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INTEREST AREA FOCUSES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Blocks: blocks are designed in mathematical units. Get concrete understanding of concepts essential to logical understanding: sizes, shapes, numbers, order, area, length, and weight; large and small muscle development; language, aesthetic, and social development; cooperative play; problem solving; respecting others work.

4 stages of block play: Carrying Blocks, Piling Blocks and Laying Blocks on the Floor, Connecting Blocks to Create Structures (3-4), Making Elaborate Constructions (4-6).

House Corner: a forum where they can safely act out fears and relive life experiences. Take on the roles they fear and learn to control them. Opportunities to learn. Act out roles, develop skills. Learn about selves, families, and society. Fine motor skill development. Cooperation and negotiation skills.

3 stages of dramatic play: Imitative Role Play (1yr)- like real people they know- using real props; Make-Believe Play using imagination using symbolic props- inventive actions and situations (fears and worries); Socio-Dramatic Play (3-4yr)- includes elements of two previous stages but requires verbal interaction btwn two or more children- requires a planning of roles, complex plots, and more time.

Table Toys: Physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive skills-

3 functional categories: self-correcting toys which fit together in a specific way.

Open-ended toys which have not right or wrong solution; Collectibles are like open-ended toys but are composed of sets of like objects.

2 stages of play: exploration where use all senses to become familiar with a toy; followed by experimentation which is the actual use of the object- test to see how it works and how many ways it works.

Art: promotes creativity, is fun, develops physical skills including hand-eye coordination and fine motor movements, instills pride. Means to express, make choices, try out, plan, and experiment. Explore and discover.

4 stages of drawing and painting (from 18 months to six years) : disordered scribbling, controlled scribbling, naming a picture that was not planned, and representational drawing.

Sand & Water: encounter principles of math and science; physical dexterity, social skills, cognitive learning and skills (sink & float), sensory satisfaction.

3 stages of sand and water play: sensory motor exploration; planned and experimental play; greater complexity, drama, imagination (more cooperative).

Library Corner: to gain information & adjust to new experiences, learn to deal with difficult events, acquire specific knowledge, become familiar with different kinds of literature, learn about social responsibilities, learn new ideas, expand imagination and creativity, have their life experiences reinforced, understand their feelings, fears, and problems are not unique to them, feel good about themselves.

2 stages of library use: exploration and experimentation.

5 stages of book use: exploration, playing at reading, and having books read to them; understanding sequencing of stories (beginning, middle, end)- details important; learn to relate stories to pictures and words- gaining more awareness of written words as symbols for ideas and thoughts; matching words to printed text; focus on text and meaning of words - begin sight word recognition.

Outdoors: an extension of indoor classroom (cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical learning) plus outdoor sensory experiences, science, etc.

2 stages of outdoor play: exploration and experimentation.

Resource: The Creative Curriculum For Early Childhood, by Diane Trister Dodge, published by Teaching Strategies, Inc. P.O. Box 42243, Washington D.C. 20015, distributed by Gryphon House, Inc., P.O. Box 275, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712, 1988.



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Biography

Ronald Mah, therapist and educator, combines concepts, principles, and philosophy with practical techniques and guidelines for effective and productive results. He uses humor and stories from his many experiences to illustrate important points in a stimulating and highly motivating and engaging style.

A Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, his experiences include: Asian-American community mental health, Severely Emotionally Disturbed mental health & school partnership programs, vocational programs for at risk youth, welfare to work programs, clinical consulting & cross and multi-cultural training for Head Start, other early childhood education programs, social services organizations, & mental health agencies, supervising a high school mental health clinic, training and supervising therapists, private practice in Castro Valley, author of the Asian Pacific Islander Parent Education Support curriculum.

Professional Education experiences include: 16 years in ECE, including owning and running a child development center for 11 years, Kindergarten, elementary, & secondary teaching credentials and experience, ethnic studies curriculum writer, community college instructor, Masters of Psychology instructor, and former member Board of Directors of the California Kindergarten Association and of the California Association of Marriage & Family Therapists.