

Skill Development Guide

Environmental Science/Nature Awareness:

Children will develop knowledge of:

- weather patterns
- plant, animal and fungi life cycles
- how to care for the physical environment
- species identification when it is relevant and of interest to the children

Ex. Each day children observe the weather conditions outside through experiencing first-hand how the plants and animals change and adapt throughout the seasons.

Play:

Educators will observe children's interests in activities, as well as their approach to play, including:

- imitation-based or fantasy play
- independent, parallel or collaborative play
- creativity and risk-taking
- sensory integration, physical coordination
- object manipulation
- physical motor skills (gross motor: body awareness, flexibility; fine motor: grip, hand dominance)

Ex. When children play by pretending to put on a concert with sticks and stumps, they are engaging various senses, along with physical coordination and social collaboration.

Routines/Transitions/Self-Help:

Daily routines and transitions offer opportunities for children to develop:

- sense of humor
- confidence and independence
- self-esteem and perseverance
- executive functions and ability to transition
- flexibility
- ability to listen, make eye contact, follow directions

Ex. Transitions, particularly during indoor to outdoor environments are important times for children to dress themselves appropriately, requiring planning, making choices and persistence in order to get dressed by him or herself.

Social and Emotional:

Through daily interactions with peers and educators children will develop:

- positive self-identity, empathy
- ability to understand and respect differences
- conflict-resolution and collaboration
- awareness and articulation of feelings
- self-regulation, self-discipline and impulse control
- adaptability and resilience

Ex. Community Reflection Meetings and Sharing Circles encourage children to voice their opinions and feelings, while also listening to others. Puppets are also used to encourage open discussion of feelings.

Cognitive:

Language- Children will explore and develop language cognition using:

- verbal and nonverbal communication
- receptive and expressive language
- reasoning and respectful articulation of feelings and plans with others

Ex. Active storytelling occurs everyday in the program and engages children through asking questions about the plot, character and setting along with questions regarding children's predictions and thoughts.

Literacy- Children will practice literacy cognition through:

- letter recognition
- ability to identify and produce letter sounds
- print awareness
- rhyme
- mark-making (writing and drawing)
- understanding, relating to and communicating oral and written stories

Ex. The Children's Sign-in sheet enables children to explore mark-making and the meaning of print everyday.

Numeracy- Children will practice numeracy cognition through:

- shape and color identification
- sorting, sequencing and counting
- number recognition, patterning
- one-to-one correspondence

Ex. Collecting acorns and fallen leaves for pretend food rations among children enables individuals and groups to have an authentic experience with sorting and counting.

Social- Children will engage in social cognition by developing:

- ability to recognize social situations

- interpret feelings and intentions
- show and understand empathy
- listen to others and express feelings safely and productively, especially when dealing with disappointment

Ex. The Montessori concept of a Peace Flower is used regularly when children are experiencing peer conflicts. The Peace Flower allows children to own their feelings and feel empowered by their ability to share their thoughts with others, while understanding the importance of listening and respecting others. (See Behavioral Guidance below for more information on Peace Flowers)