, *You have two eyes, two ears, one nose and one mouth.*

Develop:

Display *senses Photo* Card. Ask questions such as *What does that facial feature do?* or *Which feature helps you hear? Which features help you see, taste, smell?*

TRANSITIONS – SENSORY Icon

Sing *This Is The Way We Wash Our Face* (p. xx, Lilypad)

STEAM – STEAM Icon

Invite children to make faces with dough. Show them how to roll a ball, pat it down flat and add little bits of clay for features. Have them compare their dough faces to their paper plate faces. What is the same? What is different*?*

SCIENCE – Literacy Icon

Allow children to use a magnifying glass to look closely at their puzzle face pictures. Have them point to the corresponding feature on their head. Talk about the sense that each feature represents.

**Physical Development:** [image child holding a ball]

Learning Outcomes

Materials

* Small soft balls

Did you know?

Theme 1, week 2, page 19.

Teacher Self-Care

Practice a daily Gratitude Ritual. Expressing gratitude regularly will train your mind to see the positive. Try journaling what you are grateful for or speaking positive affirmations aloud to yourself.

Motor

Prepare:

Gather small soft balls   
  
Discover:

12-18 Months

Invite children to hold the ball with their hands. Encourage them to tap the ball to their nose, chin, or forehead.

18-24 Months

Invite children to hold the ball under their chin. Place the ball on the floor and demonstrate how to move it only using your chin.

24-36 Months

Encourage children to walk with the ball under their chin. For a challenge ask them to turn around or hop while the ball Is still under their chin.

Develop:

Ask children to think of other places they could tuck the ball such as under the arm. Encourage walking, then hopping while holding the ball under the arm or between the knees. Ask, *Is it harder to hold the ball under your chin, arm or between the legs?*

Mindful Movement – [motor icon] I assume this will change each week or Is It the same for the whole theme?

Introduce Mindful Movement with Mountain Pose, fostering balance, alignment, and grounding.

Create an inclusive space for practice. Guide children to stand tall, press legs firmly, lengthen their spine, and press palms together.

Offer visual cues, verbal prompts, or physical modeling. Encourage holding the pose for up to one minute, celebrating all efforts and adaptations.

**Social-Emotional Development:** [image child touching head]

Learning Outcomes

Materials:

Main Activity:

* Hat

Mindfulness:

* None

Activity 1: Whisper Words

* None

Activity 2: Feather Touch

* Feather

Did you know?

Theme 1, week 2, page 18

Main Activity

**Prepare**:

Use *My Head* Poem (xx Appendix)

**Discover**:

12-18 Months

Recite the poem as you point to the corresponding features on your head. Then repeat pointing to the features on the child’s head.

18-24 Months

Point to features on your head as you recite the poem. Encourage children to point to their facial features as you recite the poem. Talk about the senses each feature represents.

24-36 Months

Recite the poem encouraging children to point to their facial features. Say, *All of these features are on your head. What is on top of your head? Discuss hair color and length.*

**Develop**:

After you discuss hair color and length, you can ask children to stand with children that have the same hair color, length or style (long, short, curly, straight).

Mindfulness – [motor icon]

Start in Mountain Pose with a deep breath. Invite children to get silly for 30-60 seconds by dancing and singing loudly, then return to calm. Repeat the silly-to-calm activity three times, ending in calm.

Activity 1

**Whisper Words [outside icon]**

Whisper *today is sunny.*  Have children whisper it back. Have children say their name out loud with hands on throat to feel a vibration.

Activity 2

**Feather Touch - [play icon]**

Use a feather to gently touch a facial feature as you name. Older children can use the feather to gently touch your facial features or their friends as they name it.

**Inquiry and Exploration**

**Tips and Preparation**

Keep centers uncluttered and predictable during the first few weeks. Introduce only a few materials at a time to avoid overwhelming toddlers. Model how to use materials correctly and put them away. Rotate new items gradually as children gain confidence and independence.

**Quite Zone pic of child looking In mirror**

Materials

* mirror
* *Facial Expressions* Photo Card
* Magnifying Glasses

12-18 months

**Beginning of Week**

Invite children to look closely at the faces on the Photo Card and name them.

**Midweek**

Add a large mirror and encourage children to make faces.

18-24 months

**Beginning of Week**

Invite children to look closely at the Photo Card and to make one of the faces.

**Midweek**

Provide a mirror for children to make faces and compare them to the ones on the Photo Card.

24-36 months

**Beginning of Week**

Provide magnifying glasses for children to find details like freckles or eye color on the Photo Card.

**Midweek**

Add a mirror and encourage children to look for their own freckles and eye color. Invite them to make the same facial expressions on the Photo Card, then some of their own.

**Active Zone pic of balls and a bucket**

Materials

* Balls of different sizes
* Bucket or Container
* hula hoop

12-18 months

**Beginning of Week**

Provide balls in a bucket. Younger children will enjoy holding and carrying them around.

**Midweek**

Demonstrate how to fill and dump the containers and encourage children to run and catch them.

18-24 months

**Beginning of Week**

Demonstrate how to throw the balls in the bucket and how to retrieve them to do it again.

**Midweek**

Change the size of the balls and ask children if it is easier or harder to throw a larger ball in the bucket.

24-36 months

**Beginning of Week**

Have children throw balls in the bucket while standing 2 away. Move the line closer If needed.

**Midweek**

Add a hula hoop to throw through. Ask them If It Is easier or harder than aiming for the bucket.

**Imagination Zone pic of play dishes**

Materials

* Play dishes, pots, pans, and pretend food
* Bananas
* Salty crackers
* Plastic knives or tongue depressors

12-18 months

**Beginning of Week**

Provide play dishes, pots and pans and pretend to make soup. Say, *Yum this soup is good. This cracker tastes salty.*

**Midweek**

Provide some fruit or crackers for snack time and talk about the sweet and salty tastes.

18-24 months

**Beginning of Week**

Provide props for pretend play. Demonstrate how to set the table for snack. Say, *Yum this banana tastes sweet. This cracker tastes salty.*

**Midweek**

Provide some fruit or crackers for snack time and talk about the sweet and salty tastes.

24-36 months

**Beginning of Week**

Demonstrate how to set the table and prepare a pretend snack.

**Midweek**

Demonstrate how to cut bananas. Allow children to prepare their own snack. Ask, *Is the banana sweet or salty?*

**Sensory Zone pic of children painting**

Materials

* Washable Tempera Paint
* Paper
* Peppermint or Vanilla Extract
* Paint Brushes
* Music (Lilypad)

12-24 months

**Beginning of Week**

Demonstrate how to dip the brush in the paint and make marks across the paper. Let the child try.

**Midweek**

Add a few drops of peppermint or vanilla extract to the paint. Ask the children if they can smell the paint.

18-24 months

**Beginning of Week**

Encourage children to make straight lines and curvy lines or circles with the paint

**Midweek**

Add a few drops of peppermint or vanilla extract to the paint.

24-36 months

**Beginning of Week**

Encourage children to paint something they see in their environment to peppy or calming music.

**Midweek**

Add a few drops of peppermint or vanilla extract to the paint. Notice If they paint differently with the peppermint extract (more alert) and peppy music or vanilla extract (more relaxed) and calming music.

**Outdoor Zone pic of child touching rock or stick**

Materials

* Natural items outdoors

12-24 months

**Beginning of Week**

Let the child touch a rough rock, smooth rock, a hard stick and a soft flower as you say the texture out loud.

**Midweek**

Choose one item to add to the sensory center to paint.

18-24 months

**Beginning of Week**

Let the child touch a rough rock, smooth rock, a hard stick and a soft flower. Say, *Point to the smooth rock. Which Item Is soft?*

**Midweek**

Let the children choose one item each to paint in the sensory center.

24-36 months

**Beginning of Week**

Ask the children to find a rough rock, smooth rock, a hard stick and a soft flower.

**Midweek**

Let the children choose one item each to paint in the sensory center.

**Closing Circle**

Materials

* On **Day 1**, send home the “Senses” family letter.
* Max with House

Daily

Revisit the Sakekeeper Ritual and discuss how you have kept the children safe and how they have kept the classroom safe. Highlight specific examples for children to reflect.

Invite a volunteer to help put Max to bed in his house, offering opportunities for children to engage through actions, words, or gestures, ensuring inclusivity.

Reflective Questions

*What was your favorite thing you did today?*

*Can someone tell the class how you helped a friend today?*

*What is something you do with your nose/mouth/eyes/ears/hands?*

Giving Kindness

Highlight specific children in the class for the kind or helpful things they did during the day such as:  
  
*I noticed (name of child) helped (name of child) pick up the balls. That was so kind of you!  
  
(Name of child), you were so gentle when you helped your friend with the mirror. That was a great way to work together!  
  
(Name of child), I saw how you listened carefully when your friend was talking. That helps everyone feel heard and special!*

**Assessment**

Language

Cognitive

Physical

Social-Emotional